

THE SONS OF FATE



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Prologue: The Architects

“Long ago, in a time since lost to the ages, there exist an all-powerful, yet lonely old man. He lived in a house that consisted of a single room, and his days were filled with nothing but fashioning scissors to cut a single thread that remained on a loom before him. Time meant nothing to the man, as the only thing that mattered was cutting this thread that refused to break, no matter how many scissors he used. One would break, and he would create another in its place, and continued cutting, but the thread endured. He battled against the futility of this task. As he grew frail and weak from age, he longed for death to claim him, yet death never came.

“One day, in his loneliness, he held his scissors to the thread, but instead of cutting the thread, he placed them aside, and questioned his actions. ‘Why do I subject myself to this?’ The man asked. ‘I will do this no longer.’ So, the man ignored the thread on the loom, accepting it’s existence, and sought to relieve himself of his loneliness. Using his powers, the man expanded the room into that of a sizable house. ‘Now,’ He thought to himself. ‘I can finally be at ease from my loneliness!’ He was satisfied for some time, spending what felt like days, weeks, and even months in one room before moving onto the next, but something wasn’t right. He knew within his heart he had made an error somewhere, but couldn’t immediately point it out.

“He realized that he had spent so long in that empty room, that he had grown acquainted with emptiness, and had made his house empty! He laughed at his foolishness, and knew it was now the time to fill his house! Now, he used his powers to decorate his house with all manner of furnishings, making each room distinct. There were paintings, sculptures, and much more to fill the eye. ‘Now,’ He said. ‘I can take my mind off of everything else other than my beautiful house forever!’ For a length of time much longer than those before, he spent his days exploring his house in all of its majesty, examining every crevice, every detail, every speck of dust, yet he still felt troubled. ‘Why does this emptiness linger in me?’ He asked. ‘My house is as beautiful as can be!’

“He returned to his original room that held only the loom with the single thread, and he reflected, deep in thought about what he had done before, and what he was to do. The only thing he ever knew was the thread; an object. As he realized this, a thought struck him! ‘Aha!’ He said aloud! ‘I see! What I lack is people! I will create a family that will enjoy my house with me forever!’ Yet, as he said it, he had doubt about doing this. For what felt like eternity he had been alone. Was that the way it was meant to be? The decision was in his hands, and he made his choice: ‘No matter what happens, I do not want to be lonely ever again!’

“Submitting to his desire, he used his abilities to create two lives, a set of twin brothers. He looked upon the newborns and smiled; filled to the brim with happiness as he knew he would never be alone again. He stared into his son’s faces, and as he did, he grew curious. These babies were young and full of life, just as he once was at one point. What were things like back then, and why were things the way they were for so long? Dread seeped in, and as he panicked, he ran back to the center of the house, and he cried out when he saw the loom. The loom, instead of bearing a single thread, now bore several threads of various thicknesses. He remembered his duties, and he had failed them. He had failed everyone.

“Once he had finished crying, he looked upon the first thread that had bested him, and nodded solemnly. ‘It had been a while, hadn’t it?’ He said in acknowledgement. His task had always, and would forever be futile. Knowing what he had set in motion, he knew what remained to be done. He shifted a tile in the center of the floor, and there he laid eyes on two beautiful orbs; one that held darkness, and one that held light. He placed the orbs on the ground, and prayed, for his children would inherit his house, these orbs, and the thread, and he could only hope that one day a child of his could cut the thread. Knowing his time had come, he fashioned a door, and exited the house and hid the door so that none may find it.

“The brothers grew over time, playing, fighting, laughing, and learning of the house as they explored it’s vastness. One day, they came across the room that laid at the center of the house, and saw the two brilliant orbs lying before them. ‘Look!’ A brother said. ‘Our father has left us an inheritance. Let us take one each.’ One brother took the orb on the left, that was filled with darkness, and the other boy took the orb on the right, that was filled with light, and continued on with their days. Eventually as the boys grew into men, they grew powers that were that of their father. They made, they destroyed, they changed, and they invented. They grew wiser in the way of their powers, but their wisdom led them down different paths.

“On one hand, the brother of light believed that they should follow in the footsteps of their father, and create and expand the house and their family so that many more could enjoy the pleasures of the house. On the other hand, the brother of darkness rejected his brother’s view, believing that the house was perfected by their father, and any further interference would be antithetical to their father’s will. The brother of light rejected his brother’s theory, and began forming more rooms and furniture for the house, while the brother of darkness, determined to protect his father’s masterpiece, torn down and destroyed the creations his brother fastened. The brothers became indignant, and resentful toward one another, which culminated in the two clashing against one another. In their fight, they felt their very beings leave the house to a place foreign to them, where they felt a presence watching over them.

“At the end of their battle, the brother of light stood victorious over his defeated brother, who faded from him. The brother of light panicked, and searched and cried for his brother, regretful over what he had done. To his surprise, he found him in the room with the loom, incapable of exiting the room, or interfering with his will. The brother of darkness accepted his situation, and acknowledged his brother’s victory, holding no further resentment towards him. The brother of light, no longer impeded, expanded the house vastly, now becoming a father to many more children that could enjoy the house in it’s glory. As he did so, he heard his brother call to him: ‘Brother, brother! Come quickly! You must see this!’

“He returned to his brother, who pointed to the loom, which now bore more threads than before. ‘Brother, look! The threads of this loom have since grew!’ Curious, he touched a thread, and their eyes were filled with a vision from a life that was not theirs, and of events that had not occurred. They felt as if they were falling from a great height before they had plummeted and died. They were bewildered, and afraid of what had happened, they left the loom alone. One day, as the father of light was tending to his children and the vast rooms of the house, he heard his children playing upstairs in a rowdy manner, and he scolded them. Ignoring their father, they continued their roughhousing until one child pushed the other over the banister, and the child plummeted to their death. The children of the house were horrified, and as the father lamented the death of his child, he remembered the loom.

“Immediately he returned to the loom, and touched each thread, filling their eyes with several visions of what was to come from each child present, realizing that there were several looms for each child, and not all of them detailed death. The father of darkness proposed that perhaps these things were meant to be, but the father of light would not hear his brother’s proposal. Seeing another of his children’s demises detailed by being crushed, he sought to protect them, and when the circumstances aligned, a dresser was soon to fall upon them, but he had intervened and saved his child. When he returned to the room, his brother exclaimed ‘Brother! A thread has snapped!’

“From then on, he took it upon himself to protect his children at any cost, preventing any misfortune upon them. One day, he saved another child of his from cutting their hand on a thorny brush in one of his gardens, and relieved, he returned to the loom only to find the thread still there. He returned to the child and looked on in shock when he saw their hand cut with a broken vase on the floor. ‘Father,’ The child cried. ‘I have cut my hand cleaning this mess my sister has made!’ Astonished, he mended their hand and returned to the loom to find the thread

fulfilled. Over the years, he experienced these threads that seemed to persist and occur no matter how hard he tried to work against them.

“One day, as he continued to look after his many children, he saw a crowd gathered around one child, who did many things that were unique and unlike any child had done before, or that even he had done. ‘By what manner do you do these things?’ The father of light asked. ‘Father,’ The child responded. ‘I have found a jagged jewel, and it has allowed me to do these great things!’ They displayed the stone, and it was in likeness to the orb he had received many years ago, but fragmented. He ran through his pockets, and realizing they were empty, he grew furious. ‘Thief!’ He cried out. ‘How dare you steal and destroy what is your father’s!’ Despite the child claiming they had only found it, he continued to admonish them for their deeds. It was only after one day when he saw another child of his performing different feats that were unlike his or their sibling had done did he begin to believe his other child. When he confronted this child, they revealed to him a fragment that was cold and black, similar to the one his brother owned.

“He retreated to the center room, a room that no child had ever reached to his knowledge, and saw his brother in panic. ‘Brother! My orb entrusted by our father has been taken from me!’ Within mere hours he felt something was wrong. He could feel his abilities waning as the two children discovered more fragments around the house, and they grew in hostility over one another as they feared each other’s powers. So that he might quell whatever would happen, he retreated to the loom, and searched through the threads, until he pressed upon a thread that showed him no vision. He tried several closer by, but they revealed nothing to him. ‘Father?’ He heard behind him. ‘Why are you hunched over that loom?’ To his bewilderment, he saw the child that bore the orb of light in the room with them.

“‘My child,’ The father of light spoke. ‘Touch this thread for me, and tell us what you see.’ The child did as commanded, and touched the thread, finally revealing the vision that involved them. The three of them saw a great fight occurring between the two siblings that now bore portions of the orbs, fighting with their orbs completed in the future, causing great devastation. When the vision faded, the father of light pleaded his child to seek between their sibling so that they might avoid destruction. When the time came, and the two had completed their orbs, the fathers felt their power leave them, and the households were split into two factions, each behind their own orb-bearer. In an instant, the two vanished, and they could not be found anywhere within the house. After a few minutes had passed, the child who bore the orb of darkness returned, and claimed: ‘I returned, having seized victory from my sibling.’

“In an instant, the father of light was transported to the loom with his brother, and now his child who had sought to honor the peace, but was struck down without mercy. Though they attempted to leave, they were incapable, just as father darkness was unable to leave the room. There they saw and observed the actions of the child who now led the household, and who brought drastic changes that many were for, but many were against. This leader eventually found their room during their reign, and in time began to consult them for advice, but when the three reprimanded them, they hardened their heart, and continued their own path. In time, they discovered the potential of the loom, and touched their threads to uncover visions that the rest could not see before. The bearer of darkness used this knowledge to circumvent any misfortune that would come upon them or their reign. After a long rule of division and discord, two new candidates rose up, and the power of the current ruler waned. Seeking to extend their rule, they attacked the new bearer of the orb of light, but were struck down with the new found power of the prodigy of light, who grew strong from their struggle. With equal effort, the two bearers vanished from the eyes of the household, and the bearer of light emerged victorious.

“With their new powers established the leader of this era grew worrisome, uncertain if their decisions were wise or not. In time, they discovered the room with the loom, and bowed before the others. ‘Rulers of old, guide

me!’ They pleaded. The father of light stepped forth, and bowed. ‘We welcome you to our chosen fold, and acknowledge you as victor, and the architect of this household. We are here at your disposal should you need council.’ The father of darkness nodded. ‘Indeed. Here lies with us a loom for you to see what is to come, and what you may change if it is your desire. Though you may try, some threads are not possible for even us to intervene in. Should you permit, find and touch your threads, that we may prophesy them together.’ With this, the new architect set out to rule in a way that would please all of the household, often consulting each of the room to advise him. Despite their combined efforts, there were still many that had their disagreements and frustrations with how life was in the house.

“What felt like centuries passed, ages of rulers came and went, and many things were learnt as discoveries were unraveled. The order chosen by the orbs grew wise in their leadership, and each new architect of the house consulted all those that would aid them in their rule. It seemed to be an equilibrium for some time as the flow went back and forth for extended periods. Eventually, an age came where a bearer of darkness performed the most radical and detrimental changes seen yet to the house, and to everyone’s surprise, the orb of darkness had been expended. It would not be until much later that the orb would slowly regain some of its lost power, but in the meantime those chosen of light reigned without contest. The usage of the orbs became like war between the sides of light and darkness as they determined whether it would be better to reserve power to beat their adversary, or whether implementing their rule by using their power was what should be done.

“The strategies employed blindsided all who were before, and the fear of the opponents were instilled in the contestants. Violence was the only thing the children of this household knew to achieve success. It was only when one who came from the darkness humbled himself before his sibling in the light did things begin to change. When they shared words with one another, they found commonality, and discussed policy and reasoning. They both didn’t want anyone to suffer, and in the end, they agreed the bearer of darkness would have a better chance of bringing the change all wanted to see. This revelation led to a renaissance of dialogue, where peace was had and ideas were tested for the good of the household. Of course, expectations grew with each age, and when those expectations weren’t met, frustrations grew and violence would renew itself.

“Time only expedited chaos. Tyrants and peacemakers emerged on both ends. Legends were born, and new discoveries were always made. As their council grew, so too did the differing voices, and yet this council of theirs always found a way to guide the architect in the way they best saw fit. Yet, there were a slim few that existed in their fold, who eternally existed with malice in their hearts, and sought the destruction of the house for the events they endured in the age they lived in. Times of great destruction had been established from these tyrants and workers of evil that came from both orbs, enacting their heinous will in a manner that unified the rest of the council. With these eras of horror and trial came the understanding that their council should be one that strives for the continued improvement of the household from both sides. As to what improvement meant to each of them was up for discussion, and would be determined by the architect of the age.

“In an era closer than many believe, a new ruler has emerged that has caused great distress. The bearer of the orb of darkness promised to usurp the will of the council and their father; the first of them. Their power was great, much more than the one that bore the light. When the time came, instead of fighting, the bearer of the light attempted to dismantle his opponent’s beliefs, but they had a stubborn heart, and struck down the bearer of light. In their moment of triumph, instead of finishing off their opponent, the bearer of darkness let them live; prideful and eager to prove their dissenter wrong. With that, the architect of darkness left the vision of the house, and the council of those before, with no one being able to tell where they are, but some still say he is around, lingering in the dark recesses of the house. Well? What do yall think?”

The crowd before him blinked. Everyone began looking at each other in silence; confused as to what to make of the tale. One person stood forward after a few seconds and said exactly what everyone else was thinking. "That's it?" The man said. "What was that ending supposed to be?"

"Yeah, what's the moral of the story?" A businesswoman asked.

"Uh ..." He paused as he felt a frog in his throat. "... look, this story isn't over. It's ongoing, and from what I understand we're always experiencing these periods."

"What about the bad guy in the dark?" A kid asked.

"Yeah, like, were you going for a horror setup there?" Someone else asked.

"No, no, no!" He sighed. "We don't know where he is yet! What I saw and what I spoke about was all I was able to interpret from what I saw! I saw no further than that so we must still be in ..."

"Wait, you trying to tell us you saw that?" The businesswoman asked. "What kind of drugs are you on to give you a vision like that?"

"For real!"

His heart sunk as the criticisms poured in. "It wasn't a vision or from drugs. It was just a dream." It didn't matter anymore at this point. The crowd began dispersing from his spot and made their way down the sidewalk to their various destinations. He held out his hat in hopes anyone would give him some money; hoping that he had entertained someone, but no one came.

One of the last few of the crowd shrugged as they walked past. "You should've made up a better ending man."

Then it was just him on the sidewalk. It was a cold day in the city, and he needed a new jacket. He looked inside his hat and only saw a few dollar bills from some of his earlier performances to build the crowd. He felt stupid for trying to branch out, but that dream really was something else, so much so he felt obligated to share it in its raw form. It seemed he wasn't cut out to be a storyteller. With his heart cracked and fragile from rejection, he was ready to take his earnings and buy a sandwich before getting back to it, but as he grabbed it, a set of feet stopped before him.

He looked up, and there was a man already bent over halfway in the middle of giving him something, and it felt weighty. When the man stood back up, he was shocked when he got a view of it. Though it was mostly covered and difficult to tell, when he looked into its eyes, he swore that what was before him was no man at all, and yet despite this, it chuckled.

"For historical accuracy." They said, before parting ways down the street.

He was completely bewildered by the event, but eager to see what he was given. He held the wrapped pouch in his hand, feeling its weight, and when he unwrapped it, his jaw dropped. Inside were numerous gold coins with indecipherable markings. In disbelief, he took one out and bit on it, and sure enough it was real. He stood on his feet and began laughing like a madman, and before he knew it, he was dancing and hollering in the public square as he yelled triumphantly.

The stranger took a glance back and smiled before continuing down the street. They already saw the friend they were meeting, and waved over to him. Their friend approached and was visibly distressed.

"I've got some news." He said. "I'm not sure if it's good or bad just yet, but it's definitely going to throw things off." Before they continued, they looked over to the storyteller jumping in the streets and then back to the stranger. "Is that something you did?"

The stranger nodded and smiled. "He was just reminding me what we were fighting for." He gestured ahead and began to walk. "Shall we?" The friend nodded, and they set out to fulfill their duties.