Colin Hite

DGM - 4000

**Shared Story – Act 1**

It is a brisk dreary fall evening that cascades through the mountainous region of the American Midwest. In a small shanty town built for an age long forgotten there lies a humble forest just outside the qualms of modern society. Within its winding curling embrace there lives a rickety well forgotten bridge waiting for its companion to return.

Its companion is an old gentleman shrewd from his many years working in an iron factory. His head is wrinkled with the many waves of time that have flown over him. Adorning his body is a rugged worn pair of denim overalls fastening his favorite base ball jersey t-shirt. Namely what attracted this bridge to his companion the most was his callused dry hands that often adjusted his lumbering boots upon its span.

However, it has been quite some time since we last heard from the man. As we recall his last visit was nearly 12 years ago. Back then he used to visit quite often giving the bridge a light sanding or a couple spare nails. Although his final visit was quite peculiar. This time the man came empty handed.

“It is always a wonderful day out in the fall around this time.” The man said.

“I wonder how my favorite bridge is doing today.”

As he walked his usual route he came upon a lonely bridge perched above a ten-foot drop overlooking a roaring river. It had become tradition at this point for the man to stop and admire the bridge for a time. First, he would admire its subtle expanse in the cool blue overcast light. Next, he would inspect its many rivets and nails ensuring that everything had a tight fit. Finally, after a thorough inspection he leaned over the side of the bridge to absorb the soothing sounds of the churning splashing river.

As he opened his eyes and looked down into the depths of the river he noticed something peculiar. There he saw a small crimson bell off the shore of the river glimmering in the dimly lit ramparts of the forest. The man stared at the bell for a moment and spoke to himself as if someone were listening.

“Who could have left litter in a fine place like this…”

Upset the man crossed the bridge and slowly made his way down the sharp jagged incline that lead to the bell. After many excruciating minutes of maneuvering down the slippery slopes the man finally reached the bell.

“It’s quite a shame too that someone would throw this out. It is quite a lovely bell.”

Leaning down the man picked up the bell in one hand and admired its glossy chrome finish. However, in that moment the sky turned black. A huge swirl of ethereal smoke created a column of dense purple smoke in front of the man over the now calm river. Startled the man fell onto his back sheering his arm up against a razor like rock. In a panic the man grasped his arm bellowing out into the distance his cries of pain. Soon the smoke dissipated to reveal a large figure cloaked in an elegant black and purple dress. Stunned the man looked up in horror as the figure spoke.

“I see you have found my little red bell.”

Soaked in an emanating fog the figure smiled with a burning red fire. It looked down at the man as he tried to run away. Looking for any way out the man exasperatedly clutched at the damp rock failing to find any proper hold.

“The devil has come to take my soul!!!” The man shouted.

“Devil? No… I am but a conjuror.” The figure paused as it reviewed the mans failed attempts to climb the slope. After a moment of thought the figure raised one finger to it mouth and spoke. “Although… I’d be more than happy to be your devil if that is what you wish for returning my bell.”

With a fluid motion of its hands the figure waved its arms and enveloped the man in a black smoke. Screaming the man writhed as the smoke consumed his being. Finally, the figure gave the man one last look with a smirk on its face.

“If you really don’t want my present then you’ll have to retrieve my bell once more.”

“I’ve hidden it within your final destination if you have the gall to refuse my generous work.”

“Good luck young man. You will need it where you are going. HAHAHA!!!”

A bright flash of light enveloped the forest returning it to its prior state. Water continued to flow, birds continued their song, and the bridge continued its solidarity. Still screaming and grasping his arm the man awoke to find no blood and no figure. In a panic the man stood up to get his bearings surveying his surroundings. As he soon came to realize he certainly was not in the same world anymore.

<Name>

DGM - 4000

Act - 2A