I guess I’m not the correct person to tell you this story. I can’t say I was in on it, or that anything here was my doing. Most of what happened I merely observed, or was told to me by another source, and when everything started going down, not every source was credible. I wish I could’ve been in the thick of it, or had some righteous cause that I believed in. I didn’t.

My name is Bystander.

I don’t know how much you know about the people of our world, but the one name you should take away from this is Roy. Roy caused what happened. He catalyzed the problem, but he also catalyzed the consequences from it. I admire Roy for what he did, really. I’m not sure, in the end, if what he did resulted in a better world for us all. But it certainly changed things, shook them up to the point that they would never return.

As I said before, I will never be fit to tell Roy’s story. Only Roy and the Wall Spirit that probably rules above us can know what happened for sure. I am merely a courier, one to inform you what happened to us, so you can decide what happens to you.

I happen to be a Believer, as you might have guessed. Albeit but a weak one, but since I am a courier, I will try to keep my beliefs and opinions out of this story. I guess, after what happened, something stirred me into believing the Spirit existed, or ought to exist. Nothing else could’ve stirred Roy to the acts that he did. Maybe my proof isn’t the best, if you can even factor in proof for an argument about the Wall. I will freely admit it; I am a coward beyond comparison. I cannot fathom the feelings of the courageous. I used merely observe them, watch them, form my opinions and tell my stories.

Maybe I now can be motivated to act. I’ve heard the Wall Spirit can work great things in cowards who now have protection from the world. But, again, that is just what I hear.

Come to think of it, I’m not sure what Roy believed in, the day he saw the Wall Spirit in person. I find it funny, looking back on the day it happened. The one prophet of our religion wasn’t sure what he saw that day. Everybody wonders whether or not the Wall Spirit exists, but I believe Roy was closest to the truth.

I’m getting ahead of myself. This is not where my story begins. And, as one of your songs states, as quoted by the Scroll of Infinite Knowledge, we must start at the very beginning. It is a very good place to start.

There will be time for questions afterwards.

**Chapter 1**

A crash. Stone on metal produces a squealing sound that is heard throughout the village. Roy sighs, then heaves his body out of his bed and looks around the room. Seeing no problems, his eyes wander sleepily to the clock, then to the window. What time is it? The clock says two in the morning, but the window argues. Surely that much light can only mean a sunrise. Roy groans, afraid of sleeping yet another day away, and now the clock must be reset in addition. He looks down to the sheets, and the comfortable whiteness tempt him beyond compare. That’s when the first scream arises.

Merely a scream. Nothing to lose sleep over. Perhaps the child in the apartment downstairs has jumped her brother in the dark again. Nothing wrong.

Suddenly, Roy’s eyes widen in a moment of dawning comprehension. Light. The crumbling of a falling building. Screams, which now echo at a more and more frequent rate.

Something horrible has happened.

Barely stopping to tie his shoes, Roy rushes out the door of his apartment to the concrete staircase that leads to the ground. Taking the steps four at a time with the occasional jump, Roy manages to get to the ground floor hastily. The only thing that stops him is the dull thump of a body from around the corner. Both figures fall in a heap on the ground. Only one manages to get up in a timely fashion. The other picks himself up slowly, but the insanity gleaming in his eyes suggests he still plans on running.

“Ow, ow, ow…” Roy groans.

“Roy! Roy, you need to run!! It’s almost here!!”

“Aero, what’s going on!? What the hell happened!?!”

“Roy, it’s… It’s horrible! We need to get out of here! It’s already too late for Aether, but I can still save you!” spits out a frantic Aero. He looks like an animal cornered at the end of the hunt, ready to bolt at the soonest opportunity.

A shiver runs up Roy’s spine. Aether. What the hell happened to Aether?! And where is all this light coming from at two in the morning!?

“Where is she!? We need to go back for her, Aero! She’s your sister!!”

Aero seems to pale, almost as if the reminder of this fact has made him physically ill. He seems to shake his head around, and the nervousness returns to his face. With renewed initiative, he turns quickly, almost as if to hastily plot the fastest route out of the complex. Would Aero just abandon me like that?! We need to go back and find Aether!

A looks of disgust seems to flash over Roy’s face, but it is quickly replaced with a look of determination. My mind is made up.

“If you’re not going to find her, I will! Aether is part of me, and I’m not letting her go tonight!” Roy yells.

Aero’s eyes widen, and he turns again to steal a glance at the door. Roy is feverantly searching the room, and selects a worn shovel from the pile of odds and ends at the bottom of the staircase. He tests its weight, and finding it an easy enough tool to carry, slings it over his shoulder. Both figures take off in a run, race out the door onto the increasingly brightening street, and take off in different directions.

If Roy had taken the time to look at the shovel in his hands, he would’ve noticed that it had slowly turned a milky white.

However, Roy does notice why the night is so bright. Fingers of flame appear more and more frequently as he sprints to town square, a route chosen because it went opposite to Aero’s. A body appears in his peripheral vision. A small child tries to lift the boulder that had crushed it, and cries out for its mother.

I can’t help them. I want to stop, but I can’t help them now. Nobody can. I need to find Aether. For the first time, Roy’s nervousness evolves into emotional pain. It hurts, and is especially bitter because he hadn’t felt anything like it before.

Roy’s pain was different from the boy’s. For whatever reason, Roy’s pain lasted.

Roy collapses, and grabs his head. What is this?! Why does it have to happen now!?! Using his shovel as a cane, Roy pulls himself to his feet. On shaky legs, he keeps running towards the source of the chaos. More bodies appear, and stricken friends, lovers and family members cry out in grief. Roy looks away, and focuses on the horizon of the street.

A black mass of something sits at the entrance of town square. It shifts, almost cohesively, as if it actually is alive. Roy approaches it wearily. Suddenly, two white circles appear to open up on the thick looking surface.

Roy jumps back in surprise and fear. They look almost like… eyes. But how can this thing be alive!? It’s so different from anything in my world. It can’t exist! Roy almost manages to convince himself of the comfortable notion that the mass was once again inanimate. That’s when the fist falls.

Black, gooey, but surprisingly hard when compressed, it knocks the air out of Roy’s stomach. He barely manages to recover when a far stickier looking black extension shoots from the mass. Roy ducks, and the hand swallows a lamp post where his head used to be… Roy scrambles to his feet and runs away. Somehow, the shovel is still clutched in his clenched, sweaty fist.

Once perceived safety has been reached, Roy tries to compose his damaged mind. It… looked at me! What was that thing?! Why is it here? Some part of the back of the back of his mind remembers Aether, but it doesn’t seem as pressing as it did before.