

*Night time in gloomy London town-*

The moon watches, behind smoke and cloud and surrounded by blackest night, but shining milky white upon the dark patchwork of this most perilous city.

A man watches back – a twisted man, a devilish man, guarded from the night by cold window glass, guarded from the world by cold men in the winding halls of his tall building, guarded from all decency itself by cold alabaster upon his face. He is the vile Fiend, and he watches the tired city, this twisted man – he watches the city below him and he waits, smiling the same hooked smile as is ever emblazoned on his alabaster mask.

*Thwak!*

Noise – commotion and violence in the halls outside. The Fiend does not turn, even as the noise grows – as the violence draws nearer to his own office door.

“Boss-”

A call from his man in the hall – then, muffled by carpet – *stomp*. A heavy footfall.

“Boss!”

A call, more urgent – another *stomp*, louder. The Fiend does not turn.

“Boss! BOSS! BO-”

A mighty *krak* against the door! The wood buckles and bursts – a frightful visage breaks through, forced through the splintering gap – a twisted scowl with garrish teeth – a mask – the Fiend's own masked man, sent through the very door he stood to guard by a blow of truly mighty strength!

Still, the Fiend does not turn – not yet. With hands gloved in black, gloves ornamented with cold steel, he grips more tightly to the head of his long black walking cane.

The door, burst off from its frame and dangling on rent hinges, creaks open.

In steps a man – a towering man, a mountain of a man, beefy and thick – his long gentlemanly coat torn and frayed, his bare and barrel-chest bloodied and cut, his face shrouded behind the scowling pink snout of the Smashing Rasher.

The Fiend smiles the same hooked smile, and at last he turns. From behind his broad mahogany desk, with his jagged fan of triangle horns framed by the dark window at his back and

lit by the milky white of the moon, with his long black cloak shrouding all but his alabaster mask and his steel-garnished gloves and his long black walking cane, he regards his foe.

-*huff*- The Smashing Rasher is breathing hard. For a long, still moment, the two only watch each other. Then, finally-

“Good God man.” The Fiend speaks with cold and mirthless humor. “You really are a big fellow, aren't you.”

The Smashing Rasher says nothing - ever stoic, he only cracks his bare, bloodied knuckles, and takes a step onto the lavishly carpeted floor of the office of the Fiend.

But the Fiend is unmoved - “Oh please.”

The twisted man strides forward, leaping atop his broad mahogany desk like a vile and hateful cat.

“Would it kill you to make even an attempt at polite conversation?”

From the height of the desk, in leering alabaster mask and flowing cloak he looms over even the immense musculature of the Rasher, cutting a bitter figure against the wide window at his back.

“I mean honestly.”

He speaks as smoothly as he moves, and he moves as creeping ink that stains a page. In a single flowing step he's off the desk and gliding across the room.

“All this, all your thunder and fury...”

The two bitter adversaries stand near face to face, nothing now between them but a few feet of lavish carpet.

“What could I have possibly done to make you so damnably mad?”

The Smashing Rasher is quiet. Beneath his gentlemanly coat, his broad shoulders hang tight and tense. The pink ears of his besnouted mask hang limp. His valiant mutton-chops sag, only so slightly.

“You've done enough,” the mighty man says, voice low, weary of the evil before him.

“Ha!” The Fiend laughs, short and cruel. “Don't suppose I can argue with that.”

Then – in a flash of dreadful speed, blood flies through shredded cloth, cold steel glints and drips with red as the Fiend has struck! The metal on his gloves, hooked and sharp like the talon of a savage bird, slashing the Rasher in a dizzying swipe - the Rasher, expert pugilist as he is had mighty arms up to block but the razor claws cut deep, shredding through his gentlemanly sleeves and tearing flesh beneath.

With such speed the second slash comes and the third – but no! The Smashing Rasher swings up his trunk of a left arm, and though the claws cut deep the swing is stopped and the Fiend is left hanging, open for a mighty strike!

Surging full of such unimaginable force, the Rasher's great, meaty right fist comes smashing down upon the frozen face of the Fiend. With a resounding crack the Fiend tumbles backward, feet kicking and wheeling until he strikes the desk and crumples to his lavish carpet.

The Smashing Rasher rumbles forward, torn and gentlemanly coat trailing behind. He towers over the scrawny form of the Fiend. He raises his mighty fist one more time, ready for the end...

*But no!*

With a click and a searing flash of fresh steel, a blade, a sword, hidden within the Fiend's very walking cane, swings up as the Rasher swings down.

Blood oozes from a long, hideously long gash. The Smashing Rasher's barrel chest is split by an ugly streak of red. The rubbery snout of his pink Rasher mask is slashed apart, and one half hangs limp. His mighty arms fall slowly.

The Smashing Rasher sinks to his bare knees as the Fiend rises like a shadow on the wall.

“Ha... Hah...” The twisted man breaths hard, but he stands, in all his hideous triumph. He coils back.

The Smashing Rasher kneels, vital fluids pooling on the lavish carpet. His mighty arms are heavy beside him. His mighty legs feel as cold as the night outside.

With the Fiend poised overhead, the Rasher makes no move.

The Fiend delivers the final, piercing strike.

The Smashing Rasher lurches. Dark blood, dark as a shadow, creeps across the back of his gentlemanly coat.

The Fiend lowers himself to face his bleeding and broken foe. He smiles the same hooked smile, relishing in vicious victory.

“Honestly man,” the Fiend speaks, his voice sharper than his blade and dripping with gloat. “What did you thi-URK!”

His sinister mockings are cut short by a mighty hand! Too close and too assured to slip away, the Fiend is taken at the throat by all the incredible strength of the Smashing Rasher! With inhuman determination, with might and vigor drawn up from the deepest wells of his sheer beefy force of will, with blood spurting and teeth ground, the Smashing Rasher rises to his feet, towering with rippling muscle over the Fiend!

“WHAT -” The Fiend shrieks, digging his savage claws into the vice grip at his neck, slashing at the Rasher like a pinned cat.

The mighty man steps forward, Fiend in hand - “How are you still ALIVE?” The Fiend gasps - “How much blood do you have?!”

The twisted man's protestations see no avail – he grabs for his sword, still embedded in his foe and wrenches – the Rasher lurches but keeps his feet and drives on forward.

“Wait -” The Fiend howls, smiling the same hooked smile. “Wait woah hang on-”

The Smashing Rasher speeds forward – he steps upon the great mahogany desk, pushing the Fiend ahead. Already his limbs begin to fail – his legs feel like stones, his arms like heavier stones, but still he pushes, so furious is his might!

“Wait stop no NO - GOOD GOD MAN, COME NOW!”

Mustering the very last shreds of might in his body, the Smashing Rasher leaps off the desk, smashing through the cold window, into the night.

The Fiend protests, but the last of his words are lost in the shattering of glass and the howl of wind, lost as the two foes fall to the moonlit streets of gloomy London town.