

GOD ASH: REMNANTS OF THE FALLEN.

Chapter 2: Life as it was, and as it is...

"I have seen all the things that are done under the sun, all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind. What is twisted cannot be straightened, what is lacking cannot be counted..."

Cain had read these words somewhere in a book he had found in a library.

These words were extracted from the holy book of a religion long forgotten to mankind, with almost all information on it lost in the annals of time.

The knowledge of this old religion was however able to express his current thoughts most accurately, with but a few words...

He opened his eyes to the bare ceiling above him and could feel the bile of boredom churning in his stomach, on the verge of releasing itself from his digestive tract...

It was most likely just acid reflux due to indigestion, but no one was going to stop him from being a bit poetic, right?...

He had once thought he had a problem with his head and had even considered seeing a shrink. He eventually came to terms with the fact that his thoughts and his mental processes were just different from everyone else around him.

It was like he was constantly standing upon a hill, observing the city below as well as the people living within, in ignorance of the world around them.

The world had known constant peace, but what exactly is peace? Is it the presence of virtue, the absence of vices, or both?

Whatever it was, it certainly was an oxymoron...

At least, that's what he thought...

According to the history books, the world was a little blue planet called Urbus. This world could be considered the abode of a highly developed civilization of humans, who had made several high levels of technological advancements and breakthroughs throughout its history.

In reality, this broken world was merely the remnants left behind after the events of a war of catastrophic proportions that had taken place a thousand years ago.

The humans that roamed the world back then called it something different, that name now lost forever in the rivers of time.

What they did leave behind, was the burden of rebuilding a world damaged almost beyond repair for their offspring...

Only from the hottest of fires can true gold emerge. From the flames of war, an even more prosperous civilization of humans emerged. They created the world of Urbus.

Major wars were now a thing of the past, and famine, hunger, and disease did not exist anymore due to the level of technological means available to all,

providing different ways to improve agriculture, production, transportation, and other basic, yet fundamental areas of everyday life.

If observed from outside, one could even say there existed no unsatisfactory elements in this world, as the rate of crime in this world was supposedly at an all-time low.

Jobs were made available for everyone, and most of these jobs were made easier by machines powered by artificial intelligence to boost efficiency and reduce work load on the humans tremendously.

Under these conditions, the fostering of societal problems shouldn't have been an issue...

But humans will always be humans at the end of the day...

Behind this facade of development and prosperity, lay all sorts of terrible vices, and you could say the main character of this story is merely a by-product of these vices...

Cain had rarely known warmth growing up. His stepfather had shown him neglect, and his stepbrother, an obese junkie wasn't any better.

The neglect wasn't bad in and of itself, but his life had eventually turned into a never ending cycle of reoccurring images...

In a sense, Cain blamed the peaceful society they lived in...

He wasn't that much of an athlete, but his memory was better than average. He lacked the necessary skills to partake in casual social interactions, so it was only normal for him to be bullied in school.

For Cain, all was always as far from good as the distance between the north and south poles. Cast aside by society, there wasn't much for him to do. No friends, a neglectful family, and very few hobbies, Cain could feel his life spiralling into a never ending abyss.

But on a fateful day;

The threads of fate began to untangle their knots...

On a dark, rainy night, after running away from home because he had an argument with an intoxicated foster father who was goaded by his stepbrother, he happened to come across a mysterious man.

Under the dreadful storm, Cain could see the silhouette of a man dressed in all-black garbs stretching his hands towards him.

'So warm...'

Under the dreadful cold, the contrasting heat radiating from his palms was the closest he felt he would ever get to comfort...

Struggling to keep his eyes open, he fell unconscious...

A few weeks passed, and during this period, Cain was nowhere to be seen...

As expected he wasn't missed by anyone, and his foster father didn't file any missing reports, thinking he had probably run away.

Although the police knew he was missing, surprisingly, no action was taken to search for him, almost as if something or someone was manipulating the situation from the shadows...

One day, Cain finally appeared before the faces of his stunned stepfather and stepbrother.

Only, this time, there was something extremely different about him...

Monday morning, Cain lay in his bed recalling his dream from the previous night...

In a great war between numerous gigantic behemoths and beasts, golden blood of all shades flowed like a river across the starry sky.

He observed in the third person, as the body he inhabited roamed across the battlefield, slaying numerous beasts and powerful-looking monstrosities until there was no more to kill.

He watched as this figure rose its mighty head and roared into the void, where sound was said to be impossible to travel through.

And yet, said roar managed to inflict terror into those who were unfortunate enough to hear it.

Those who gazed into his eyes, one as dark as the most empty recess of the abyss, and one as bright as a supernova, didn't usually live to tell the tale.

As Cain watched in awe, the figure suddenly looked in his direction. Cain watched in shock, as the giant figure opened its mouth and roared a stream of purple-colored flames as he-

"Shit!"

With a jolt, Cain abruptly woke up from his lucid state...

Gazing at his bedside clock, he realized he had wasted almost an hour staring into space, his head lost in the clouds.

'What was that all about?'

Letting out a sigh, he took his sweet time getting out of bed, then proceeded into the bathroom.

Standing in front of the mirror, he stared into the eyes of the entity gazing back at him. Long lashes, a head full of raven black hair, bronze-like skin, and a set of dull, grey eyes.

With the bridge of the entity's nose very slender, his features looked nearly beautiful and effeminate, if one was to ignore the scar running across his face from his left eye, all the way to his right cheek.

He ran his fingers across the scar, his eyes glazing over as he recalled the series of events that lead to its acquisition.

'So ugly...'

He shook his head vigorously, breaking away from his thoughts. He grabbed his toothbrush, beginning the morning with a mouthful of toothpaste...

Stepping into the corridors, he was glad to notice that no one was home, which meant that the day was off to a decent start.

Since he picked up practicing martial arts, he had hardly seen his stepbrother of stepfather. Whenever he did, they always had something to say about his recent behavior which was still a real ear scratcher...

He proceeded to the kitchen, in hopes of preparing some breakfast before heading to school...

"At least buy some eggs, damnit! How can I eat breakfast with no eggs?" Cain sulked as he opened the refrigerator, pulling out various ingredients to make a moderate breakfast.

In a few minutes, he had prepared the meal, eaten it, and was off to school with a spring in his steps.

The path to school was a long one, but was made fast and easy through the modern system of transportation.

Magnetic shuttles that could cover vast distances in the blink of an eye were very common to see. Cain boarded one of them. Punching his destination into a panel in the luxurious vehicle, the vehicle rose a few inches above the ground without a sound, then sped off...

His school was located on an island attached to the mainland by a huge bridge. Numerous magnetic shuttles raced across the bridge at high speeds.

Staring at the ocean, a thought surfaced in his mind...

'As I suspected, I'm late...' He sighed to himself.

He got to school thirty minutes late due to his morning daydreaming session. He was surely going to get an earful from Susan, his class monitor, who made it her life mission to make his life just a bit more enjoyable than it already was.

Contrary to his temperament, he was good-looking, at least according to the opinion of other people.

The only thing he saw in the mirror, was an ugly scar. The scar though him lessons, but it was still ugly...

"You are late. Again..."

Susan, the class monitor of Cain's class said in an annoyed voice as he strolled into the class.

'Sigh... not this again.' Cain thought as he proceeded to put on the most ingenuous smile he could muster, hoping it would lessen the heat.

"And a good morning to you too, Miss. Class monitor..." Cainn said, trying to fake the most unsarcastic voice he could muster as he tried to appease the demon in human clothing in front of him.

This girl before him was one of the people he tried his best not to piss off, as she had every means possible at her disposal to make his day a little bit worse.

"The first class is over. Why are you late?"

"Overslept..."

"Why did you oversleep?"

"Reading..."

"What were you reading?"

"A book?"

"Be more specific!"

"Fine... I didn't have my alarm set."

"You are so irresponsible! Do you know...."

He never could figure out why the damn class monitor was always on his case. He felt like there had to be a reason why she would single him out of all his classmates to make his life terrible in school.

Due to her constant terrorizing, dumbasses who had a crush on her misinterpreted the situation, thinking they had something going on and would try to constantly get on his nerves due to jealousy.

Even though he constantly put them in their places, it still became a source of constant headaches for him, as the flies never gave up...

After listening to three whole minutes of her verbal scolding, while the whole class laughed at his situation, he was dismissed by a satisfied Susan.

He sped off quickly to his seat, intending to brush the whole morning drama aside.

'Ha... Could this day get any better?' Cain thought to himself with a smile.

Now seated, he kept reminiscing about the dream he had the night before. Since he had a bit more time before classes began, he decided to let his mind drift off as usual...

Suddenly, he felt his heart begin to palpitate excessively. He felt like at least for hundred shots of pure caffeine had been forcefully injected into his bloodstream.

All of a sudden, he lost his ability to respire, then his bodily functions ceased to respond to him.

His head slumped onto his desk, and his consciousness faded away as he blacked out...