

Journey

By Ruroni_Otaku

Submitted: October 2, 2006
Updated: November 17, 2006

I really dunno. I just sat down one night and started writing the first things that came to mind...Maybe I'll continue it if enough people like it.

Provided by Fanart Central.

http://www.fanart-central.net/stories/user/Ruroni_Otaku/39756/Journey

Chapter 1 - The Shadow's Song	2
Chapter 2 - Gift of the Hills	3
Chapter 3 - Guilty's Name	4
Chapter 4 - Return of the Traveler	5

1 - The Shadow's Song

Journey

In the astrological sphere, Cain opened his eyes to bewilderment and wonder. How did he get here? Why was he here? As he pondered, shadows danced in shapes and forms around him. They seemed good enough to examine; he neared one and upon only breathing a simple "wow" it changed its shape to synonyms of awe. He wondered how this occurred, was it comprehending what he said; a response to a simple utterance? He viewed the surrounding shadows, which appeared vaguely against the starlit structure of sky behind them.

It was then he realized the earth beneath him was not earth, but the great expanse of sky which the shadows lurked and swayed. He was surely dreaming, a vision brought on by poor eating habits, or maybe he accidentally caught a whiff of some misplaced narcotic. As he thought on these things, the shadows merged to form a unity. One shape, the shape of him. It was his shadow. Enamored, he raised his hand. The shadow did the same. He put it down, and the image followed suite.

Again, why was this happening, and how? He opened his mouth, simply to inquire, but as the shadow imitated the lowering of his jaw, a screech echoed throughout the starry plain. It was horrific the images that flashed across his mind as he endured this sound. All he feared, all he despised raced across his mind's eye like a slide show gone awry. He clasped his hands to his face and screamed in horror, only to be deaf to his own words, for the shadow figure still stood screaming its miserable off key song of discomfort.

He fell. Cain's feet lost contact with the nonexistent ground beneath them, and he fell. He fell far, not knowing where he would land, or if he would. But as he plummeted, the scape changed subtly. The stars dimmed, and the sky grew orange. Cain realized he was falling back to earth on a roller coaster called gravity. He grimly awaited to become as Judas, but when he struck, he did not die. Only, he lay there, dizzy, and no longer in awe. He wanted out of this nightmare. Rising, he surveyed the area in quick glances. Lost he was to the endless field of grass and short, rolling hills. He moved, devoted to the purpose of finding his way to wherever he was going; not knowing, however, the most important factor: he was going Nowhere.

2 - Gift of the Hills

Gift of the Hills

Tired, exhausted, out of breath, Cain fell to the soft, sweet grassy ground beneath him. The madness took over him; compelled him to run as far and quick as humanly possible. Escape tormented his mind. This same hill, that very billowing figure hovering in the sky, he had seen it all before. In fact, he perceived that they had not changed since he began his fruitless quest for emergence from the land he now lay upon.

It was then, that the notion collided with his train of thought: he had been trying too hard. Giving up was not an option, though hopeless he was, and deserved to be at this point. However, he forced himself into a state of relaxation; flinging himself into daydreams of happiness, trying to forget this blissful Hell. Would it work was definitely the question of the moment.

Against all grains of his mental capacity, Cain found the merriment of his forced visions almost painful. It surged mercilessly through his nervous system, he felt he was being torn apart by his own imagination. On one hand, he stayed locked in the hills. On the other, he flew into reckless montages of yesterdays and times he wished would come. Which would get the better of him? Or would they tear the very fiber of his being, forever scarring his mentality? He tried to scream, but wondered if he made a sound, for there were none around to hear him.

Then, as abruptly as the changes before, the scenes changed again. The earth fell away, and the blue sky melted into hardly cohesive shades of blue streaks. Now, however, he was not falling, but merely hanging, suspended by an unknown beating force pulling at his subconsciously moving shoulder blades. Then he realized something had not only changed in the surroundings, but in his physical shape as well. He had wings, large, angelic wings that beat gracefully just so to keep him from riding gravity once more. Cain thought for a moment, but it was a moment too long. Before he could make any analysis, he merged with the melting clouds, drowning now in a sea of condensation. All about him was a fog, but the ability to breathe was soon returned to him, and he accepted it gratefully. But now, he knew not where he was yet again. He feared another loop of endless hills, yet no hill this time, just fog. Utilizing his newfound gift of flight, he cautiously pressed onward in the only direction he knew he could go: Forward.

3 - Guilty's Name

Guilty's Name

As he pressed on through the unending fog, Cain resumed the wondering of why this was happening. He dug deep into his psyche, struggling to remember what happened prior to the terror of the shadow. He couldn't pull it out of his dilapidated memories, however. They were too tangled within themselves that he couldn't even recall his own appearance. This struck him as an annoyance, for you can't recall yourself correctly if you don't know the shape of your own mass.

It was then, as if the very condensation could sense his subconscious wish, that a sheet of falling water coalesced before him. The droplets came together, molding a reflective, yet transparent surface of liquid. Cain seized the opportunity, and gazed into his own eyes. For the first time since he had awakened, he saw himself. What he saw shocked him, for even though he couldn't remember his natural build, he simply didn't strike his subjectivity with naturality.

His shoulder-length hair was messy to the point that it appeared as if each strand was attempting to strangle the other, but with all he'd been through, he labeled that as normal. What caught his attention was the fact that it was whiter than the cloud around it, and his youthful face seemed to have gained a few excruciating years to it.

A sharp pain seized his forehead with a shockwave of negative neuron energy. He stared in fear as he watched letters being etched into the skin above his oceanic blue eyes. No knife or blade was there, but his feelings would've begged to differ. When it was apparently done he read the bloody inscription, and it was but one word, a name: Elani.

4 - Return of the Traveler

Return of the Traveler

Cain searched his thoughts for any hint as to what Elani meant. He found the name familiar, but could not quite place it. Suddenly, a dark, image threw itself into his mind's eye. He saw a young blonde girl, her quivering body huddled into a corner. She was crying as if she had lost someone who had meant only the world to her. In her hand was an item that seemed out of place, however: a small gun. Cain felt an urge to sympathize for this strikingly familiar girl, but at the same time, her image brought to him a strange sense of anger. He began to proceed forward once more, thinking hard over all that'd transpired. He had a hunch he wasn't going to like the outcome of his meditating, but tried to deduce all possible alternate answers.

It was then that he noticed he was nearing a light that appeared to burn a hole through the unending cloud about him. Not seeing anywhere else he could go, he made for the piercing light. As he neared it, it grew to blinding brightness. Before he knew it, Cain was robbed of his ability to perceive things around him through his eyes. He became blinded; it seemed only temporary. He made an attempt to squint through his stubborn eyelids. What he saw was not what he had ever expected to find. A gleaming humanoid figure, almost devoid of shape, yet still retaining a general figure. What little Cain could make out about it was it had what looked like three heads, each slightly different, yet similar to its neighbor. The middle head began to speak, but he could not distinguish its words. In fact, Cain felt that his ears would implode upon themselves if he had to stand anymore of it. But the left head began to burn, and its fire reached out to him. He expected more torment, and braced himself, but what he felt was far from pain. He felt a warmth wrap around him like a hot vapor, something he had not remembered feeling for as long as he could search his memories.

As the flame consumed him, the voice became softer, and he understood the words it spoke, though it still did not speak his tongue.

"Why are you afraid?" the voice asked him. Cain didn't know how to respond. All this time, he had feared each step he took up to this point. He noticed he was trembling, but couldn't help himself. He felt as if a hole had been cut into his soul, and now he felt the consequences. "I don't know where I am," was all he could manage to say in response.

"Do you not know who I AM?" the figure asked him. At these words, Cain came to a revelation. He was standing before a judge, waiting to be sentenced to an eternal reward for better or for worse. "I am dead. . .why? How? What's been happening to me? Why has this happened?" This time, the right head spoke in voice much more soothing, yet still authoritative, "Fear not, for you are not permanently out of body. You have experienced things no man has felt."

"But why?!" Cain impatiently questioned.

"Because you took not to heart the things you heard. Therefore, while you hung on the verge of death, you were taken to taste a drop of your reward."

Cain understood now why was here. But he still knew not how. Before he could inquire anything more, however, he was told, "You need to be ready. Prepare yourself for your return, for you know it is inevitable."

Like a sick *deja vu*, he felt nothing beneath his feet, and his wings dissipated like mist. Everything around him melted away, and he began to tumble headlong into a vast starry plain. This time, however,

he kept falling, and as he fell he witnessed what looked like shooting stars crashing down into a deep chasm. Then he noticed something approaching him, or more likely he was approaching it. It was a blue sphere, dotted with green and brown shapes, and white swirls. He recognized it as the place he couldn't wait to return to.

Before he could experience a true landing, however, all faded to black, except a quite sound off in the distance. It grew louder, and he recognized it as a female crying. A retrospective vision hit him with that same image of the girl he now knew to be Elani. She held up her firearm, and slowly, almost reluctantly pulled the trigger.

With a bang to shake the world, his eyes opened, and he saw about him familiar faces. He tried to move and speak, but his damaged body would not allow it. He found himself to be in a bed; he was in a hospital.

Finally, everything made sense. For his actions, he was punished. And though he felt his punishment far from over, he was willing to make a resolution for the better. But for now, he would simply try to enjoy being home from a painful, grueling Journey.