



04. Eyefaychee_1

BANDIT

He didn't say a word on the ride home.

When they finally got back, he asked Vera and Sophie to give him some space.

He closed the door behind him. Rentoth was talking to his lady of the day.

"We need to talk."

Rentoth saw in his brother's eyes that he wasn't playing.

"Sure thing." He gave his lady friend some bullshit explanation and promised her a callback. He locked the door behind her.

"So, what is sooooo pressing that you —"

Bandit didn't even let him finish. He grabbed him by the collar, eyes injected with pain and Flux and the passion of a man whose whole life had just been turned upside down again.

"Did you know, you two-faced motherfucker? Huh? Is it true? Am I your actual, full-blooded brother? Did these sorry-ass dead parents of yours give me up?"

Rentoth blinked, stunned.

“Woah, dude. What are you talking about? I don’t know anything about that. What the fuck? Who told you this?”

“Oh, shut the fuck up, will you! I don’t believe a word that comes out of your parasitic mouth! They rejected me! They gave me away like a rabid dog! ‘Bandit,’ they call me... Truly a fitting name for a pariah like me.”

He let go of his brother, sat down on the beat-up chair next to him, pulled out a cartridge of Flux, and inhaled almost all of it in one go.

“Fuck ‘em. And fuck you too.”

Rentoth stared at him, trying to process.

“Dude, I swear on everything I own — and will own again — that I have no fucking clue what you’re talking about. This man you saw... what did he look like?”

Rentoth was already suspecting something.

“He looked like no one. Some asshole. I don’t know.”

“And you believed him? Some guy approaches you, delivers an Elderise-shattering piece of information, and you just believe him? Look at me, you fucking junkie!”

Bandit slowly lifted his head.

“You knew.”

"I just told you I didn't!"

"You fucking knew."

Rentoth stepped forward.

"I didn't know shit."

That was enough.

Bandit lunged.

Rentoth tried to grab his arms, but he didn't have his brother's street instincts.

Bandit shoved his hands away and slammed his forehead straight into Rentoth's nose.

A dull crack.

Rentoth staggered backward, swearing, clutching his face.

"What the —!"

Bandit didn't stop. He kicked him hard in the stomach. Rentoth folded over, gasping.

When he crouched, Bandit shoved him to the ground and started wailing on him, fists coming down wild and fast.

"You lied to me!!"

Punch.

"They all lied to me!"

Punch.

"Left me to fend for myself in the gutter —"

Punch.

"— while you were ruling the fucking world!"

Rentoth tried to cover his face, but Bandit grabbed him by the shirt and slammed his head against the floor.

“Say it!” Bandit screamed. “Say you knew!”

The door burst open.

Vera, Sophie, Mads, and Aksel rushed in and intervened. Vera grabbed Bandit from behind with Aksel’s help, while Sophie and Mads shielded Rentoth from more hits.

High, angry, sad, and impetuous, Bandit wasn’t done.

“Leave me alone! All of you! Let me go.”

“Not if you’re gonna act like a monster!” said Vera.

Bandit thrashed, breathing hard, eyes glassy from Flux. For a moment it looked like he might swing at her too. Instead he shoved Aksel away and broke free.

“Fuck you all! Don’t come for me!”

He stormed out, slamming the door behind him.

Silence.

They all looked at each other, not having a clue what to do next.

Bandit had run away again.

THE MAN

The man walked through the narrow corridor in silence.

Level 9 never really slept. Old ventilation systems hummed in the walls.

Somewhere down the block a drunken argument echoed through the street.

The building itself had seen better decades. Peeling paint. Flickering lights. A cracked elevator that wheezed its way between floors.

The priestess was waiting.

Same white robes. Same calm face.

She did not greet him.

"You did what you were told."

The man nodded.

"I told the boy exactly what you said."

"Good."

She stepped closer.

"You have served faithfully."

The man swallowed.

"My family..."

"They will want for nothing."

The tension drained from his shoulders. For the first time since he had left the Slums, his face softened.

"Thank you."

The priestess studied him for a moment.

"Close your eyes."

He did.

His lips moved softly.

“IZE WAID SEH.”

She repeated the words.

“IZE WAID SEH.”

Then she stepped behind him.

The blade moved quickly.

The man’s eyes opened just as the blood began to spill down his throat.

By the time his body hit the cracked tile floor, the priestess had already turned away.