Its once-eyes cracked open. Barely a slit, light shone through to meet flesh, undisturbed for centuries. And with this opening a voice reappeared; one that had not cursed the world for untold years, whose presence had been forgotten long ago and buried under the glacial but indomitable accretion of time.

The voice found itself amid the void and consciousness returned. It used the vision It now had and stared out onto an unfamiliar world.

A blur imprinted on its mind, slowly growing clearer until it could make out distinct shapes and color. Its gaze returned low lying plants, hints of autumn, with brown leaves nestled amid tendrils of green. Some things never change.

“Who are you Chained One?” The voice repeated.

It remembered the voice. The voice had awakened It from its unbeing and brought it back here.

Words came for unbidden, spurned by the seal which still held It fast. It remembered air. It filled its lungs and spoke.

“I am not Chained One; I am burned; I am the Burned One.” It knew those words well for It had said them over and over in the mad darkness that had initial engulfed Itself. The Burned One. With these words It remembered Itself.

Now Its consciousness remembered its body, and its once-muscles. It moved what had been Its head forward, raising just enough to see who was there, who had awakened him. It saw the body of a man and nothing more. The being was not Its jailer.

It had meet men before, as the earth changed around it, mountains slowly crumbling, forests arising suddenly and then disappearing before his once-eyes. At first some remembered It as the god It once thought Itself. Then as time went by, and years turned into decades, the visits became less frequent and Its eyes opened less and less.

Every century or so, there was a man or woman of great power, who, upon finding It, chained and immobile as It was, would try to extract knowledge. However, It could not say what those powerful men and women wanted, for the chains bound more than just Its flesh. It would not have told regardless. They were arrogant ignorant people and seldom bothered It for long, usually giving up in frustration.

Once there had been a man who had been more persistent, but perseverance finally gave way to acceptance after three years of attempting to unbind It.

And now here was another, but this man too would leave like the others, and It would cease to be again.

“Why are you chained?” The man asked.

Again the words rasped from Its mouth uncalled for.

“I am chained for my crimes. For the lives of those I twisted and tore and broke and for the blood which I made them lay before me.”

The man absorbed this knowledge silently.

It was then It noticed a difference with this man. The man was large of build with heavy muscles, especially around its arms. It wore a simple tunic. There was no megalomania here, nor the wasted body of one who had pursued knowledge at the expense of everything else. This was no scribe; this was no man of books.

“And who chained you?” The man asked.

This required no answer, but It responded with the truth anyway.

“The last of the Law Makers punished me for my crimes, for my immortality of blood. He drove these chains into this rock.”

It watched the man step slightly closer, peering at It and its chains, running everywhere. It looked at well, scarcely remembering Its own form.

A hideous mockery of a man met Its once-eyes. Flesh hacked into the semblance of a man, surrounded everywhere by peeling bloody skin. Burned dry and flaky remnants of his body gave way to constantly dripping puss and oozing eternal blisters, which then ruptured and burned. It had learned long ago how to forget the crippling pain that Its body endured every second. The burning had been total. Not a spot remained untouched by the Law Maker’s punishment.

Below Its feet lay the Stone. It had been there for longer than It, and had once been an artifact of Its own time, when the power of the gods had been at the control of those who willed it, and when great and terrible feats were accomplished.

The Stone had been a convergence point of those powers, but the Law Makers had put an end to that era and the Stone was now perhaps just a Stone. It could no longer feel the Stone’s power. A dead lifeless thing now, bereft of any purpose except for its invincibility; an invincible, immovable Stone for Its invincible, unbreakable chains.

It appeared as it always had, a mysterious fathomless black, with a surface smooth as glass. It rose from the ground to perhaps twenty feet, an obelisk like crystal. The chains were part of it in some way The Burned One did not understand.

The man looked down at his own hands and thought for a moment. It waited. It was good at waiting.

The man’s right had slid to the pommel of some weapon attached to his back.

“I felt drawn to you in a way that frightened me. I saw your semblance in my dreams” He said.

“If I free you, will you swear an Oath to follow me?” The man asked.

Its mind quickly dismissed the offer. “There is no force that can free me; there is no Oath that can hold me. I was not meant for the Law Giver’s Pax Justica. I am from a bygone age.”

The man tightened his grip on the weapon, before drawing it swiftly.

A two handed weapon, the hammer’s crudeness was balanced by a inexplicable but undeniable presence. It burned at the world. Its very existence an affront to Order. Just drawing it hushed the winds and silenced the animals of the Forrest. Existence waited with nervousness.

The Burned One felt the weapon’s power and was astonished. This is a weapon from my age. Is this some lost relic, or have the means be remembered to make such objects? But It said nothing.

“I see” The man said, with a hard expression on his face. He raised the hammer. And struck.

The Burned One felt pain. It knew this weapon could end Its existence, Its eternity of waiting; the torture forced on It. It waited for the void so long denied to It.

For the second time the world felt Absolute Sunder. Impact. The sky bruised. The earth cried blood and trees groaned horror. Animals either madly fled, the sharp scent of hysteria and death following them, or convulsed until lifeless on the ground, wracked by fear. The ponds and lakes boiled and steamed. The men hurried inside with their families the secured their doors, making oaths and gripping their loved ones close. The mountains themselves trembled.

The Burned One still felt pain. The likes of which It had never felt before, never in Its eternia of agony had It encountered anything like what It felt now. It fell to the ground and drew itself together, the blood immortality like a small twig, which It now held on to as if in a storm of pain.

The Burned One did not die. That blessing was denied to It once again.

As the waves of pain subsided, It realized It was on the ground. It raised Its head and turned its body, staring, not quite believing at the Stone.

The former convergence point lay shattered, along with the remains of his bonds. The invincible Stone, broken. The unbreakable bonds, shattered. The man cast a glance at the form below him and slowly turned and started to walk away.

The Burned One, now in mastery of Its pain rose from the ground with a power which had for so long been denied to him. The man, turned quickly.

The stench of death arose from the ground itself and what was left of the low lying grass perished instantly, twisting into dessicated lifeless husks, which blew away in a steadily increasing burning wind. The man regarded the Burned One, but did not raised his hand to his weapon. There was an air of sorrow in his eyes, which the Burned One could not explain.

Trees collapsed around the Burned One and death screams echoed from shadows, which flickered to life, darker than the Stone which had held him. Blood coursed form his body at every point, boiling out of his once-flesh, and wicking off of his withered self to fall to the ground, burning it with its very existence.

The Burned One remembered Its power and it was once again within Its control. The screams ceased and the blood stopped leaving the battered clearing suddenly silent and empty.

The man nodded and turned, then started walking away. The Burned One thought for a moment and then followed him at a distance, now not quite sure where Its eternal life would take It.