

A smirk slowly drew over a pair of curling lips with a hard face taken by the toll of time, wrinkles amassing it. The man stood within the dark room quivering as the only source of light wavered above a middle aged man lay motionless in the iron chair. His head leaned forward as he sat unconscious.

“Awake, finally!” the man’s voice coiled, twisted with insanity.

“Arrghh... wh-wh-where am... I?” the middle aged man swayed his head, fighting against the headache searing through his head. He tried to open his brown eyes but he couldn’t make anything as the light was directed on his face, he closed them instantly and shook his head to the other side.

The man stood motionless, watching. The smirk grew over his face.

The young man lifted his head up blinking as his eyes adjusted to the moving light. At first, he couldn’t make out the faint silhouette that blocked his view, but as his eyes adjusted to the light, he saw the shape of the slim man standing in front of him.

“Who are... you? What is going on? Where am I?” the young man asked with one eye open looking straight into the man’s eyes. He noticed the smirk, immediately something within him stirred, a gush of emotion splashing against his body. He felt uneasy, he knew something was wrong but he couldn’t make out what. The feeling grew when the man neither answered nor moved.

The young man tried to move out of the chair, as he stressed against the chair’s arm to push himself up, something stopped him, fixated him and didn’t allow him to move. He looked at his arm, he saw iron chains spiraling from his wrist binding it to the arm of the chair and crawled up to his shoulder.

“Why am I in these chains? What happened here? Get me out please! Help!” the young man started to panic, flailing his hands trying to break free off the iron chains.

“It is pointless, I can tell you that” the young man sprang to cut in the conversation but the man continued “and before you ask, I don’t know why or how you are in them. I can only tell you that we are all bound in this damned place for the current time being.”

“You... what is going on here?” the young man stopped flailing his arms.

“Did you do all of this?”

“No! Of course, not.” The answer came quickly. “You don’t know? Can’t you remember? After all you are part of the reason why we are bound in this forsaken place.” the reply was a shock to the young man. He gazed ahead trying to search through his memory for anything of use. He was met with a blank darkness, he couldn’t remember anything. Inside his head was absolute nothingness a void of thought. Yet, through all this confusion he could feel he is connected to the man standing before him. He could feel that this isn’t their first encounter, something in his voice, that twist of insanity, that look piercing through his insides like a cold iron blade – he has seen him before.

After a moment of silence the standing man unbound his hands and took a couple of steps towards the young man in the chair. “Obviously you can’t remember anything... well, let’s try to make things easier for you, shall we? Try to remember who you are...”

The young man’s thoughts spiraled through his mind trying to grasp for information. He closed his eyes and lowered his head forcing all his thoughts: Who am I? What am I doing here? Who is this man? What is going on? Too many questions, his head throbbed with pain. He can’t remember, no. He opened his eyes and started looking around him for anything or any clue that may betray any information about him or the place he is in but was met with complete darkness. The entire room was made of empty darkness save for the one light above him swaying its strands of light around.

The man took a few more steps towards the young man sitting on the chair. He knew that the young man doesn't remember anything and that was good enough, if it continued this way, he could have his way. He can end this forever. He smiled.

The young man still struggling with his memories gave up and looked at the man standing in front of him. "Help, please... I can't remember. Why are you doing this? Just tell me –" The light crossed the standing man's face and his eyes glinted portraying his dangerous silent laughter. Suddenly it came to him; like an avalanche all at once, speeding through his mind crowding the very paths of his thoughts. The young man's eyes widened as the smile that drew over the man's face expanded to a grin. The man knew quite well that he remembered everything. The young fellow dropped his head, lowering it as if tired from the waterfall of memories.

"I never thought we would meet again, I thought I have vanquished you a long time ago." The young man said with a strong voice; his fears faded, he knew who he was exactly.

"You thought that we wouldn't meet again?" retorted the man quickly.

"I didn't, but not so soon, what are you doing here?"

"Cleaning your mess, I am sure you know"

"What mess are you talking about?" The man took a long look over the young man then he moved slowly to the left while his right hand pointing over to the endless darkness before him. The young man gazed into the darkness, abruptly a small light aura appeared from within the darkness as the faint shape of a young man sitting on his knees before a mirror flashed. His light brown eyes searching through his reflection trying to find an answer, he raised both of his hands and crossed them through his black hair in despair.

The light aura suddenly disappeared as the man standing slid his hands inside his pockets; the young man looked at him with disdain.

"Our meeting should have at least hinted that your grip over Him is starting wearing off. You've lost your touch my old friend!" the man finished his words as he moved around the chair with the young man tilting his head trying to keep eye contact until the man stood behind him and placed both hands on the chair.

"He is perfectly fine, what are you talking about?" the young man tried to keep his voice casual. The young man felt fear and dread creep through his veins; after all the man was right. "He didn't summon you, I have never left his side, how did this happen?" The young man went through all of the recently returned memories trying to remember, when did He summon him? What happened that might have triggered this event? Questions and more questions but with no answers. Something is wrong, treachery – it must be.

"Then how do you explain my presence? You know perfectly well that the only way I can escape from where I was is through Him and Him alone." The man lowered his head and approached the young man's ears "why do you keep denying the truth?"

The man walked back to face the young man sitting in the chair. "It has always been your weak point. Did you get a good look at Him? He is in pain! He is not at peace and seriously, his life is falling apart; look at Him! And you are still denying it." The man smirked as he shook his head slightly. He looked in pain. How couldn't he notice the signs before? Why didn't he act earlier? But these are questions for later, right now, the young man didn't want to give away any doubts to the man for he will use it against him. He must not waver.

"From the outside He may look like suffering. What He feels from the inside is a whole different matter, you should know this, and you know that He is happy, you just don't want to admit it either. I know what you are trying to do and simply I won't let you." The young man replied slowly as he drew a soft smile trying to conceal his feelings beneath it.

“You had your chance with Him, now it is time for mine, He summoned me and you have no choice. Look at yourself, your bound, tied, helpless! What can you do? Nothing!!” the man forced his hands on the young man’s chained hands and bowed to face the young man closely “If He wanted you to win this battle, I believe He would have summoned me in a much worse state.” the young man smirked and leaned back trying to regain confidence. It is true after all, He could have locked him up in that awful place. Maybe even obliterate him from existence all together, the young man still had a chance.

“True, quite true in fact. Yet, you are summoned in shackles; doesn’t that give you any hints?”

“It is merely a punishment or maybe you have persuaded Him to do this. I don’t know how long I was out.”

“We were summoned at the same exact moment.” Retorted the man without thinking.

“He is still undecided, the state I am in will not stop me. I still retain control over Him, in some way”

“Not any more, or we wouldn’t be here... take a look at what you have done. You can’t deny that He goes to sleep every night in regret; He goes to sleep every night doubting himself, his own sanity. Last night, you saw what happened. No one bothers to see what He wants or needs, they just go to Him when they need Him; your actions almost put Him to tears. Why should He endure such a thing?” The man flailed his left hand in anger while fire of hatred ignited through his eyes.

“Why would He be the cause of suffering to others? It is far better that one person be in suffering while others regard him as the cause of their happiness than Him being their cause of misery. While, yes, He was almost to tears, He knew deep down that He made them happy. They knew how much He loves them, they knew how much He cares, they knew! That is what matters. He should be happy for they are happy, if even it appears that He is neglected and uncared for!” Anger rushed through the young man as he tried to rise off his seat but the chains gave him no way out.

“Is this your idea of happiness? Are you insane? Your bringing his life to an end, you are destroying Him and saying He is happy!!” cried the man.

“And exactly what is your idea of happiness?!?”

“It is when He sleeps every night with a smile over his face. When He sleeps at night with no feelings of guilt or shame. When others know his true worth and fear Him. Then He will be happy!”

“Yes, through fear, through bringing others misery and pain. Is that your idea of happiness? What happiness is this? You are a fool and you will destroy Him!”

“And what are you do--”

“Bickering, bickering... that is all you two can do.” A cloaked man, entered through the darkness of the room quietly, adjusting his spectacles slowly. As he marched into the room both men stopped talking and starred directly at him, the stranger suddenly felt the attention directed at him “Oh, don’t mind me, please continue. It is quite amusing how you two quarrel over negligible facts that do anyone nothing.” The cloaked man paused a moment but neither man changed their positions; they were both still looking at him with a confused look drawn over their faces “Do continue, please.” The man fell silent as he crossed his arms and waited for them to continue.

“Who are you?” said the young man.

“What he said.” the man looked at the young man once and then at the cloaked man suspiciously.

“Hahaha, you don’t cease to entertain!” The man in cloak freed his hands and clapped “I? Well, I am a neutral entity, I am only here to assist the both of you settle down your quarrels fast. To prevent you two from deterring away from your main objective. I believe the both of you know quite well why you

are here? Judging from the conversation going on between you two, I believe we might find a result really soon.” The cloaked man fell silent for a brief moment as he adjusted his spectacles. “Most splendid, he thought it would take much longer than this. But I see it is coming to an end.” the man adjusted his spectacles again.

The man sighed as shook his head briefly. “See what you did to him? Now he brought more -- as if we need more of us.”

“If he summoned him too, I would say we probably need him. In either case, in the end his presence or absence won’t really decide the outcome. If you noticed what he said, he is neutral; we don’t have to worry about him.” The young man sat back in his chair and shrugged. The man with the spectacles nodded slowly.

The three men kept gazing at each other, exchanging looks, until both the young man and the man standing in front of him locked their gaze.

“Uh! I seem to have killed the fun – again! Oh come on; please continue what you were doing.” Said the man with the spectacles breaking the silence as he continued to watch the other two men defiantly looking at each other.

“We can work together” The young man said slowly “It will need both of us working together as one hand; putting aside our differences, our disagreements and focusing only on what we need to achieve.” The young man paused again, this time however, he didn’t wait for his listeners to react. He went on. “We will work together applying your theories and mine’s, with this, I believe we can stand fairly against the world. Neither of us will have to defy the other and no one will have to sacrifice; we would save ourselves a lot of battles.” The young fellow stopped.

As the young man was about to continue and explain the plan to the man, the chains around his wrists tightened, pulling him further down the chair; the man stood in silence as he watched the iron chains form another layer over the young fellow’s arm, pulling them down to the chair; fixing them further. The man glared at the sight and straight through the young man’s eyes.

“What is happening? What have you done!!” the young man started to move about flailing his arms as much as he can with little freedom allowed because of the chains. This is never a good sign. Something wrong is happening.

“Nothing... nothing, I have no power over the chains, I wish I had.”

“Then why are the chains tightened?”

“Simply because he doesn’t approve of that; he doesn’t like the solution and how things are faring. My guess, he knows your rivalry well, he knows that you won’t be able to overcome it. Furthermore, you won’t ever be able to collaborate and the product will be an abomination, to say the least.” The man with the spectacles interrupted as he walked across the room and rested his hands over the chair’s back.

The young man and the man exchanged looks of anger and hatred, as if all fires of hell have awakened inside them. The thud that was heard in the moment following was nothing but the blow aimed by the man on the young man’s chin. The force of the blow obliged the young man’s face to tilt abruptly to the left as the pain coursed through his bottom jaw. The man with the spectacles slowly moved away from the vicinity standing at a safe distance watching from the darkness enveloping the area.

“It is quite obvious that he had enough of your ways. Mankind has changed my friend, to adapt to today’s times you need to change not to apply the nobilities of ages passed. I have told you times over, yet you never listen.” The young fellow tried to regain his concentration, as anger mixed with pain

started to boil through his veins. He tried to rise from his chair and break the chains, but to no use. The chains were too strong. The second hit came across his right cheek; hard as the first.

“There was a time when nobilities ruled over a world of ideals a world of greatness... n-now, look outside... the world is slowly coming to an end. If every man and woman followed your beliefs, it won't be a surprise if humanity perished.” The young man was in pain, he tried to direct his thoughts away from the pain, he tried to contact Him; but he was too weak.

“Words of wisdom, as always, but it is pointless now; He already decided!” As he finished his words a third blow aimed to the young man's stomach made him hunch his back in pain as he screamed in agony and started to cough heavily.

“Yet... there will always... be those who will stand to the darkness... if not Him...others. You have always looked at what He thought... you never looked at what other people thought of Him. You forgot... you... you forgot how many... how many people commended Him. How many... people praised Him. How many people have looked up to Him!” the young man was out of breath and losing his strength gradually as the man grabbed his hair and pulled it upwards glaring at his eyes. The young man reluctantly looked at the coiled smirk on his face.

“Your words are pointless, he has al-- no, no, no, NO, NO!” the screams came louder and louder as the man retreated in surprise and shock.

To his amazement the chains around the young man's arms dissolved into silvery dust. The young man ceased the moment and launched himself out of the chair diving into the man's abdomen with his shoulder as the later was retreating in astonishment.

The two fell to the floor with the young man over the man. Quickly the young man gathered some of his strength and directed a blow to his chin. The blow wasn't strong, but it was enough to throw the man's head to the other side stealing some of his strength.

“Truth isn't... blind, it is always hidden.” The young man aimed another blow with his other hand, still fixing his opponent to the ground. “While it seems that nobility is not a luxury in a world like today, it is the only option to strike a string of hope over a web of dark—”

The young man didn't finish his sentence as the man suddenly raised his hand, glowing with a shimmering red fire encasing his clenched fist into the young man's chest. A loud scream of pain broke the hissing sound resulted from the contact of both body parts; the young man grabbed his chest in pain and rose to his feet retreating. He slowly and hesitantly moved his hands in swirly moves over the burn while a blue light with sparkling green speckles chased after his movement clearing the wound and fixing it.

“What could... a string...of hope do... against heavy rain!” the man stood up gathering some of his strength, ready to continue the fight.

In the near vicinity the man with spectacles watched, adjusting his spectacles as flickers of green, yellow, white and red light flashed over and over again. “There the fight begins - again!”

In the carefully furnished bedroom the young man standing before the mirror fell to his knees, looking at the ground, leaning his head over the mirror, both of his hands slowly slid over the mirror in a futile attempt to keep himself on his feet. Slowly he moved his shaking hands and clutched his head. Feelings of hatred, love, consent, appreciation, neglect, hope, doom and dismay, all raced through his body as it started to shake; a tear fell off his left eye burning through his cheeks as he looked over the mirror. Deep through the light brown eyes of his, you could see strands of different colored light flashing within; two figures standing in front of each other in defiance each striking at the other with his might!

