

THE HAND

By Yours Truly - COldFlaME

I don't know for how long I've been climbing. My hands hurt from clutching onto the rope forever, but I will not give up. For as long as I can remember, I've been in this dark space. Climbing. It could be a well or a cave; I've no way of knowing. I don't know what's at the bottom or where I started from. Yet I climb, for I see the way out. The only source of light in this darkness is me, as I shine brightly from the light showering over me through the exit. "What am I? Why am I here? What is my purpose? Who put me here?" Such questions arose within me throughout my time here. But that didn't stop me from moving forward, from having hope, and from smiling. Was I smiling? I've no way of knowing since I can't look at myself in this void. Or maybe I was just deceiving myself. No, as I caressed my face, feeling my smile with my hands, I knew. This had to be the brightest smile to ever exist. So, I climbed on, smiling. I don't know how long it has been. The passage of time has always been a bit foggy. But I climbed on and on and on without ever slowing down, for I see the exit. Somehow, it feels like the distance to the exit never seems to change. No matter how much I climb, it always seems unreachable. "Was I a fool? Will I never make it out?" I pondered for myself. I've yet to see any help from anyone outside. "Will this be the end of me?" I began to question. Just as I did, my expression changed. "So this is what fear feels like?" I thought to myself. As I was making that realization, something happened. The exit that had always been at an impossible distance had suddenly appeared within my reach. As I climbed eagerly closer to the exit, a hand emerged from the light. The hand of the person was shrouded in darkness, even though it had appeared out of the exit. I felt relieved. Finally, I'll be able to leave. I'll be free. Just then, the hand began to cut off the rope that had been my only salvation in this darkness. Fear, confusion, anger, panic, and frustration. Feelings that I never knew existed within me were coursing through my mind. But I was not about to let that hinder my actions. Right as the hand had cut the rope completely, I reached out just far enough to grab onto the hand. I will never let go. Though I was climbing for what felt like an eternity, I will never let go. Either the hand pulls me up or we both fall back in. As I began to climb using the hand that was previously shrouded in darkness, it began to appear as it was. Covered in cuts and bruises. The skin is far coarser and rougher than the rope. Then I saw his face looming over mine. Scarred and tired. His eyes were devoid of light so much that I was able to see myself clearly in them. I could finally see my face. What I looked like. For the first time in my life. I saw my face through his eyes, and

through mine, I saw his. It took a while for me to recognize it, but it was me. He was me. I don't know when or what point in time, but it was undoubtedly me. Just as I had made this realization, he spoke. In a whisper, ever so slightly, through a smile that I could only describe as pain and eyes that just wanted to rest, "Please let go"

Even though it was barely a whisper, I could hear it perfectly. He could've pushed me off and pried my hands off, but he still chose to ask me. Why? Suddenly, I felt compelled to move. For all my life, I've been climbing towards what I thought was my exit. But now, at this moment, there's nothing more that I wish to reach than this person in front of me. And so I climbed. My reflection, which had been clear till now, began to shake and distort as his eyes welled up. Then he spoke again as a single tear rolled down his face onto mine, "Please, I'm tired" I've been climbing for an eternity, pulling myself again and again, but never have I felt a burden such as this. The weight of the single tear made me lose my grip, and then I fell. As I was falling to my demise, I realized who I was, what I was supposed to do, and what my purpose was. I understood everything. My mind was flooded with thoughts and questions. But one stood above everything else. The thought that I never knew that I could smile like this.

-Thud-

"Where am I? The ground didn't feel completely solid. Oddly enough it felt quite similar. This feeling. Then I saw what the ground was made of. Thousands? Tens of thousands? No. There were countless bodies of people who looked exactly like me. For as far as my eyes could see, I could only see them. As my consciousness began to fade and as I took my final breath, I saw. Far above the surface, at a distance, someone climbing"

XXXXX

Closing words:

Thank you for indulging in my selfish request and sharing your thoughtful opinions. Couldn't have done this without you. This has been fun ☺

Signing off...