Her ripped clothing was dingy with damp soil and warm blood as she rushed in the pouring rain, out of breath, towards the door.

She lingered her fingers through the incision of the metal, feeling the cold sense of the metal. The engraving figured the moon, entwined together with the sun in a matt pattern that looked grim and spooky under the dim light of the night.

She forcibly pushed on the door, but the stringent machinery remained immovable, insensitive to the hopeless touch of the sandy-haired girl.

From afar, she felt a howl, an appalling yell of slaughter and wreck that shook her up to the core, ripping off flowing tears from her moist eyes.

Sam woke up.

When she rubbed her eyes, she saw the morning rain clouding up the windows of the dorm and the dim sunshine filtering through the tinted glass.

The atmosphere was quite calm.

No hysterical tears filled the air and except for the dim whispers of the *guardians*, the room was silent, pervaded by a sense of peace that rarely lulled within the walls of the prison.

The polished walls stood in the gloom of her cell, motionless and unsettling as always and the sickly scent of bleach and medicines tingled her senses, pervading her whole body with a hint of queasiness.

Sam lay sweaty in the middle of her bed.

She’d had a touch of fever the previous night, and her head still hurt a bit, despite the dosing of sedative drugs that circulated in her blood and .

Slowly patting her skin, she could feel the frosty thin polymers of the cables that linked her forehead to the monitoring system and puffed away.

She hated that harness.

She *hated* being trapped during her sleep by those subtle wires, but every night she forced herself to bear in mind that they worked for her own good, to keep her stable, to hail her, to lead her to the right path.

Every single night she fought the dream of being free, distant from the walls of the prison, distant from those hellish mechanisms that kept every single thought under a meticulous control, distant from every guardian and every prison.

*Desmoterion is a safe place* - they say each time - why should one persist on opposing on the very one thing that keeps us alive?

*Law* - they say - is order. Law is freedom. Law is control.

She hated that parching feeling of impotency before their power, the shame she tasted when they controlled her synapses and read through her mind, between the slightest thoughts that brushed her brain and the most intimate desires that she experienced.

It’s not a bunch of walls that keeps a prisoner inside, in Desmoterion.

It’s guilt. It’s the horrifying prospect that your mistakes hinder your own survival, the disturbing and yet so appeasing, even pleasing, idea that you can heal yourself.

You can get cured.

“How are you, Sam?” - A delicate voice whispered with gentleness.

The girl winced and slightly raised her head, facing the person who’d talked.

A woman in her late twenties drew a dim smile, eyeing her with a mixture of heartfelt concern and mild scolding.

The guardian wore a milky white metallic uniform, edged with the fine threads of chromed gold and adorned with her military ranks.

Her name, as the sleek tag on her chest recited, was *Selene*.

Sam smiled at the sight of the woman. Selene was always kind with her, she took care of her needs and guarded her when the fever would come.

Unlike the other guardians, she almost never beat her. She protected her.

“I feel better” - She proudly stated in a weak voice.

“Reports say you repeatedly refused to take your medicines” - The guardian reproached - “I can’t force you to heal if you offer resistance”.

Selene’s gaze was icy but settled, bound to obtain what she aimed to.

Sam avoided that gaze, staring at her crossed legs, instead, with an inward feeling of faint quandary and awkwardness.

“I feel better” - She repeated, this time with a hint of vexation - “The medicines they give don’t take effect and make me throw up. I don’t need them”.

“If you really feel better, I suppose you really don’t need them” - The guardian soughed - “Do you really feel better, Sam?”

“I do” - She confirmed - “Can I go, *now*?”

Selene pondered over her request, and shook her head with a sigh - “Have patience” - She calmly murmured - “I just need to ask a few more questions”.

The guardian hinted with her thumb to the tiny cables that stretched out from her forehead and bracketed her down to the machinery.

“What did you dream, tonight?” - She inquired in a neutral tone.

Sam didn’t like revealing details about her dreams.

It made her feel unsecure, deprived of her own private sphere, but each time she was asked she couldn’t dare lying to the guardians.

Bad things happened when someone did.

“I heard someone who gets killed” - She spilled out with a trembling voice, trying to recall the smallest detail, the slightest sound of her memory - “I felt bad for them”.

“Good” - The guardian expounded - “…and could you see the person? Was there a fence or any kind of hitch between you and the person?”

“There was a door” - She clearly spoke out - “The door was locked up, and I couldn’t see the person”.

“Very well” - Selene smiled, revealing a streak of satisfaction - “Can you remember any detail of the door?”

The image of the door lingered across her mind, bright and clear.

Sam could perfectly recall the whiteness of the glossy metal and the accurate carving of the sun and the moon that was engraved on the pliable material.

She visualized that mysterious symbol.

It looked so prohibited, so intimate and secluded that she felt the irrational urge of keeping it hidden, as if it was jealously guarded treasure.

“No…” - She lied, her voice even more uncertain and quavering - “I can’t remember”.

A rough slap reached her face, unexpected.

Raising her gaze to the guardian, Sam could see that the between the placidity of the woman lurked only eagerness and the cruelty.

Selene was losing her temper.

“Speak the truth, Sam” - The guardian grumbled in a puff.

“There was a symbol” - She murmured, as a warm tear of weep trundled across her cheeks and fell on the ground.

“What was the symbol like?”

“The moon… and the sun…” - She bleated - “Entwined together, like a sort of logo but, I swear, I don’t know what it meant”.

Selene tenderly dried out her tears with newfound gentleness, as if nothing had happened, and loosened her cabled, freeing her from the hardness.

“You can go, *now*” - She announced - “But don’t you try to lie again”.

Sam faltered near the way out, a little bit troubled for the would-up conversation she’d had.

Sure, guardians could be scary.

They could be frightening to death if ever they thought you’d done something you shouldn’t have done, but to unfurl such a sudden change in method by Selene, something had happened.