

Powerless

Adonis' POV

The Present

Balls of white powder rained down, hitting me and Roger as we ran down the street. The white powder stuck to our clothes, a characteristic I was quite worried about. Roger looked back, his black eyes bloodshot and a deep gash under his right eye oozing crimson blood onto his cheek and beard. The white powder stuck to our clothes started to glow red, heating up simultaneously.

“Oh shit.” The only words either one of us was able to get out before all the bits of white powder blew up across our bodies. *Boom!* The upper side of my back burns, and my raw skin is now exposed to the air. *Boom!* As I step forward, my left leg falters. The impact of the explosion on my left hamstring and calf forced my leg to fold and sent me tumbling onto the asphalt. *Thump!* The side of my right shoulder hits the street. *Skrrrrrr!* I slide, scraping my recently exposed back. *Thud!* A bump in the road causes my body to jump, turning me in the air. *Skrrrr!* I once again go sliding into the street, this time on my left shoulder. I come to a stop when I hit a curb at an intersection, landing on my back and looking up at the red stop sign above my head. Nerves all across my body yell the same thing at me- *help*.

Dazed but no longer doing my best tumbleweed impression, I look around for Roger, having lost track of him when we both were blown up. The rain of white powder balls had stopped. As I was scanning the street from left to right, my eyes stopped at a red fire hydrant on the opposite side of the street. A familiar man was propped up against it, his bald head and back leaning against the hydrant. Blood was still gushing from his right cheek, but now it was

accompanied by a burnmark running from the left of his neck down his collarbone all the way to his left shoulder.

“Roger.” His body was motionless.

“Roger,” I repeated, “we need to move.” His lips quivered, attempting to mouth words they couldn’t muster up the energy to say.

Everything hurts, but we can’t stay here. Especially not with that thing still around, I thought to myself. The circumstances piled on top of my consciousness, pushing adrenaline into my veins. I managed to get to my feet, but my left leg and back were still pulsating in pain. I hobbled over to Roger, looking at all three sides of the street before I crossed in case any more powder balls were coming from the left, right, or above. The coast was clear. Roger looked exhausted, barely able to open his eyelids to look up at me.

“Give me a second kid,” he coughed while trying to muster up his strength. “I got some powder stuck up my nose like I was on a Bruno Mars tour.”

“Hahaha.” We chuckled dryly, cracking our smiles that shone brightly on our dirt-covered faces.

A deep, booming voice joined in on our chuckling from our left, raising the hairs on my arms. Our smiles disappeared, our eyes widening while our jaws tightened. I craned my head to the left to, unfortunately, see a familiar figure. White dress shoes, white slacks, a white long-sleeve button-down shirt, and a white hockey mask rest on the figure, their silver gray curls sticking out from all sides of its head. They turned their left palm forward, revealing another one of their infamous white powder balls.

“My precious,” the figure said, their body facing me, “why do you run?” They pointed their right index finger at Roger. “He can’t even help himself, yet you continue to follow him in

hopes that he will save you from what is already destined to happen.” He extends his left palm, as if he were to be giving me a peace offering. “Don’t struggle any longer; come to your *true* home.” I consider his offer a bit jokingly, wondering if the life of a lab rat would be simpler than the one I was recently shoved into.

“Don’t do it, Adonis,” Roger said, his chest heaving, struggling to take in air, “Dr. Genesis will only use you to further his research.”

I responded, “Well, isn’t that the same thing you will do?”

A heavy silence consumed Roger, who I couldn’t read. Maybe he was verbally unable to reassure me because of his injuries. Maybe he wasn’t able to reassure me that such things wouldn’t happen because they would be faulty reassurances. Maybe he had no clue what would happen to me once we got to our destination- maybe he was simply doing as he was told.

“Roger,” I said, “promise me you’ll buy me food for the rest of my life if I go with you. Pinky promise.”

“What?”

“You heard me, pinky promise.”

“You’re really going to ask for that when we could be killed where we stand?”

“Do you pinky promise or not, Roger?”

“We have free healthcare and dental care.” Dr. Genesis interrupted.

“I’ll give you both of those and food for as long as you live, assuming we make do. I pinky promise.” Roger finally folded.

“Well,” I said, shuffling my body face towards Dr. Genesis, sticking out both middle fingers at Dr. Genesis, “you have my response here.” Dr. Genesis stared at me, his shoulders and chest started rising and falling more rapidly, his breathing becoming more audible. Then he

froze- his chest and shoulders resting. He fixed his mask. He stayed silent, leaving the air so quiet that you could hear people's thoughts. Then he threw the powder ball he had at me blindingly fast. I couldn't react in time. The last thing I remembered was seeing a blur in front of me. *BOOM!* My vision went black.

Flashback: 2 hours prior

SMACK! A blunt object hit the top of my head, waking me up from my precious mid-lecture nap. I picked my head up, wrinkling my right cheek in annoyance. I looked to my left and right at my classmates, their faces red with their hands covering their mouths in an attempt to hide their obvious laughter. I wasn't going to let it slide.

"Yo, who the fu-" I was interrupted.

"Watch your language, Mr. King." I looked over at Roger, who was staring at me from his wooden desk to my left. His lips, which I could barely see under that long black mustache and beard of his, had a friendly but threatening smile. He stood up from his desk, his bald head reflecting some of the light from the projector into my eyes.

"Christ, Mr. Rodriguez," I said while covering my eyes, "watch where you point that thing." My classmates erupted in laughter, hands smacking on desks, people rocking in their chairs, shaking from the giggles they were trying to hold in.

"Firstly, it's Roger, not Mr. Rodriguez," Roger said while pointing at the projected slide on the wall, "and since you have time to make jokes, Mr. King, I'm sure you have had time to find the answers to the questions on this slide."

Shit. I thought to myself. *I wasn't paying attention to sh*t.* I looked up at the projected slide and was prepared to bring out one of my favorite skills: bullshitting. The first question read: *What is a genton?*

"Ohhh, I remember hearing about this!" I lied. "This is one of those uhhh," I said, looking down at my notebook page with only one word written on it, "subatomic particles, right? The fourth one?"

Roger squinted his eyes at me. "Well said, Mr. King, now how about the second question?" *What is its functionality within the atom?* I read.

"Uhhhh," I said, "I think genton's send energy to our electrons and protons to help increase the effectiveness of their-"

"WRONG!" Roger said, smacking the wall the slide was projected on. "What's the right answer, class?"

My classmates droned, "The genton releases a type of energy that allows humans to use magic."

"Thank you to my students who pay attention!" Roger said, switching his gaze to me with his eyebrows furrowed and his jaw tightened, "To my students who couldn't get that, please pay attention, as this information is very important."

After a long and embarrassing lecture, Roger dismissed the class, well, "except for you Mr. King."

He beckoned me over with the wooden ruler in his left hand to the plastic navy blue chair in front of his desk. He sat up in his black leather chair, leaning towards me, his elbows on the desk and cupped his hands together.

“Excuse me embarrassing you in the middle of class, Adonis,” Roger said, “but I keep trying to get you to take this class seriously. The study of magic now has intertwined itself with human society, making it all the more important for you to understand-”

“Why would I want to understand something I don’t have or that pertains to me?” I interrupted, the restlessness that I tried to hide with my tapping feet now exuding through the words I spouted at Roger. A silence fell over the classroom, the hum of the projector filling in the lack of conversation.

SMACK! Suddenly, Roger slammed his ruler against the desk with enough force for it to break in half, the broken half of the ruler flying right past my right ear. He stood up quickly, pointing the jagged edge of the once-ruler at my face.

“If there is one thing I won’t tolerate, Mr. King,” Roger said while trying to hide his anger with a solemn tone, “it is ignorance to not care about the world around you. For a student with as much potential as yourself to say something so mindless- it’s disappointing.” My face burned as I turned it away from Roger, scratching the back of my head from the embarrassment of being called out in a valid manner and being left speechless.

Roger sat back down, placing his half of the ruler on his desk gently.

“Look,” Roger started, “I know you are under the impression that because you haven’t been able to use magic up until this point you are probably a non-user, but-” *Rrring! Rrring!* Roger’s deskphone rang, and he stared at it, raising his eyebrow. He picked up the phone.

“Roger speaking! How may I help you?” A deep male voice was on the other end, speaking rapidly. Roger’s eyebrows furrowed again while staring at the screen on the deskphone, his left hand brushing the back of his bald head. I tried to read the name on the deskphone

screen, *Secreta*-. Roger moved his hand blazingly fast, covering the screen and staring at me, his eyes wide and full of worry.

“No problem, sir. We’ll be there soon.” He put the phone back in its docking position and looked at me while scratching and brushing his beard erratically.

“We gotta go.” He said it plainly, jumping up and grabbing my right arm with his right hand, almost pulling my arm out of my socket. I grabbed his wrist, his iron grip almost restricting any blood flow to my right arm.

“Where are we going? Who was that? I didn’t do anything!” I protested, sweat starting to run down my lower back.

“I’m sorry, but we have to go. Now.” Roger looked at me coldly, his eyes now full of determination. “One way,” Roger’s left hand flying towards me, “or another.” *Thud!* The side of Roger’s left hand hit the back of my head, causing the entire world to go dark.

Flashback: 1 hour prior

Vshhh. The sound of wind brushing against what seemed to be a car woke me up. I opened my eyelids to an interesting sight: I was cuffed to a silver hook on the back of the car set in front of me, the iron cuffs digging into my wrists. Two seat belts ran across my torso, one across my lap keeping me secured tightly to the black leather seat I was on. Seated in front of me from left to right were a man with slicked back black hair, a pair of black shades, and an all-black three-piece suit on. The man to his right was styled the exact same way, except his hair was blonde.

Finally, the man to the utmost right was- “Roger what the hell is going on?” I said, alerting everyone that I was awake.

Roger turned around, also in a three-piece suit and shades, his lips curled in a slight smile.

“Glad to see you’re up!” Roger said, the cheeriness of his voice not matching the force of the hand chop he knocked me out with. “How’d you enjoy your nap?”

“It would have been cool,” I said, rubbing the spot on my head where Roger hit me, “if you hadn’t hit me and kidnapped me, you know. Where the hell are we anyway? Why did you kidnap me? Is this because I stole your iPad last week? I swear, I’ll bring it back to class tomorrow I pro-”

”Shut up, baby.” A deep, booming voice directed at me from the passenger seat of the car. I hadn’t even bothered to look up at the front, but I finally did, my eyes focusing on the man with short gray streaked curly hair and black shades looking at me. He also had a three-piece suit on, only his was white.

I thought to myself, *he’s the guy who-* “called Roger. Yes, that’s right, baby.” The man responded, completing my thought. “We had to move you to a safer location as soon as possible, baby, *they* were getting too close to you.” The *they* in that sentence draped a cold blanket over the mood of everybody in the car, everybody sitting up, shoulders tensing up. Sweat trickled down my back again, for the entire situation was becoming extensively more overwhelming.

Who are they? What does it have to do with me? Does this still have to do with the iPad? I thought to myself.

“Baby, why are you still worried about the iPad? We have a gang of armed bikers chasing you yet you are worried about-”

The man in the passenger seat was interrupted by Roger. “Secretary Owoyemi, you weren’t supposed to tell him!”

It all began to click. The secretary of the United States, Owoyemi, would not have gone out of his way to deal with some kid all the way in Houston if it weren't a matter of- "national security, baby, your intuition is correct." Owoyemi said, continuing to finish my sentences through his telepathy.

"Adonis, baby, the power you hold is greater than you could possibly imagine. Roger's observations of you were correct, the magic you possess-"

The driver muttered, looking at the rear view mirror "What is that flying towards-" *Thud, thud, thud, thud! BOOM!* Our conversation was interrupted by four simultaneous explosions, sending the car flipping forward and ragdolling our bodies in the directions of the sides of the car that were scraping the street. *Skrrrrr! Blonk.* The car came to a stop, landing upside down, leaving me with my arms and hair dangling. My head pounded, feeling like I had a few horses trample on it. Fortunately, the crash had freed me from my cuffs. I looked around the car, everybody else had been knocked out by the impact except for Roger, who was also looking around to see who else was awake and locking eyes with me. A piece of glass from the broken windows had shot past his face, cutting his right cheek right under his eye.

"We gotta get out and get you to our rendezvous spot." Roger told me, cutting his seat belt with a shard of glass and crawling out of the broken window to his right. Surprisingly, the spread of shards of glass went everywhere but around my seat. I followed suit, trying not to cut myself on any of the shards of glass. We stood up next to the car, finally seeing how bad the damage to the car was. The black Cadillac SUV had all 4 tires blown to smithereens; every single window, including the windshield, was broken, leaving just the car body laying on its roof with black smoke billowing from where the tires once were. I noticed a white sort of substance around the car and the black asphalt of the highway that our car had been flipped on. For some

reason, the highway was also not busy at all, since I didn't have any cars zooming by, impairing my view of the white cement barriers on both sides of the highway. Roger started walking down the highway, around the barrier, and along the side of the highway exit with a stop sign at its intersection. Roger was getting farther and farther away from the SUV.

"Why are we leaving them behind?" I said, not having moved from the side of the car. Roger looked at me, shaking his head in disapproval, "They can take care of themselves; we need to-"

Vroom! Vroom! Motorcycle engines roared as four motorcycles were speeding towards us. The motorcycles, both all-baby blue sportbikes, carried seven people in total and were in a triangle formation. In the back, each bike carried two people dressed in all-silver baggy tracksuits, batons with blue tips, the electricity buzzing in the air around the tips. At the very front of the line was a figure in white dress shoes, white slacks, a white long-sleeve button-down shirt, and a white hockey mask on his face, their silver gray curls sticking out from all sides of its head. All he had on his body was a small white sling bag hanging across his torso.

"*Adonis,*" the white figure hissed, "*why do you continue to surround yourself with bad company?*" I started to run, catching up to Roger, who was waiting for me.

Who ARE YOU PEOPLE?! I thought to myself, looking at Roger and our incoming not-so-friendly bikers. Suddenly, one white blur and four black blurs shot out of the destroyed SUV and stood in front of us- Secretary Owoyemi and his guards. Secretary Owoyemi held his hand on his side, starting to pull out what looked to be a long silverblade.

"We will answer all your questions soon, baby. For now just-" *Run.* This word echoed in my head as I sprinted down streets in the concrete jungle of skyscrapers, following Roger's lead for my life depended on it.

Present

I was on my back when I woke up, staring at the Sun that hovered over me as if reminding me I needed to be up. The memories of the last scuffle: Dr. Genesis throwing his bomb, Roger flying to intercept it; reappeared in my mind and I looked around quickly, scanning my sides for Roger's familiar bald head. The familiar stop sign was to my right this time, my body somehow having ended up on the sidewalk. To my left, a red brick wall with a poster advertising a new superhero series called "What If"- a superhero fan's fantasies of hypotheticals pitting the strongest characters of their universes against each other. Taking my attention off the poster and craning my neck to the front, I found a sight I was afraid to see. Dr. Genesis had his right foot on top of Roger's chest, Roger's chest still smoldering from the bomb he took for me earlier.

"Scum like you," Dr. Genesis muttered, producing a knife from his right sleeve, "deserves to be scraped off my shoe."

The next sequence of events I can barely recall and was only able to describe accurately with the aid of Roger, who was conscious enough to hear and feel everything that unfolded. My fists clenched. My ears and face burned, and my blood boiled. My jaw tightened. The peripherals of my vision turned red, putting a red tinge on my main focus: Dr. Genesis. The memories of all the times Roger looked out for me or showed me the tough love I needed to realize my shortcomings flooded into my head, traveled down my spine, and covered my fists- creating purple, translucent spheres of aura around them. I lunged at Dr. Genesis, to Dr. Genesis' and my own surprise; swinging my right fist at his right cheek.

Bang! The purple aura spheres made contact with his cheek, forcing his entire head to jerk to the left.

BANG! My right fist made contact with his right cheek immediately after, forcing his torso to jerk left as well. Dr. Genesis' eyes were wide in shock, unable to process what was happening to him. I threw a straight with my left fist at the middle of his torso- aiming for right under his stomach, where his pancreas should be.

Bang! The aura sphere on my left fist hit his torso, causing his body to jerk slightly downward.

BANG! The contact of my left fist on his torso, forced his body to hunch downward violently. I pulled my right fist back, aiming for his chin.

Bang! Aura to the chin.

BANG!

CRACK! Bare knuckles pushing his chin and head even further back- my right hand breaking in the process.

DOOM! DUN! Dr. Genesis went flying into the wall of a skyscraper that stood behind him, waiting to embrace him with its tough steel beams.

I was tired of being Powerless.

You see what I did there? I think to myself, transmitting my thoughts to the reader.

I sprinted down the white asphalt of the highway exit after Dr. Genesis; the only thought on my mind was putting him down. I lept through the Dr. Genesis shaped-hole in the skyscraper, landing on a sleek cream marble lobby. I looked around and saw Dr. Genesis standing right in front of me. The bankteller stood behind them, having been destroyed by their momentum.

Dr. Genesis began to chuckle, the top right part of their white mask beginning to crumble and reveal the eerily ice blue iris of their right eye.

“And here I was worried that I had broken my future lab rat.” They said, gathering their breath between syllables.

Why did I ever consider joining this guy aside from the free health insurance? I thought to myself as the adrenaline was still circulating in my veins.

I lunged out at Dr. Genesis, my palm extended, and summoned another purple shockwave to send this bastard flying through more buildings.