

Home Sweet Home

In the dead of night, I remembered everything.
Why'd I have to remember everything.
The way the blood dripped from my hands.
The way it dripped down my face—

My best friend was dead on the floor.

I thought this was supposed to be a nice night. A nice few nights...
All we wanted was some cool winter parties.

Some winter parties to help us forget what happened twenty years ago.

Well.

Guess even that doesn't matter anymore.
When one war ended...
Perhaps another one is to begin.

...

"We all have monsters inside us," I told Eric, my little brother.

"Can't say I deny it. Though, whether we do or not—"

"Eric," I interrupted.

I looked outside, feeling as paranoid as ever.

What the hell was he going to say next?

“There are reasons we don’t talk about these things. And whatever you’re about to say? Really think about it...”

“I think more than you do. That’s why you touched that weird-looking crystal, and I didn’t...”

“I didn’t want to. I didn’t even mean to.”

The grandfather clock went off.

Its chimes reminded me of the ones from the chapel—the same chapel I’d taken the crystal from.

The Grissom Chapel.

I should’ve never fucking stolen from that place.

Maybe...

Maybe my friends would’ve never gotten hurt.

Maybe none of this would’ve happened.

God... was it all my fault?

“Jake...” Eric said, rising to his feet with fear in his eyes.

“Bro? Everything good with you?”

I stepped toward him, but he raised a hand, motioning for me to stop.

Eric didn't say another word.

He only shook his head, whispering "no" over and over again.

Then a voice spoke through him.

"Black as day. Bitter as night. Don't you see it? It's within us all, Jake. Your brothers are mine—and all you'll remember is how it was all your fault."

"Eric, you're scaring me. Please stop..."

The youngest finally spoke.

His eyes weren't focused on Eric, though.

They were fixed on whatever stood behind him.

"You three shall receive the greatest gift this world has never seen. By His grace, The Dragon granted me everything. Now, I will teach you three what that grace truly means."

The grandfather clock went off a second time.

I felt the wood beneath me grow soft.

My brothers' faces blurred.

Thousands of voices began chanting some disturbing nonsense—

until I realized it wasn't nonsense at all.

They were opening some kind of portal.

From tens of thousands...

to thousands...

then hundreds.

Finally?

There was only one.

And yet, it wasn't merely one.

It called itself many.

Its voice was calming—almost seductive—but it twisted my stomach into a knot.

Shadows curled around the room.

I still couldn't see my brothers.

The shadows formed into puppets.

It even put on a show for me...

And that was when I realized how my brothers died.

...

Suddenly I was staring at Astrid.

I tried to tell her what had been revealed to me, but I didn't have enough time.

I vanished.

And suddenly, I was somewhere else entirely.

Even though I could no longer see my memories, I heard a third chime from my old grandfather clock.

Then came a thud.

Then nothing.

But through the silence of space, a voice could still be heard.

Undeniably...

the voice of the Shadow Man.