**Chapter 2: To not hear**

"Please lower your voice, Mr. Demon. I don't mean to mislead you, but I am actually the second-youngest among them. So, my outward appearance might not align with your expectations," I hurriedly press my hand against his lips to stifle any potential sound. The last thing I want is for these words to reach the ears of the head angel; I dread the scolding I might receive from the head angel.

As I withdraw my hand, I find a slight veil of saliva still clinging to my skin — a somewhat tiresome consequence. Yet, these minor inconveniences are a small price to pay for the invaluable insights I hope to glean about demons through this interaction. Mr. Demon's fangs and rough skin had momentarily entrapped my hand, but now I free it.

"This might seem absurd, but they have tasked someone of your stature to do this work... Thinking about it clearly, appearances can indeed be deceiving. But do tell me, how old are you?" Mr.Demon questions.

I find myself adjusting the form slightly, perhaps displaying a hint of naivety, though my father often commends my adeptness in wielding magic through this particular guise.

The question lingers, and I'm faced with a decision: Should I fabricate a more commonplace answer to maintain the flow of conversation, or do I reveal the truth, risking the exchange becoming peculiar and unsettling?

"This year marks the passage of two centuries since my birth," I opt for candor, recognizing that my pursuit of understanding hinges on a foundation of truthfulness. For truth begets truth, and I seek a confession that aligns with the essence of my research.

Mr. Demon, despite his rather barbaric countenance, offers a thought-provoking observation. "Considering the realm of immortals, your age pales in comparison to what one might anticipate from an archangel. Yet, within the context of those with briefer lifespans, you've already traversed two lifetimes."

His comment springs forth unexpectedly, hinting at a depth of understanding that one might not readily associate with his appearance.

He halts his musings, sensing my countenance has taken on a more earnest aspect. It appears my demeanor might have inadvertently transformed this discourse into a quasi-interrogation, a perception I fervently hope to dispel. Nevertheless, I remain cautious, hoping that the delicate balance between curiosity and earnestness still holds.

"Upon contemplating the course of my existence, I find myself inclined to accept the impending retribution. It seems fitting to harbor such sentiments toward my executor rather than the manner in which you are treating me," he concedes, a heavy sigh accompanying his resignation as the surrounding silence intensifies its hold.

"Perhaps we could veer our discourse away from the somber prospect that awaits us and instead indulge in lighter topics," I propose, a sense of camaraderie burgeoning between us after hours of conversation within these confines. With the exchange of memories comes a measure of vulnerability, an unforeseen glimmer amid the prevailing bleakness.

The time spent together seems to have woven an intangible connection within me, an unexpected blend of foreboding friendship, a bond I had never aspired to cultivate. Yet, resolutely, I shall shoulder this unchanging burden, bearing the weight of an unlikely companionship and the poignant specter of its inevitable end.

"Lord Third, the sun begins its descent beyond the horizon," a declaration punctuates the air, heralding the impending execution. The duo of angels materializes from behind, clasping him in chains that remain conspicuously bereft of magical restraints.

Caught in a dilemma, torn between granting him a modicum of struggle or adhering to Father's instructions, I wrestle with a decision.

"Do not hold yourself at fault; I am honored to be your chosen prisoner," the demon proclaims as they drag him forth. And so, I too brace myself to fulfill the role of the executioner.

As the sun meanders its course across the vault of the sky, I present myself adorned in the ceremonial attire bestowed upon me by the head angel. Father stands in attendance, his gaze fixed upon the impending spectacle, a mixture of anticipation and curiosity emanating from his countenance.

Gabriel's conspicuous absence weighs on my mind momentarily. Alas, I reckon I lack the privilege of his presence to witness my inaugural execution, aware that his engagements are tethered to the intricate tapestry of battles and wars for the higher cause. Who am I to impede his pursuit of equilibrium and his grand ideals?

"Initiate the swing, Lord Third," the head angel's proclamation reverberates, compelling my hand to heed the command. The axe descends, its weight an unexpected burden, and my instinctive motion finds its mark upon the demon's neck.

A curious heaviness accompanies the strike, yet it doesn't sever cleanly, resulting in a pained cry from the demon. Panic intertwines with confusion, rendering my hand as unsteady as a deer in the throes of a slaughter. The visceral pain of my victim adds to my distress, amplifying the tumult within me as I muster the resolve to complete the task at hand.

"Bring an end to me, as you've pledged to grant me a serene demise!" Mr. Demon's desperate cry reverberates through the hall, an anguished wail that sets the rumor mill into motion, casting whispers of my dubious alliance with a demon.

Summoning forth my magic, I intend to bestow upon him a slumber akin to death, a semblance of reprieve from the torment, making it appear as though his life was claimed by the blow of the executioner's axe. Yet, my efforts are thwarted as the head angel intervenes, halting the incantation's progress with a stern grasp that forces a pained groan to escape my lips.

"Complete your task with the grace befitting your first mission from Father in Paradise. Sloppiness is unacceptable," admonishes the head angel, the intensity of their grip eliciting a trace of blood from my hand. The sting of pain acts as a jarring reminder of my reality, grounding me in the present moment and the gravity of my duty.

"I understand, please release your hold. The pain is unbearable," I beseech, my voice quivering as the head angel begrudgingly relinquishes his grasp. The external bleeding may have ceased, but within, my heart bleeds with conflicted emotions. The precipice of my actions looms before me, the weight of what I am about to enact upon my first, and perhaps only, friend becomes agonizingly palpable.

"I am deeply sorry, Mr. Demon," I murmur, ensuring that only his ears catch the soft utterance. In response, his eyelids flutter closed, the anticipation of the death he had yearned for, a sanctuary from the barrage of curses. Perhaps this time, in the embrace of my halberd's blade, his soul will finally find the redemption and peace it seeks.

One swing... a second follows... and then the third, the decisive strikes cleaving through flesh and bone. The head, once defiant, is now detached, and azure spills to stain the purity of my once-pristine attire. The agonized cries that had filled the chamber are replaced by a somber silence, yet my own tears flow unabated. Muted lamentation, words unspoken, apologies left hanging in the air.

"The ceremony is concluded. Escort Lord Third to the chamber," the head angel commands, their voice a harbinger of finality. The strong arms of my angels envelop me, cradling my fragile form like a fragile treasure. Dizziness envelops me, consciousness slipping through my grasp, and through the haze, I perceive Father's gaze, an expression of disappointment etched upon his countenance.

This day, I have not merely let down one soul, but I've shattered the trust of many who held hope in me. It's a painful reckoning, a lesson learned in the most sorrowful of ways.

**The end**

The sun's embrace devoid of grace,

Mourning lingers, death's atrocious face.

Through tears unclaimed, sorrow's tide,

When did these breaths turn heavy, bide?