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Eng 215 Short Story

Dr. Neumann

# I Intro

Daijon Barloc was a guy like any other. He was from a regular home with two working parents, went to school, and obtained a nice programming job with some big company. His friends knew him as a bit awkward, but that, they would say, came with his brain. Logic was second nature but words were more like 25th. Needless to say, his talks went better inside his head than they did coming from his lips. Like many others, he dreamed of better days, to Friday, to a day when the news only had good things to say about the world and its prospects. Those would sadly remain dreams, in this new world it might be dangerous to hope for peace.

It seemed like a life age ago but he could still remember how things were. People seemed to be much happier back then. Tech was booming, most people’s problems were relationship difficulties, social issues, or rough economic times. The hope for many was to get a diploma, go to college, obtain a good job, and live life happy. There were always difficulties along the way, and not everyone could live that path. Still the era went marching on, there were great advances in science, tech, and health. Things were actually looking up, it wasn’t always great but at least then everyone felt free. But then the war came. Really, it’s funny what people will give up in the name of security and protection. The tech boom with all its great promises fell into darker hands.

It used to be you could say how you felt in public, over the phone, or online. Now though, there were always eyes watching, or electronic ears listening. Some of the very code he produced for understanding speech was now a backing to an invasive state. There may have been bombs going off elsewhere but here there was a different sort of war…

The end of the work day was sounded off by the usual government reports and warnings, “The war effort needs your help!” The voice sounded a lot like an atypical drill sergeant, “Sign up today at your local military station or help monetarily by buying bonds. Only you are the one who can make a difference." At this time he was meeting with his coworker friends for their midweek dinner outing. “Good we’re all here. Everyone ready, remembered everything?”

# II The Awakening

Daijon lied in his bed, eyes half open. His apartment in partial disarray, he had been feeling weighed down lately, even after he stopped reading the news his unease remained. *Even though you don’t see it, doesn’t mean it’s not happening*. The problem with the news was that you heard about it but likely couldn’t do anything

**“…*What if I told you, you could change the world?”***

It was a nice thought. Would that I could, he thought, but I’m just, some guy; people like me can’t hope to change much. *Useless.* Give to charity, volunteer time at organizations, smile and wave to brighten a stranger’s day. It was all so little, but he did it anyways*.* Staring up, eyes half closed, the thought saddened and sickened him. *There is always hope for a better day*. And hope he had, as his world faded and sleep took him where the world could not.

The world was so dark, he looked up to haze filled sky where the sun or stars should have been shining but there was only gloom to greet his gaze. That was when he heard the voice again. It was soothing, and utterly final. “***Everything that will follow inevitably ends here…” T***here was a pause as he retook in his surroundings. *I must be in some sort of nightmare right now*. There was rubble, remnants of inhabitation turned to ruin. The light glistened from the skyscrapers and spread across the street filled with debris and demolished vehicles. *A place where people once lived and laughed and toiled*.

***“...Unless…***” Unless what, he thought. The light continued its descent, playing shadows among the sad remains of what once was. *“****What if I told you, you could change the world?”*** It was closer now. ***”If you will accept its burden, I can give you power to counter the Darkness.”*** The world dimmed for a moment and his nerves tightened. ***“This is no true dream Daijon.”*** And then he felt it; his senses rushed back into him. He could feel the stiff air and smell its reek. Then he knew he wasn’t dreaming anymore. ***“You have been chosen. You can be the shield to defend the world of man and the sword to strike its oppressors.”***

He looked around again. Was this what awaited the future? His throat felt dry and his voice squeaked when he first tried to use it. “Are you saying if I don’t the world will die?” *Or if I accept and fail*. He blinked, the light was waiting, almost expectant. “But, I am just a man.” He thought back to all his failures and wrongdoings; things he had done, things said, and those left unsaid. Would that he could go back and do them differently. He was frightened and the sense of dread and finality weighed on his conscience. He twisted away from the light, “I think you’re asking the wrong guy.” *If I’m supposed to be the hero of this story then we’re looking at a sad ending*.

***“You do not yet understand, but your choices will be made clear in the light of dawn.”*** The ethereal orb glowed a little brighter. ***“Those who do not want power are often those who would better wield it while those who yearn for power would be better without it.”*** His senses were intensifying, his stomach was knotting.

***“Daijon, the champion must be a son of man, only by this means can the Darkness truly be cast down from its throne.”*** It bobbed again and moved out a little further from him. There was no sound here, no wind to wrest the silence. **“*If you choose to walk this path it will require you to sacrifice everything…”*** *Everything, is quite a lot*. “***Power comes at great cost and with much responsibility; it is a burden but only you can accept it.”***

He pinched himself, and then several more times just to be sure. *Yep, definitely not one of my day dreams*. He let out a shudder, only now could he feel it becoming colder as his breath became visible in the still air. ***“The time grows short Champion.”*** The voice was hastened this time. He could change the world, but what was this associated cost? The light above was becoming dimmer and more translucent. How many times had he wished for something better? How many times had he thought, “If I had but one wish, I would wish for a better world. Peace, food, happiness for all.” Shadows stirred beyond the view of the light and the cold pressed close, only the light brought warmth. ***“What if I told you, you could change the world?”***

*I would have said you were crazy*. But he knew better than that now. He was just as crazy and the light’s presence gave him hope and it blossomed in the gloom of the shattered world. “I would give anything for a brighter tomorrow.” He was sure of it now, “For a day without tears, a day with more smiles.” If there was anything worth everything, it would be that. It sounded almost sad when it said, ***“Good Champion, arise. There are dark and hard days to come. You will be reborn in the light and the light will be in you. So long as you keep faith darkness will never best you.”*** The world felt bitter cold now but he was warm inside. For once he felt certain in his intentions and what he meant to do. He was going to change the world…

He woke with the feeling of a sudden drop and the crunch of wood. *The front door?* He tried to stand but his body was studded with pains, so he struggled to rise from his spot at the center of his room. Everything was in tatters; the wood looked as though it had been seared in certain spots and anything not heavy enough was strewn throughout the room. *What happened last night*? There was the sound of heavy footfalls against the wood floor going up the stairs.

He looked outside and saw that the world was awake and buzzing in the predawn gloom. He was putting all he had into movement but his body would hardly obey, it felt like the world was on his shoulders. That was when the two doors to his bedroom exploded from their hinges and heavily armed men charged in, surrounding him. He wanted to hide in a corner, to be freaking out but all he could think of was the men’s armor, it were pitch black, not part of the military.

The lead opened his visor. T*he eyes, they’re molten gold*. “You may not know who we are, but we know who you are, Champion.” His voice felt like ice and was full of malice. “Only, this time we were ready for you.” The air in the room stiffened, his hairs stood on edge and his heart beat fast, as though it knew it was enjoying its last run. “We are the darkness in man’s heart, we are the plagues, the droughts, the wars. We are the sins of this life, and we are many.” Their guns rose, leveling on him, he could not move. *If you choose to walk this path it will require you to sacrifice everything.* “This is our world now, and you don’t belong in it.” He saw the flash before he felt the bullet rip through him. That’s when the darkness swept in around him, it was so cold.

III A New Dawn