

New Dimensions (Draft 2)

Despite the devotion of defending knight and soldier alike, the king did not resist as we dragged him from his throne. Despite the servitude from his people, keeping his belly full and his thirst quenched, the king did not stop us from gorging ourselves in his pantry. Despite the fires burning so hot they melted the wooden foundations of his dynasty, his eyes remained dry.

Throughout the journey from the former king's castle to our own fortress, he remained stoic. He did not protest as we chained him nor hauled him. We berated him, my friends beat him, yet nothing.

So here he sits, in a stone cell so putrid even the rats would struggle to sleep comfortably. Wine still stained his opulent shirt but his constant indulgences betrayed him. His enormous body struggled to sit comfortably in the wooden chair we provided. The room was also adorned with horrid implements: long blades, massive sheers, and jagged metal lined the wall. All freshly stoned just for the king's arrival.

As he sat, I leaned in and found his large brown eyes, "You're not going to die in here; you will die tomorrow, beheaded for your rule. I have been told to assure this or it will be my own head under the sword."

Still his expression remained blank.

"This moment we have now will be the last time you are not in unspeakable pain. Tomorrow, you will not have fingers, you will not have feet, your teeth will litter the ground we walk on. And you will know our vengeance as you see the silver blade drop towards you. Do you understand?"

Again, silence.

"Fine, you don't need to talk. But you will scream and if it annoys me your tongue will feed the dogs."

But he did not scream, he did not struggle, he did not even weep. With every laceration, gore, and wound he remained silent. Eventually, as I carved out another piece of scalp, my fellow knight yelled, "Speak you vile being!"

The bottom of his boot found the king's cheek and he was launched to the blood stained floor. As we hoisted him back up I asked, "Why don't you speak? Say something."

Not a word escaped his lips.

I put my knife to his remaining foot and screamed, "Speak or you will never walk again!"

His eyes didn't even flutter as I sawed through bone.

Later, resting from our work, we devised a new tactic. Pain it seemed was not something he was unfamiliar with, but we had something new.

It was then that I presented him with a simple choice, "You will stay silent and we can resume our torture..." his expression was as if he were alone "or, you can say anything and you may drink this." From behind me I produced a most exquisite red wine. The bottle itself was beautifully crafted, encasing a deep crimson liquid filled to the brim. Finally his eyes darted down towards my hand. Quickly he looked back up, but before I could ask for his decision, he licked his lips and his mouth opened.

"Just outside of Washington D.C. there is a suburb called Sterling. There, you can find a rock climbing gym called Sportrock. If you go to the front desk and ask for nOble, with a capital O, he'll give you a \$25 Amazon gift card."

Each of us pulled back slightly. My own eyes darted away and found those of my fellow knights.

"What did you say?" one asks.

"If you go to the climbing gym, he works there, just ask for nOble. If you don't live near it, you can call the number on the website. Be the first one to do this and he'll give you the code."

Again, we turned to each other with our eyebrows scrunched and mouths ever so slightly open.

"Where is Washington D.C.? What is a climbing gym?" I ask.

"May I drink the wine now," he asks politely.

I look down at the bottle in my hand. Marked on the side of it was "Thomson #5 - 1373" in black ink. Silently I gave it to his remaining hand and he brought the opening to his lips. In one long swig and quiet belch the wine was gone.

The words rolled around in my memory, many foreign to me. I awkwardly shifted my feet in front of him. "What does that all mean?" I ask.

His eyes centralized once more and his posture stiffened.

"Tell us what that was," I say louder.

The king had shut down once more.

Almost instinctively, my hand clenched his fatty neck. His long hair began to mix with the sweat and blood of my gauntlet. I unsheathed my long, ancestral broad sword from my hip. Gently I placed its blade right at the center of his lips.

"There is more wine for you, but unless you tell us what you meant by those words, may you never taste again."

Without a moment to pull back, he lunged his neck into the edge of my blade, escaping my grasp. Instantly blood painted that steel canvas of my armor. His piglike head slumped forward as did his chest and torso. Finally, the chair could no longer hold balance and he tumbled down at our feet, dead.