

THE  
CROSSFADE...  
SOLO

The logo features the word 'THE' in a small, black, serif font at the top left. Below it, the word 'CROSSFADE...' is written in a large, black, serif font. The letter 'C' is significantly larger and more ornate, with a decorative flourish on its left side consisting of two small, light blue circles. A large, black, stylized musical note is positioned between 'CROSS' and 'FADE'. The word 'SOLO' is written in a smaller, black, serif font directly below 'FADE'. Three small, light blue circles are placed at the end of the 'CROSSFADE...' text.

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*With that said, Please Enjoy!*

*<http://thecrossfade.weebly.com>*

# Chapter Four

THAT RINGS A BELL

Cadmiere slept, it slept peacefully, except the dry howling winds from the east. They cried every now and then with pitiful wails, causing the peaceful suburban setting to don a tone of void. Thin humble trees swayed with a monotonous tranquility; despite the wailing sounds that dominated the atmosphere. The street lamps glowed dimly, as if they could feel the mood of Cadmiere that chilly night. Only one house in the neighborhood was lit.

This may be because the inhabitants of this house were not in the least bit asleep. As a matter of fact, they were at quite an anxious faceoff. It was; however, a silent showdown. This suspenseful scene attracted the loud noises of the weather, specifically because no one spoke a single word.

\* \* \* \* \*

*"I found myself getting angrier as the clock ticked selfishly away, having no regard for the sensitivity of my situation. Yet I knew that if I had my way, the situation would never get any better; I had no intention of cooperating. However, my offenders begged to differ."*

"Dahn..." A female's voice finally called with a soft urging. "Please, If not for anyone else, for Lemon?"

Dahn glared at the two wretched humans before him with a nasty expression of disdain. *"How dare they bring Lemon into this? As if they actually cared for her well-being?"* Dahn thought furiously. "I should tell pure lies to confound them..."

"I care about you and your friend." The female continued to coax. She leaned over Dahn's chair, and looking him in the eyes. Her soft brown hair bounced casually as it hugged her friendly face. Dahn; nonetheless, looked pass her welcoming countenance into a world of insecurity. "I will not - I can't..." he thought as his mind began succumb to the woman's demeanor.

"Haidee," a different person, the woman's companion, called flatly. "He is wasting my time, he is wasting your time, and he is wasting our resources."

"Just wait doctor." Haidee retorted. "He doesn't trust us, that's all this is."

Dahn listened the two medical officials try to determine his thought process. He found it a tad bit comical that they spoke of him as some sort of primitive alien from afar who didn't understand English. *"Why talk about me like this?"* He thought with exuberating annoyance. *"Do I look extra terrestrial?"*

"What was that?" Haidee's companion asked, his eyes flashing towards Dahn's slumped figure. Dahn lifted his slouched head slightly; barely meeting the doctor's gaze as he responded.

"I didn't say anything." Dahn growled through his teeth. His voices sounded like an attack on the surrounding air, it hissed as it squeezed through his clenched teeth.

"Yes, you did." The doctor insisted. "You must not have realized, but you did. I even think I heard the word 'terrestrial'".

Haidee resumed her original stance; raising up from her sympathetic gaze, and folding her arms across her soft indigo turtleneck. "We want to help you Dahn, and if you don't talk, how do you expect us to do that?" She complained.

*"I have no choice, at least I know where this will go in the long run..."* Dahn thought as he realized the futility of his ostentation. He raised his head higher and met the doctor's nettled eye contact with a grim smile. He knew what he was about to say would not go off well, and the anxiety of the situation rose with every passing second.

*"I need to calm down and gather myself, I'm about to do what I told myself I wouldn't do, but these people are not going to get off my case until it's done. Whether they think I'm mad...well - they'll have to deal with the consequences. I've come too far to stop at trivial hindrances such as the ones before me."* He thought confidently.

The exhausted young man tried to rid himself of the sweaty feeling in his palms as the suspense built up within his own mind on how his revelation would be received. Not only was he worried about Lemon, but the stinging in his arm from the sedation dart really rubbed him the wrong way. However, now was not the time to consider it.

"Do you all ever play a video game, where you can save your current state? When you sit in front of your computers and save your forms and documents, do you ever remember that you could be wiped out existence in the next minute? All that data then meaning nothing?" Dahn began. He gazed at the ground between his feet intently as he grimaced sinisterly. He almost enjoyed the confusion he knew he was about to create, feeling immature and spiteful due to recent events.

"Don't toy with us." the doctor snapped without even considering Dahn's question.

"I do." Haidee answered in a small voice. She then turned to her companion and mouthed furiously, "Just play along moron!!! He's opening up!!!"

"What if...you could save your own life like that?" Dahn asked.

"I think anyone would jump at a chance to preserve their life with save points." Haidee replied.

"They would be an Idiot not to." the doctor agreed.

"Just as I thought." Dahn retorted. "Here is all I am going to say tonight. After I do...You all will take me to Lemon. If you don't, you will not like it."

"Of course we will." Haidee assured him. "We aren't your enemy Dahn."

"I will be the judge of that!" Dahn responded abruptly. "*Gosh these people really take me for a fool..*"

"I -" the doctor opened his mouth to speak, but Haidee withheld him with a "stop" motion of her hand.

"Just don't Dr. Maeski." she said running her hands through her hair. "Ok Dahn, let's hear it."

Dahn lifted his head slowly and blinked deliberately, he cleared his throat and began to talk.

"When a person encounters something that triggers a sentimental yearning or wistful fondness for the past, a memory of some sort, we call it Nostalgia. Often, this feeling is onset by a song or music, and sometimes we save an tangible occurrence of these memories. We call it Memorabilia. When we come

across an event that we could have sworn we had lived before, we call it Déjà vu. And when we blend one or more sound wavelengths - we call it Cross fading. Am I right?"

Both adults nodded in unison silently.

"Well...I have seen things..." Dahn trailed off with an amusing but sad smile. "I've researched things..."

"I can see people's auras..." Dahn revealed suddenly, turning to look Haidee dead on. Their beautiful attentive locked in a mesmerizing stare, as they exchanged an immediate optical conversation right then and there.

"When I see a person's aura reacting with anything, especially music, I label it as Nostalgic. When their aura connects and latches on to a tangible object, I call that object their Memorabilia. When they inadvertently interact with their Memorabilia, they see Déjà Vu. Even if they have not had that experience yet. And finally, when that person come in contact with their nostalgic memorabilia..." Dahn trailed off with an intelligent smile.

"They've been Cross faded." Haidee finished. She looked at Dr. Maeski with a puzzled but excited look.

"This is an amazing and fascinating connect you've made." the doctor concluded with a hint of respect. "The big question though - Is it real?"

"Is it real?" Dahn grinned. "Why don't you tell me?"

"Honestly, I'm blown away." Haidee admitted, happy to have finally gotten something from the exasperating young man. "This is too surreal, but yet I'm so inclined to believe it. It feels like it exists. I myself can testify that I've witnessed these sensations, but the angle you see it at is...phenomenal. What boggles me is, what lies beyond this "Crossfading" as you say?"

"Well, I haven't discovered it all yet. There is also a "Vibe" which I haven't totally identified. But no one without my ability to see the auras can realize what's going on." Dahn informed them.

"And you think you're the only one who knows?" Dr. Maeski asked truly interested in Dahn's revelation.

"I don't really." Dahn disagreed. "I know there has got to be other people that can see auras, but I don't think they know what I know.

"Why not?" Haidee asked as she leaned on a nearby table.

"Because," Dahn started. "If they did, and were fully successful, they'd be on the road to immortality, and I'm not getting that feeling."

The room fell silent as everyone pondered the reality of this concept and the prospect.

"Like saving your data..." Haidee mouthed. "*This kid is on an amazing route...*" she thought.

"So Dahn," Mr. Maeski inquired. "Why haven't you figured it all out yet?"

"I've been researching the brain's behavioral patterns and the way we store and access our memories for the past few months. And even without a surreal ability like mine, I think the avenues for Crossfade are ground breaking and real. However, to answer your question, it's because I lack something." Dahn responded. The wind howled again as if it wanted to know the answer too.

"What do you lack???" Dr. Maeski asked a bit too eagerly while taking a step closer, his bushy eyebrows furrowing.

"You need like a device?" Haidee thought aloud. "Something that can actually Crossfade the memorabilia with the person it belong to. Basically "saving" their brain memories. Something that can translate the memories into readable electrical signals?"

Dahn smiled and looked down at the ground. He planted his hands firmly on either side of antiquated chair he sat in and rose to his feet slowly. Haidee and Dr. Maeski didn't budge, they weren't afraid of him anymore. They were actually impressed.

"Not something...Someone." He smiled.



“Ok ok ok, let’s all pretend for a moment that this is all not the bullshit it sounds like.” Dr. Maeski said after Dahn’s revelation. “Let’s pretend you’re telling the truth. How the hell do you think you can waltz into a hospital and test your fantasies without being reprimanded? Are you above laws???”

“I never said what I did was acceptable or right.” Dahn shrugged nonchalantly. “I took something called a ‘risk’.”

“And. You. FAILED.” Dr. Maeski snarled. “Now sit your ass back in that chair before I break your legs.”

“Maeski...” Haidee breathed in disbelief. “Why so violent?”

“I don’t know Wark, this guy’s attitude just effin gets to me!” Dr. Maeski exclaimed with a frustrated sigh.

Haidee looked at Dahn with an exasperated look of hope and disappointment at the same time. She sigh and agreed with Dr. Maeski.

“You are a pain,” she told him.

“Look, why don’t you all let me get out of your hair, and you can get out of mine, and we can pretend this never happened?” Dahn tried with equal exasperation.

“HAHAHA!” Dr. Maeski hooted. It was enriched with healthy sarcasm. “You are funny, you want to choke an innocent woman, breach a protected medical ward, assault patients with foreign equipment and bring malicious personnel into hospital territory and then just ‘get out of our hair’? Dude you are loaded.”

“Well, I just thought, if the police knew you guys were carrying Tasers around under your so called “doctor” farces; they’d be looking up more than one person tonight.” Dahn countered smugly.

“The “Tasers”, are a new security protocol that only highly qualified persons that undergo a rigorous background check and record analysis can obtain.” Haidee butted in to defend herself and her partner.

“Oh sure... That’s why Hannah didn’t have one, but you – the *nurse-in-training*, did.” Dahn rolled his eyes. “Come on, can’t you all do better than this?”

“How do you know she didn’t?” Haidee challenged, now also getting pissed.

“I guess we need to add sexual assault to the list of crimes you committed?” Dr. Maeski jeered. “Must have done **something** to know she didn’t have ANY taser on her.”

“Listen guys,” Dahn began, while taking a step forward and raising his hands in the air. “I am going to walk out of this room, and you all are going to go back to whatever it is you do and we’ll all be fine k?”

Dahn hardly finished his sentence when he noticed Dr. Maeski’s taser gun point directly at his chest.

“I will fill you with every dart in this damn taser if you make another step.” He snarled.

“STOP IT!!” Haidee screamed with a violent shaking of her fists. “JUST STOP OK?”

Both males degraded their confrontation down a notch. However, Dr. Maeski still kept the taser gun raised.

“This is not what I mean for; we are not supposed to be at odds.” Haidee cried as she gently pushed her superior’s weapon down. “I’m going to work something out.”

“Sorry Wark,” Dr. Maeski told his assistant. “But if it were for me, this pompous louse would be in jail already.”

“I know, and I don’t blame you!” Haidee whined. “But please Devin, please just wait a moment please! Then you can have your justice. I need to check something!”

“Fine.” Dr. Maeski surrendered, letting the taser drop to his side.

“Ok, you stay right there young man.” Haidee commanded turning to Dahn. “We are SO not through with you.”

Dahn just shrugged. "I'm not a criminal, you don't need to beg me not to do anything more wrong." he retorted.

Haidee backed out of the door slowly while keeping her eyes glued to her male company. "Please, nothing funny." She pleaded as she left the room. "I'll be right back!"

A torturous silence swept in to fill Haidee's absence as soon as she was gone. Dahn stood his ground and didn't not sit back down, neither did Maeski.

Dahn couldn't help but feel like Haidee wanted to buy him time to get away. He didn't know why the thought popped into his head. He felt really conceited to think this woman he'd only met a few times would try to side with him against her obviously dominant partner. Nonetheless; the feeling didn't go away, and Dahn really felt like he could use Maeski's aggregation to his advantage. Thus, the confident youth continued his act.

"See the thing is..." Dahn began. "Haidee doesn't get it."

"Shut up." Maeski barked.

"Wait listen to me." Dahn insisted. "I'm saying Haidee just doesn't understand that I just told you guys totally crap and I have a bed to get to."

"What the-

Dahn whipped around and picked up his chair quickly. Realizing what he meant, Maeski immediately without hesitation shot at Dahn's chest with his taser. The gun was silent and sleek. Its bullet, which was a toxin wielding dart, sailed through the air with admirable speed and no drag. Dahn however, blocked it with the chair and proceeded to cover himself; using it like a tower shield.

Dr. Maeski shot 2 more times out of raw frustration, and was again thwarted by Dahn's chair shield. The cunning young man then hurled the chair in Maeski's direction to knock him off guard. Dr. Maeski jumped to the side angrily with a roll, and aimed to shoot Dahn with his taser again.

“Swsssshtcktt” the dart cried as they stuck into targets other than Dahn’s flesh. He had taken to the ground, pulling a little lamp with him and dashing it to piece on the ground; sending the room into a sinister navy-blue darkness, the only remaining light was from the low-key ambient lighting of the neighborhood.

Dr. Maeski got up from his position furiously and ran across the room in a blind rage; kicking everything out of his way as he headed for the spirited young man.

He was too ambitious and desperate to make sure Dahn did not escape to bother heading for the light switch.

The once neat and tidy home office was quickly reduced to a wild mess as either individual trashed its contents; in attempt to use the room’s obstacles to gain the upper hand.

After overcoming turned furniture, toppled cabinets, and a teetering bookshelf, Maeski caught his prey trying to sneak under a desk. The desk was a computer desk, with storage drawers on both sides and a hollow opening. Dahn scrambled through its center as fast as he could, trying to get enough distance between him and the doctor to make a clean escape.

Luckily for Dr. Maeski, both Dahn and the rooms’ size played into his hands; allowing the raging doctor to grab a hold of his enemy. Maeski grabbed Dahn’s leg with wind-breaking grip, and dragged him back powerfully.

Dahn rolled rapidly to the side of this desk; a crafty maneuver to quickly dissolve Dr. Maeski’s grip on his ankle. Maeski realizing that he could not hold him for much longer, let go of Dahn’s leg. However, he opted for a more concrete solution and jumped the desk, landing directly above Dahn on the other side.

Wasting no time, Dr. Maeski pulled the taser and shot Dahn in his stomach and then tried to shoot him in his leg, but the taser was out of ammunition.

“GahhhhhhhHHH” Dahn wailed in pain cringing.

Despite his shaking, Dahn managed to grab the dart out of his belly and throw it across the room but by this time, Dr. Maeski was already kneeling down on his body, one knee on his chest, limiting his ability to breathe, and the other on the side of him. The doctor grabbed the panting youth's neck and began to choke him violently.

"This is for Hannah you scumbag." Dr. Maeski laughed evilly as he choked Dahn.

"How does it...it...How does it -

Maeski spluttered and stuttered while choking his target for some unknown reason. He started convulsing in a very similar fashion to the way Dahn did when he first got tasered. Within a moment's notice, Maeski fell to his side beside Dahn, panting and shaking aggressively while clutching his head. Dahn looked at his attacker in bewilderment. Maeski convulsed for about ten more seconds before passing out.

"What the -" Dahn wondered incredulously. "Hello???" He called wondering if another entity had entered the scene on his side. Dahn rubbed his neck soothingly as he cautiously rose to his feet.

*"I better get out of here before Haidee gets back,"* Dahn realized. He turned his head slowly to look down at Dr. Maeski's unconscious body. With a triumphant kick to his torso, the body rolled over onto its back with the doctor still gapping.

"That's what you get for being so violent." Dahn shook his head. He limped over to his backpack sitting on the ground where he originally had gained his consciousness. His stomach throbbed constantly with the pain from the dart and he wondered if he'd sustain any latent damage from the assault.

Dahn braced himself and tried to ignore the pain of his stomach and neck as he slowly trudged to the door of the dark room. The ground was sprayed with upset furniture, broken glass, bulbs, mini figures, and papers. *"Look at what I've caused."* he regretted.

Dahn reached the door post on the room swung the door open; he slinked out drowsily and started to teeter down a dark hallway. Nausea fought the determined youth's strength adamantly; he struggled to

keep his balance, but the dart charge was too efficient. It was no regular taser. His body acted as if the brain signal's he was sending to his limbs were being scrambled.

"Goddamn it you!" Dahn heard Haidee's cry coming down the hallway. His eyes drooped, and he grabbed hold of the walls; hoping for a little stability.

"Why! Dahn what did you do now!" Haidee cried. The hallway light's popped on and Dahn squinted naturally due to the sudden light. He raised a hand to his face to shield his dilated eyes, but in the process lost his balance. No longer able to go, he finally collapsed, only to be caught by Haidee.

"You stubborn fool..." he saw her mouth as his consciousness left him a second time that night...

“Ugh”, Dahn groaned as he raised an aching hand to his face and rubbed his right eye. For the second time in 24 hours, the young man was waking up somewhere other than his bed. He tried to stabilize his body; it felt like it did not want to obey him.

Slowly, each of Dahn’s cognitive functions came back to life as they normally should be. It seemed to take forever. However; as soon as they did, he could make out the distinct cynical voice of his ever so jolly uncle.

“It doesn’t make sense, regardless of how you put it.” Valerian’s voice floated over Dahn’s unmoving body.

“That what he claimed.” A female voice countered.

“Well of course you know I don’t buy it.” Valerian added.

“You don’t buy anything Val.” The female voice sighed.

“What is that supposed to mean?” Valerian answered with annoyance.

“I just mean in the few days I’ve spent with you since Lemon went to the hospital, have been very revealing of your character”. The woman concluded.

“You have some nerve Haidee. But it’s ok. I’m a difficult person.” Valerian agreed rather warmly.

“It’s not bad.” Haidee assured him with a thin laugh. “I just don’t expect you to buy it.”

Dahn listen to the adult argue a bit more before actually opening his eyes and letting them know he was awake. He wanted to catch on to the subject of their conversation first. He knew Haidee must have told Val what he did, and he was extremely curious if not amused to know his uncle’s disposition on the matter. Valerian was always preaching about risks, and taking them when life tossed them in your way.

“Well, on a side note, looks like we have an eavesdropper.” Valerian said with a kick to the sofa Dahn lay in.

“Ahhh, I’ll add it to the list of felonies and immoral things he’s done.” Haidee put in sarcastically.

Dahn sat up slowly in the soft piece of furniture and peered between the gazes of both adults. He then began to scratch the back of his neck still in silence.

“Well...” Haidee and Valerian began and trailed off at the same time.

“I’m sorry.” Dahn croaked finally.

“You better freaking well be.” Valerian snapped. “I raised you better than this!”

“Actually, you didn’t.” Dahn groaned softly as he flopped back into the couch. Haidee laughed at his curt answer.

“Ingrate.” Valerian retorted followed by some cursing under his breath.

“I’m just saying, you always condoned taking risks uncle, and that’s what I did. Dahn defended.

“Taking risks and being a complete bumbling clown is not the same thing.” Valerian continued.

“Maybe I could have known that if you actually raised me.” Dahn mumbled.

“F-

“Ok enough.” Haidee snapped, cutting Valerian off. “Dahn you’re not a kid, you’re smart. You knew exactly what you were doing back there and the risks it had. So just stop acting like you didn’t do anything.”

Dahn sighed in agreement and hung his head.

“So besides that, how do you feel?” Haidee asked with genuine concern.

“Weak.” The young man answered flatly.

“What happened back there anyway?” Valerian asked while folding his arms across his tight chest.



“Exactly what I knew would happen if Ms. Wark left me in a room with that doctor.” Dahn explained rubbing the spot on his neck where Dr. Maeski tried to choke him.

“Yeah, I’m sorry, but you were asking for a beating.” Haidee said giving Dahn a disapproving look.

“He did seem testy though.” Valerian mused.

“He’s just super zealous of the law.” Haidee tried.

“Well sorry, but he brought out an extremely sarcastic and rude side of me. I’m really not like that at all.” Dahn tried to remind his company.

“Yup, he’s a wuss.” Valerian nodded.

“Thanks uncle, I’ve always wanted you to say that. Can you lay off me now?” Dahn asked with irritation.

“Give him a break Val.” Haidee commanded. “He’s been through a lot.

“Its kind of his fault, but ok.” Valerian shrugged. He leaned off the wall where he stood beside the couch Dahn lay in and left the room. “I need a drink.”

“Is it me he hates? Or is he always like this?” Haidee asked Dahn in a hushed whisper.

“Oh it’s not you, he’s ‘angry at the world’”. Dahn air-quoted.

“I see...” Haidee trailed off.

Haidee’s final words marked the beginning of a tense period of silence; only the various appliances around hummed and buzzed, totally unaware of the emotional atmosphere of their fellow humans. Dahn’s mind was filled with thoughts of what kind of consequences he’d have to face for his recklessness. It almost consumed the goals of his original ambitions.

Valerian emerged from the kitchen with his mouthful of sandwich, a pint of beer, and a breaking of the silence.

“You are weird Haidee; you’ve got Polar Beer in your fridge”. He laughed as he walked back to his original position. “Do you even drink this? Why is it even in there”?

“To impress my very few male guests when they come over?” Haidee tried sheepishly. “Look - I don’t drink... beer, it’s disgusting.”

“I never took you as the type for a second.” Valerian pointed out through a mouthful of sandwich. “Hey you mind if I eat this sandwich?”

“If I did, it’s too late to mind now isn’t it.” Haidee said with a wry smile.

“Yeah, to be honest, I’m a fridge raccoon sorry.” Valerian shrugged. “It’s been a while since I had a good sandwich.

“You don’t know how to make a sandwich???” Haidee asked incredulously. “The mighty Valerian? Destined to wither away in anit-sandwitude?”

“You’re not funny.” Valerian laughed pointing to the worn lady. “And no, I know how to make a sandwich, but I mean a *good* sandwich - one with soul and effort. I don’t have that - my wife did though.”

“Ah hah!” Haidee chimed with a sparkle in her eyes. “You mean you lack a woman’s hand in the kitchen.”

“I’m not against to admitting woman superiority in the kitchen”. Valerian grinned with a sly look as he pushed the last bit of Haidee’s sandwich into his mouth. “I can’t be great at everything.”

“Trust me, we aren’t all great!” Haidee laughed. “But you have Lemon.”

Valerian immediately scoffed. “Lemon is that last thing I’d call a ‘woman’. Heck! Dahn’s more of a woman than her.”

“I was wondering when you were going to start heckling me again.” Dahn finally put in after listen to the two older adults banter. “I know it’s MY problem, but why are you two acting like it’s a totally fine day today.”

“Oh I forgot to tell you – I took care of all the shit.” Haidee informed Dahn quickly.

“You did?” Dahn asked his eyes wide as saucers.

“She said, she – cough! Cough!” Valerian began. “She persuaded them to believe that nothing really happened.”

“You better believe it, because it’s the only reason why you don’t have officers at your building right now.” Haidee scolded.

“Hey!” Valerian defended putting his hands up. “I’m not complaining, I’m just curious how you... *persuaded* not only your violent boyfriend, but Hannah, and the entire investigation unit, that this didn’t happen.”

“It’s easy actually.” Haidee began. “I persuade Hannah and the chief and it all goes quiet – for now at least.”

“But how did you persuade Hannah...” Dahn breathed in disbelief.

“Look, there is just something with me...when I tell people things in a way – they tend to just... I don’t know... believe me.” Haidee explained. “It’s like I make people want to believe me.”

“Hahahahaha!” Valerian cackled. “Yeah I know what you mean!”

Dahn’s uncle gave him a painful punch to his tender shoulder as Haidee became his new heckling target.

“So how do you go about doing these *persuasions*?” Valerian grinned. “You use your lips?”

“What?” Haidee asked, Valerian’s crude joke going right over her head. “What? No I mean well yes I tell the person things and they believe me easily. It doesn’t take much effort.”

Dahn and his uncle both burst out laughing after sharing a look.

“Haidee I think you’re the butt of Valerian’s jokes – not a good place to be.” Dahn laughed.

“So you persuaded Maeski too?” Valerian asked with a twinkle in his eye.

“Yeah, he was a bit harder to get off, but I managed.” Haidee replied tenderly. “What are you laughing about?”

“We are just impressed that’s all.” Dahn grinned. You seem to have trouble persuading us.”

“That’s because she’s not actually *trying* yet.” Valerian continued to laugh.”

“Ok you two are disgusting.” Haidee pouted as she finally latched on to the joke. “I’m just good at turning people on my side...”

“You have yet to turn me on.” Valerian laughed harder. “I’ll give you a tip why not try taking off –

“No!” Haidee snapped rising from her seat. “Of course the only thing that makes you happy is hurting others!”

“Hey! Hey! Ms. Wark!” Dahn began. “We were just teasing...”

“It’s ‘Haidee’ ok! Stop calling me Ms. Wark, you make me sound old.” Haidee snapped. She then sat back down and folding her hands insecurely across her chest.

“We are sorry.” Valerian agreed. “It’s just teasing you should try it sometimes.”

“Where is my uncle?” Dahn asked no one in particular.

Valerian rolled his eyes and made his way over to Haidee, who looked positively perplexed. He put his hand on her shoulder and gave it a firm squeeze.

“Listen, if I tease you, it means I like you.” Valerian began to assure her. “If I like you, it means you are an ok person. I don’t like people below the ok line.”

“Thanks?” Haidee replied unsure of if it was good to be liked.

Valerian cleared his throat.

“So anyway my wife says I must try being more ‘tactically polite’, he stated with air-quotes. “This is not exactly my ‘style’ but I would do anything for my wife. So I’m going to take a shot at it and guess you are sensitive to using making relationship targeted jokes at you because you are insecure about your dating status – which is single and you probably think it’s due to your unattractive veneer. Well I got a piece of news for you – it’s not.”

“Well you have a lot of nerve.” Haidee began looking up at Dahn’s uncle. “But I can tell it took a lot of effort for you to attempt to work out what I’m feeling so it’s ok.

“I’m serious though. Work on your approachability – try being lighter-hearted – not so...analyzing.” Valerian assured her.

“You are right and wrong but I really don’t want to go into it, can you guys just not tease me.” Haidee asked as she fumbled with her necklace aimlessly. “I’ve had bad experiences with it.”

“I can tell.” Dahn agreed. “The way you’re fumbling with your necklace is a sign.”

“It’s sort of a family heirloom actually.” Haidee corrected Dahn’s assumption. “My mom gave it to me when I turned 18.”

“It’s pretty” Valerian added.

“Someone please call 911, I want to get rid of this imposter!” Dahn suddenly cried.

“What?” Haidee asked looking a bit concerned.

“Don’t mind him.” Valerian responded flatly. “He’s tripping because I’m not barking.”

Dahn grinned. "So...speaking of heirlooms uncle, where's ours?" You know? The bell?"

"What do you mean?" Valerian asked looking up at his nephew with a new alertness in his eyes.

"You know what I mean, our family heirloom; it's that big bell like this big and this wide?" Dahn insisted while making out the size of the object in the air.

"Yeah, I know the bell." Valerian assured his nephew. "I just wonder how you know it."

Haidee raised an eyebrow.

"What do you mean ha-ha?" Dahn laughed nervously. "Why wouldn't I know it? I know exactly how it looks, I ask cause the image of it keeps popping up in my mind as if I seen it recently. But I haven't the slightest idea where it is."

Valerian left Haidee's side and returned to his original position, not taking his eyes off his nephew.

"Dahn... You don't know the bell - at all." He stared.

"Um?" Dahn grimaced with a perplexing look on his face. "But I just told you I do. You know when you seen something, and you are trying to remember where it is, but you just can't? It's like that."

"Dahn...You've never ever seen that object." Valerian insisted.

"Maybe I did when I was little? And you just don't know?" Dahn tried. He knew he had seen the bell before and it's image was clear as daylight in his mind, even the engraving's about its exterior were distinguishable.

"No." Valerian disagreed sharply. "Dahn, your parents had me put it away before you were born."

"Maybe I stumbled into it..." Dahn adamantly persisted. "Look uncle, I know the bell."

Valerian gave Haidee a very weird look and furrowed his brow. She returned it with an innocent shrug.

“Dahn, you have not stumbled into it.” Valerian informed him with confidence.

“And how are you so sure?” Dahn challenged his uncle.

“Because it’s in the attic of my wife’s parent’s house...” Valerian concluded. “And it’s been there collecting dust since before I married Sari.”

“What the hell...” Dahn trailed off.



“I don’t think you guys know how much I didn’t want to do this...” Valerian mumbled as he rang the door bell of his wife’s parent’s house. “Remember, her parents are loaded with bullshit ammunition of all sorts, make your presence short and sweet so we can get the hell out of here without having a fuss.”

“I thought you’d be happy to have an excuse to come visit.” Haidee mused. “Don’t worry I’ll be fine, parents usually love me. Besides that; I’m eager to see who was good enough for the ‘mighty Valerian.’”

“I would be if I didn’t feel like a criminal.” Valerian retorted.

“You are an emotional criminal.” Haidee spat softly.

The pearly white door of Sari’s house swung open and the trio was greeted by Merissa’s chubby figure who looked utterly baffled to see Valerian behind the door. Sari’s husband never visited more than once in a month. The maid scanned through the visitors, and immediately stepped through the door and shut it gently behind her.

“The Talin’s are out.” She began, looking up at Valerian’s tall stature. She always had to look a good deal upwards when addressing him because she was so short.

“Whatever.” Valerian scoffed as he reached for the door and swung it back open. He made his way inside the house as if he own the building without any regard for the housemaid’s sputtering protests. Dahn and Haidee understood that visiting the Talin’s house was riddled with politics that could randomly mushroom out of nowhere in a short time; so they followed in suit without an extra words.

The house reeked of a clean eloquence, not a single surface was stained with the evidence of dirty hands, or sticky touches. The smell that filled your nose as you walked through the corridors was a pleasant melody of clean fabric, fruity fragrances, and age wood. It was clear that this house belong to wealthy inhabitants that barely used the house itself.



The three visitors entered the room where Sari spent most of her waking hours; lead by her husband, then Dahn, and finally Haidee bring up the rear. She was incredibly surprised to see them.

“Oh my...” Sari trailed off as Valerian made beeline to her and gave her a firm kiss on her forehead.

“Hey there Mr. Objective. I wasn’t expecting you at all.” She laughed as she reached up to hug him.

“Hey Darling,” Valerian replied stooping to return her hug. “Your folks home?”

“Father is working, but mother is here she’s just around the back gardening.” Sari laughed. “You have some crazy timing, she was just in here.”

“Yeah well, I had to come here now for something urgent sweetie.” Valerian told his wife while holding her smooth face in his hands. “You know Dahn, and this is a new friend, Haidee.”

“Wao! A new friend!” Sari cried. “Are you sure you’re not some imposter?”

Dahn couldn’t help but put in his agreement. “That’s what I said.”

“Come here Dahn I haven’t seen u in so long, your growing to be quite the man!” Sari smiled as she receive a hug from her nephew as well.

“Thanks,” Dahn blushed. “I’m apparently not thinking like one though.”

“Anyway hon, we haven’t got much time, I’m going up to the attic to get my brother’s bell. You know?” Valerian informed his wife quickly as he jammed his hands in his pocket.”

“Whoa so much happening so fast, why are you getting that out?” Sari inquired her eyes glitters as she looked between her husband and nephew.

“Long story.” Dahn quickly replied. He started pushing his uncle towards the second story staircase with urgency. “Let’s go uncle.”

“Haidee, can you cover for us will you?” Valerian called over his shoulder to the timid medical assistant. Then turning to Sari he said: “You’ll love Haidee - Chat up the place ladies.”

“Sure thing...boss.” Haidee trailed off as she turned her attention to Sari; who just chuckled in response.

\* \* \* \* \*

The two men marched determinedly to the attic of the Talin Residency; both feeling rather apprehensive about the upcoming situation. It was no less puzzling to Dahn that Valerian didn’t know he knew about the heirloom, than it was to Valerian that Dahn knew about it. The memory was so vivid in Dahn’s mind, he found himself wondering if he had just dreamed about it so much that he thought it was real, and it just so happen to be. However; he knew this was not the case. Dahn was so sure that he had seen and known this family bell that he wanted to make a bet with his uncle on whether he’d recognize it.

Valerian on the other hand, found this to be no playing matter. Whatever caused him to put the bell away was apparently something very annoying or dangerous that he really didn’t even want to look at it.

Therefore; as soon as the 2 men entered the attic, Valerian grabbed his nephew by his collar gruffly and warned him off.

“Now you listen here, I don’t care what you think you know, but this stupid heirloom was put away because shit happens when it’s not put away. We believed that it was rigged to vibrate on a frequency that caused bad things to happen to people near it. I don’t know where the blast your father picked this off from; I never saw it when we were kids, but he insist that its part of the family. It’s bad enough already I have to be in this house when I don’t want to be here. You do anything funny and I will kill you myself. This is NOT a toy. DO NOT ring it.” He snarled in Dahn’s face.

“You got it uncle.” Dahn grimaced slightly take aback by his uncle’s fierce reaction.

“I know I seem like I’m over reacting but I’m not.” Valerian barked as he led Dahn to a stack of weathered furniture.

“You blame this bell for what happened to Sari...don’t you?” Dahn deduced suddenly. No sooner than the words left his mouth he resented it. But it was too late the grab them back.

Dahn’s uncle froze in his actions with a frightening stiffness. He slowly turned his head over his shoulder and clenched his fists so hard you could see his vein bulge.

“Yes Mr. Clairvoyant.” He sighed. “I very much believe that coming across this @\$%ing bell is linked to why my wife got her back destroyed...”

“I’m so Sorry,” Dahn breathed sincerely. “But how can the Mnemonic Bell cause something like that to happen when the turn of events didn’t even entail the bell?”

“Seriously!? The *Mnemonic Bell*?” Valerian cried glaring at his nephew. “The *Mnemonic Bell*??? Why is it every time you open your mouth about this damn object, you reveal more about it?”

“I guess we are about to find out huh?” Dahn sigh as he came over to help his uncle unearth the infamous heirloom. “Look I’m as confused as you are.”

“Good then let get this over with.”

Dahn and his uncle looked through boxes, underneath large furniture, and in closets until finally, they found it inside of an under-the-floor compartment. Slowly but carefully the two men lifted it from out of the cavity beneath them and placed it upon the dusty floor on which they stood. They grunted and struggled to move it, forgetting how heavy then golden bell was. A thin film of aged dust coated its exterior, but its overall décor and luster remained the same as when it was placed in the compartment more than 2 decades ago. It was unbelievable how well it endured the test of time. Then again, it was 24-carat gold, which caused it to resist erosion and oxygenation, but was ridiculously heavy.

“Damn that’s a heavy bell.” Dahn grunted as he and his uncle peered at the artifact in the dim attic lighting.

“It’s a very high concentration of gold.” Valerian agreed.

Dahn stooped down and began to ever so gently dust of this body of the majestic bell. It was about the perfect size to fit under a night table. Dahn stared deeply into the engraved symbols of hands running down one side of the bell’s façade. The hands were all in different poses depicting different forms of hand-to-hand interaction. His observation was severely cut by the pain of Valerian hitting him in his ears with some sort of stick.

“I said stop looking at it and help me get it to the car. Then we’ll discuss it and observe it.” Valerian commanded.

“Ouch...” Dahn just moaned as he stood up. “Ok let’s do this.”

Dahn and his uncle stooped and with a syncing of a three second countdown, they both picked up the bell again. Just as they were about to start walking, a searing pain shot into one of Dahn’s unsuspecting fingers causing him to wail out and let go of the bell. His uncle however, had already lifted it up...

“AHHHH!” Dahn screamed grabbing his injured hand with his good one way too instinctively. The next few seconds of their time in the attic flew by very slowly as Dahn’s brain processed disaster milliseconds too late. Valerian fumbled and bumbled forward trying to catch the bell which was now determined to crash back to the ground. He screamed a slur of curses mixed with Dahn’s name and other things his nephew couldn’t make out. Sure enough, the bell crashed to the ground and a noise arose from it like a giant golem awakened from his winter sleep.

“FWEEENNNNG!!!” it wailed. Dahn felt his body caving in upon itself as the sound hit him with tangible force. His head quickly began to feel extremely light and tender. His eyes also seemed to shrink in their sockets as the overwhelming crash of the bell knocked him from his feet. Dahn’s eyes began to roll upwards in his throbbing head as he noticed his uncle scrambling to grab hold of the bell’s hull; probably in an attempt to absorb some of the vibrations.

Dahn tried to call out, but his head was ringing like a receptionist's phone. The low rumbling tones of the golden heirloom continued to infiltrate his very mind. Every second that past took some of his breath and energy with it. For the third time in a short period – Dahn was left unconscious once again.



Valerian's P.O.V

*"Why, why, why, why, why, why..." I chanted to myself. "Why, why, why, why, why, why! Do I have such a stupid family?"*

*I lay there on the ground holding a bland pity party for myself as I cursed my weak nephew. "Why you couldn't hold your pain for one moment?" I continued to groan.*

*It then occurred to me that I was lying on my back, when I had tried to break the fall of the bell and ended on my stomach. Scratch that - I was on my back in an environment I was totally unfamiliar with.*

*"I'm dead?" I blurted faster than I wished to.*

*"You are very far from dead sir." A voice floated over my body. I sat up immediately and looked around for the origin of the voice.*

*"Coward!" I shouted. "Show yourself...I've had it with the bullshit today!"*

*"No need to get angry Val, I'm here", the voice replied warmly.*

*I whipped my head around while propping myself up on my hands to see where was "here". I did not have to look far, because as I turned my head to look in another direction, I met the face of the unidentified voice right dead center in front of me. It was that of a comely young man. His healthy jet black hair fell loosely down his thin head; framing his babyish face. His small lips curled into an all too satisfying smile; complimented by his calm blue eyes and well sloped nose.*

*"BLOODY HELL!" I screamed in anger, scooting away from the man.*

*"Why so jittery?" he smiled calmly.*

*"Back off pretty boy", I commanded.*

*"You are angry Val, I condone this, but however; I am your friend - Welcome fellow Mnemon, my name is Toane."*

*"Instead of telling me your name, why not tell me where I am?" I countered. Obviously this person knew everything about my situation and wanted me to feel the same way he did.*

*"You are with Toane." Toane replied with a simple nod of his head continuing to displaying his stupidly calm smile.*

*I rose to my feet and dusted off my trousers. I cocked my head to one side and got straight to the point, I had had ENOUGH shit for today.*

*"Toane, Lets jump exactly to the part where you tell me how to get out of here, I have not had a good day. Please just cut the mystical bull crap, and freaking explain to me what the heck is going on already."*

*"Spoken like a soldier." Toane mused as he too rose to his feet. "Alright then Val, you've asked something I cannot contend with. So here it is."*

*Toane extended his hand to me expectantly. I don't know if he hadn't notice I was a considerably grown man, but he did anyway. I took it begrudgingly.*

*"So we are holding hands now?" I asked cynically.*

*"You will get lost if I don't guide you." Toane replied curtly.*

*As we began to walk, Toane began to talk.*

*"You are here because you have witnessed the ringing of a Mnemonic bell. If a Mnemonic bell is wrung and you witness it, it means you're a Mnemon."*

*"And what's a Mnemon." I asked boringly.*

*"A Mnemon is a human with a heightened sense for one or more of 3 cognitive functions in your body. We commonly know them as senses. Mnemons process more information than regular people and store almost all of the data collected at once opposed to humans that forget a lot of it. It can manifest in 3 of your 5 senses.*

Whichever one you have an affinity for, is referred to as your Path. You can be an Ascoutique (ass koo tick), an Optique (opp tick), or a Haptique (hap tick); corresponding to echoic, optical, and haptic feedback respectively.

*"Continue." I urged him after he paused to look at me.*

*"Mnemonic bells don't do anything to you except remind you where you are coming from if you don't know already. It's something we give to people to "awaken" their inner Mnemon." Toane informed me.*

*"So what you're saying is that this is all in my head?" I asked.*

*"Yes Val, this is a memory." Toane replied with one of his calm smiles, although; this one was more genuine. "It was just so deeply buried in your mind; you never knew you had it. The bell is just an elaborate memorabilia. Think of it as a - souvenir of a journey you didn't know about. "*

*"Ok so now what? What do I do now that I know I'm some irregular person that remembers things differently? Now what?" I fired at the black-haired man.*

*"Now we figure out what path you are on, and then you will wake up and see that nothing has changed except your mind." Toane informed me.*

*"So what happens then?" I wanted to know.*

*"Only you can decide that my friend." Toane gave one of his amazingly cliché responses.*

*"I'll tell you what I decide Toane. GET ME OUT OF HERE." I roared in his face. "I don't buy two syllables of what your telling me, and your getting on my @\$%ing nerves!"*

*"Rejection is often displayed here when I tell you the truth. I will let you go, like I said, I'm not interested in holding you here, you are no where different than you were when you fell." Toane replied while giving me a knowing glare. "But wouldn't you, if you had a chance, fix your wife's back? You'd take it in a heartbeat no?"*

*Toane knew he struck a nerve, bringing up my wife. However, I felt like he wanted me to punch him - so I did not.*



*“Actually, this is the part in some fairytale or some cartoon where the mystical being tells the hero that doesn’t want anything to do with some shady crap, that the key to getting what noble thing he’s always wanted lies with him embracing his destiny. Well this is not some cartoon or fairytale. This is my life you’re messing with.” I stated coldly.*

*“Well spoken Val.” Toane agreed. “But it’s true. You can help Sari more than you ever know.”*

*I finally decided to surrender because anything that could get me my wife back was worth considering...anything.*

*“What - do - I - Have - to - do?” I managed through clenched teeth.*

*“Why don’t we find out!” Toane exclaimed.*

*Toane waved his hand in the air swiftly and the backdrop changed to a simple field. Sure enough, the Mnemonic Bell sat in the center of the field, un-budging. Next thing I knew, Toane was RIGHT beside me holding a plushie like object in his hand. He waved it around in the air dangling it in front of my face as he spoke once again.*

*“The tests are simple. If you don’t belong to the path, you will not be able to respond to the respective sense that the bell delivers. You can hear, see and feel the bell. I take away your ability to feel and hear, you will be left with only your sight. Do you read me?”*

*“Yes.” I answered. It was indeed very straight forward.*

*“Here,” Toane said, handing me the object in his hand.*

*I grabbed the item from the pretty boy gruffly and only to my surprise, it felt like someone had poisoned me and was munching my eyes out rapidly.*

*“AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!” I bellowed in pain.*

*“Oops, forgot to mention that it would hurt to take your eyesight.” Toane admitted accidentally.*

*I gaped hard for air as the pain dissipated. Just as Toane had depicted, I could no longer hear anything at all. I could no longer feel my damn body either, it was like – it was completely numb.*

*I then saw Toane running over to a Mnemonic bell sitting alone in the midst of the view, and slamming it really hard with a sizable mallet. The bell hovered above the ground, dangling by a tough rope tethered to...nowhere? Anyhow – I watched the bell vibrate and swing back and forth in response to being struck. In my opinion, it was quite the normal response for a struck bell. Toane must of agreed because within a few seconds, the scene changed.*

*I couldn't see a damn thing now and Toane was close to my ear, whispering into it the gay way he loved to do.*

*“Well done Val,” He said amusingly. “You are clearly not an Optique. So let's see how you fare as an Ascoutique!”*

*I nodded; I just wanted to get this over with as fast as possible. I waited for him to slam the bell again, this time I couldn't see or feel anything – so I assumed I would hear the bell go off like a Sunday morning chime. I waited and waited to hear him sound the bell, but too much time passed for him to have not sounded it. I heard nothing. As I thought to start screaming at him about playing games with me again, I realized that maybe I didn't belong to the Ascoutique; thus failing the sound test. As if he could read my mind, that test ended. I now knew that I had regained control and feeling in my fingers as they wiggled with joy when I tested my range of motion again. However, I could not hear or see jack.*

*I began to ponder my next move, if I couldn't see or hear, how would I know where to go or how to respond to this final test?*

*I outstretched my arms slowly until they were at their full length. Swaying them slowly, I tried to embrace the atmospheric pressure that was being exerted on them. It felt different already. Every single molecule of air that pasted between my fingers was known by my skin. I felt it, I knew it, I commanded it. It was like pulling my hands freely through a cup of smooth custard. The more I swayed my arms, the more confident I felt.*

*I took one step forward and instantly knew the next one would be more revealing. I bent over and untied my boots quickly and casted them aside without a second thought. My toes gripped the soft blades of grass and the cold earth beneath my feet. I could literally see my surroundings. With that, I marched forwards with an unwavering posture. I knew this was my calling, this was my path.*

*Soon enough, I could feel an obstruction before me; the smooth custardy feeling of the atmosphere seemed like it had been parted by an object. I leaned back, shifted my weight onto my left hip, and released a full cross kick to the object I perceived in front of me.*

*“FWEEENNNNNG!” the bell screamed in my mind. The vibrations were like nothing I had ever felt. Every atom in my body was shifted when the vibrations ran through my entire figure. I felt like no one could touch me...*

*“Congratulations.” Toane grinned appearing at my side as I panted through my epic revelation. “You are officially a member of the Haptique. From now on, how you choose to live your life, will be up to you. You will wish that this day happened when you were 3 years old. Everything you have touched to this point will feel shallow and dead compare to your awareness now. The Haptique are said to be the funnest and most enjoyable path of the Mnemons. It makes the best things in life, even better.”*

*“This is amazing.” I breathed as I clenched my fists. I only then realized that I had my vision and hearing restored.*

*“It’s better than amazing...Its Mnemonic.” Toane finished. “I’ll let you go now Valerian Xiriga.”*

*“Wait!” I cried. “What to do now?”*

*“I am not a guide Val, just a reminder.” Toane smiled his signature calm smile as he walked off. “Remember that...”*

End of Valerian’s P.O.V

“Whoa.” Valerian breathed as he found himself exactly where he had been before his weird dream; flat on his stomach, in a failed attempt to catch the fallen bell. He lay there, trying to understand if what just happened was real or not. Slowly, he remembered that Dahn was in the room, and would be a quick reference to know if that event was just a dream.

“Dahn...” his uncle began.

“Uncle...” Dahn echoed.

“Did you?” Valerian tried.

“Yea, did you?” Dahn replied instantly.

“Sure as freaking hell yeah...” Valerian replied raising up onto all fours. He felt the staircases beneath him pounding as people approached their location.

“Uncle, only about 10 seconds have passed since we dropped the bell.” Dahn pointed to his watch.

“Yeah and we are about to hear the tail end of it.” Valerian groaned.

However, when the attic door burst open, only Haidee was on the other side. Dahn and his uncle looked at her and knew right off the bat that she had experienced what they had. The perplexing look on her face said it all.

“What the hell just happened?” Haidee cried.

“You heard the bell?” Dahn asked her with amusement.

“Yes I sure did, but your wife and her mother didn't hear it at all!” Haidee cried breathing hard. “And then I got a crazy dream about that bell right there!”

“It wasn't a dream.” Valerian stated as he rose to his feet.

“It was a memory...” He and Dahn finished together.