

Stage II

A Debt Repaid

Act 1

Date: Unknown

Location: A Facility Near Lockwood's Outskirts

"MOVE MOVE MOVE GO!!!"

The slam of a large metal door echoing through the chamber, several men rushing from it with rifles in hand. Two nearly crashing into a couple crates and one tumbling right over one and rolling. A room full of at least a dozen and a half men all turning to face the door, their rifles raised as they ran for cover behind the cargo of the room.

Around them dust fell, the sound of something rumbling within the building. The entire room shook only a slight, thus the fall of the dust from above. Many soldiers, grown men in armor, sweat forming upon their faces. Another loud rumbling as if from the bowels of a ship felt and heard up top; though this was in fact from straight ahead of them. The loud rip of metal.

"Staton- Staton! Where the bleedin' hell is our backup?!" one soldier barked out.

"Scattered in the wastelands sir-" the man, a young Lieutenant by the name of Staton replied.

"What like blown up and dead? Shit! We are fucking PINNED right now!!"

"We're dead, dead, dead men are we we are so FUCKED. Dead, absolutely fucking dead!"

"Calm down there O'Brien we aren't cooked yet!!"

"Angel there is the only one with any powers and he's a friggen novice. How are we going to hold **him** off with our puny guns? We're fucked!"

"Don't say that-"

"I don't wanna die like this Mackie! Pointless and inescapable!"

“Pull yourselves together men we are soldiers of the Federation. Our job is to hold the *Demonic Arms* advance off as long as possible until the device is in position. If it means we have to lay our lives down to buy even an extra ten seconds we will do it!”

“Where’s that *New Genesis* when you need ‘em?”

From beyond came the groan of metal, the distinct sound of it bending under stress and screaming as a result. All of the soldiers in the room tightened their grips on their weapons and aimed on. From among their ranks moved a young boy, no more than fifteen perhaps even fourteen with a fire sword in hand.

“Angel- Angel get back here. Where the fuck are you-”

“I’m going to face him commander. I am not going to cower in this room waiting for death like a dog. Zero Blackheart, he’s killed so many of our brothers and sisters. It’s time we stop him once and for all!”

“You young idiot you are far from a match for that monster. You should be falling back to the Ops Center- you’re not a soldier, you’re a cadet at best! You have so much left ahead of you sonny!”

“No,” Angel murmured, tightening his grip and holding his sword before him in front of that door, “He murdered my master and my friends- I will face him on my honor!”

Sweat dripped from his face, his face contorting into pure determination- rock solid and set. As he did so the crash of metal came from a room or two ahead, the soldiers all jumping a little and stepping back; though soon they too would lock in. The fear in their faces switching out for their own motivation, their own resolve. Again, all taking aim.

Still the sweat poured, running down their flushed faces and dripping from their chins. Their trigger fingers twitching, and the boy’s own stature becoming one of offense a few meters from the door itself.

Silence...

BAM!!

The massive iron door was wrenched wide open in an instant as if pulled apart like paper, a roar of smoke entering the room and engulfing the boy. The young lad’s face twisted and his eyes watered, the putrid wall of irritant hitting him full on. And then it came-

A figure towered above him, a figure in total black with white hair and piercing blue eyes. The figure was arched back and swinging up and over their shoulder with a single hand. Across came a pulsing blade of orange & crimson fire, swung up like an ax as the man took a big swing

and slammed it down right into the boy's fire sword. And in true fashion as it seemed like a one handed ax swing to the extreme degree, the sword struck like an ax.

The boy's legs buckled and collapsed, falling to one knee nearly with both hands on his hilt trying to defend. The flames of his blade died off, only a slight ember flickering to life as the overwhelming force of the adversary's weapon pressed against his. The wobble of his arms, the crackle of energies colliding, the man of dark and white barely pressing by the look of his unphased stance merely holding that orange chaos blade with a single hand.

"OPEN FIRE!!"

Shots rang out flying into the smoke, zipping around the boy and Zero himself. Around the two entered a squad of soldiers in blue attire, rushing- a few struck and killed and others moving to quickly take their place. Their own weapons, energy rifles raised, returning fire. The sounds of explosions from the soldiers directions as the smoke around them cleared, the wail of the boy as he cried out-

"NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!"

Heaving himself up he pressed against Zero's blade and forced it up. The dark warrior took a step back, his frown ever holding, only one of his blue eyes visible now as the other had become covered by his white hair. The boy, Angel, swung out with his sword erupting into flames once more. The crackle of his fire sword crashing against Zero's sword coated in *Chaos Energy*.

Another swing and a clash, Angel putting his all into the swing like a batter up to bat; though for Zero it was nothing. A simple raise of the orange hued sword and a simple turn to counter. Again, and again, and again, all the while behind the boy his own soldiers were dying left and right. Explosives tossed and sent rolling across the floor, KABOOM!!

Soldiers flew back, and those not dead would be quickly pelted with shots from the blue soldiers.

"That's enough!" Angel howled out.

"Hmph..." Zero grumbled, "Look at you boy. You fight for a cause that is already lost."

"No- I will defeat you, on my master's name! You will pay for all of the suffering you've inflicted here today!!"

"Hoh? You know nothing of the true meaning of suffering child; though it is a sensation that I will gladly share with you before you pass. BURN THEM ALL!" Zero howled out.

"NOO!" the boy cried, pulling back his sword and jabbing it forward for Zero's chest.

A simple side step and a simple outreach, grabbing old of the boy's wrists with his free hand. Angel's eyes locked with Zero's eye; though no longer was that eye blue. Rather it now was replaced by a black void without any end- with a split second following there would be the appearance of a symbol carved in red. Angel pulled at the grab, his feet anchored.

"So determined to protect those men and avenge your fallen comrades, yet this is all you can muster with your rage? You are far from strong enough to protect anyone, child. Your weakness... serves only to extend their suffering, as it does your own."

"Damn you-!"

"Still- I may have use for you. I will show it to you before you die, your lack of resolve which only harms those you wish to help... and what a help it is for those who you fight. Now- Hisanagi!"

Zero's eye pulsed, a flash of blue radiating out of the red symbol and washing right over the boy's face. The boy's own eyes pulsed for a moment, his pupils dilating, and soon fading out. Washed over with a cold, his head hung back for a brief spell. And in the next moment Zero had pulled him forward and with a mighty swing, around Angel went.

Swung out left and around- and then back ahead before being released. Hurling away from Zero and sent crashing into a bunch of crates, toppling over and falling into the lines of the Federation soldiers as they retreated from the room.

"Angel?! Quick grab him!"

"We need to move!"

The soldiers moved over to the boy and quickly caught hold of his shoulders to pull him up. The boy in a daze, his head swinging about. A hold still on his sword, the flames again fading as he was whisked away. Just as the Federation soldiers were to the door, his eyes flickered back to life, the flames erupting.

SPLASH!!

"HUUAAAARGH-" a soldier screamed out, falling to the ground with a huge gash and ash rushing out of his chest cavity torn clean open.

The soldiers stumbled back, shock flooding their faces. Angel stood before them, his pupils aglow red, his sword raging with fire. He stood there over the body and turned, weapon raised.

"ANGEL!!"

"Angel what are you doing?!"

His sword raised up and his stance changed once more, ready to thrust forward.

“Angel what has he done to you?!”

“Angel!!”

Step.

SLASH!!

SHRING- SPLAT, SMUSH!!

An arm hit the ground, followed then by a body with a wide open tear in their face. Then another with their throat burned open and their head practically coming off. Another man went down screaming with a light gash into his chest. And then another who lost an arm the moment he held his weapon out to fire, cut clean off.

“Angel stop this please!”

“Snap out of it! No- NOUAH!”

The splat of a skull caving in, the crackle of ribs as the sword sliced right through. Again and again, soldier after soldier going down.

“{No- no stop, stop this, STOP THIS!! STOP THIS!!! NOOOOOOO!!! STOP THIS PLEASE STOP THIS!! STOP THIS!!! AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH-}” he screamed within his own head as his body tore into the next room and continued to attack the screaming helpless soldiers.

Far back in the room stood Zero unchanged. Around him surged his own men, all with weapons raised. Rushing like a gaggle of Storm Troopers with no visible expressions due to their masks. And as it continued on, Zero himself shifted. His unmoved frown, replaced by but a smug smirk as he then began to walk forward. Around them the fires continued to surge and the explosions continued, the bodies continuing to drop up ahead.

The boy stood right over a fallen soldier, the soldier raising a hand up. The horror washing over his face, the tears, the dilated look of death flooding him as a pleading escaped.

“{STOP IIIIIITTTTTTTTT!!}” Angel screamed to himself as he brought his sword down straight into the soldier’s body.

“NO!” a young girl screamed out.

Her body jolted up, the covers flopping down to her legs. Sweat flooded down her face, her eyes quivering. A hand was brought to her chest and clenched at her night shirt. A huff and a puff

leaving her, her breath intensifying as she hyperventilated for a few brief seconds. The shake of her pupils came to an end as the rapid breathing did, a huff escaping her moments later.

Locks of orange drifted down over a slightly freckled face, a right eye of deep blue shining, a left eye of fuchsia glowing. Her hand lowered to her lap, her head falling forward with another huff escaping her. She sat there in her bed in a very quaint room- oak flooring, paneled wood walls, a log cabin type aesthetic in some aspects really with the wood dresser and the works.

Date: 22nd Day of the 11th Month of the Psony-3 Standard Calender, 44 A.H.

Location: Atroverg. A Town In Flore Lunae Region 462

The sound of the running water of a nearby shower, the steaming crackle of water against the tub and wall. Steam ran through the room, fogging up the mirror hanging over the sink. The shower curtain left ajar as the waters ran from the head. A splash of water from the sink, splashed by her own hands over her face and sent dripping down unto her nightshirt. The young girl looked up into the mirror before her, hair drooping in her very face.

The shaken look, a rather pained exchange between herself and the mirror. Staring into her own soul through that gateway of glass. To her left the shower would continue to rain down, awaiting the girl herself.

“Another one, yeah?” spoke the gruffled voice of an elder man.

“Yeah,” the girl from before spoke in a soft hazy voice as the clatter of cups and plates echoed out.

Two sat in a dining room of reasonable size, both around a table. The older gent sat at his chair with a folded leg and a news paper while sipping his hot beverage. Salt and pepper hair, full facial hair somewhat trim and proper, a black butler-type suit. Across was the girl in a half-red half-gray vest with a jester-like pattern of dark red and white, and then dark red and the gray.

"I'm sick of it Almec... I just- I want it to be over. I've been free of that man for years, yet what I aided him with. It haunts me."

"You were young back then... and you're still young now. I could tell you that because you were so young and so heavily modified that it wasn't you, to not beat yourself up. Yet- I suspect that that will not ease these bouts whenever they occur."

She shook her head.

"All you can do is to continue to strive for your own resolution Danielle, through penance or otherwise. The truth though is as simple as it sounds. Unlike me you didn't have much choice in the matter. That cartel of yours took the choice away from you."

"..."

"You served him, long ago. How did you ever find a way to forgive yourself for what you did?"

"I didn't," he mumbled with the swishing of his newspaper, now looking right at her, "I served under Corus the Revolutionary at a time when his ideals were necessary. After Corus fell, Zero took charge as my master's disciple. I will admit that things were a bit rocky back then but certainly not as they were for your time. I knew by the time of the Terminator Wars that we had made a mistake in following him, as it was after that his descent began. Even his brothers and sisters abandoned him soon after that."

"And now I can't help but wonder if he was right. Just, look at our world now. The war and crime. Hardly much law left in the world."

"These are strange times Danielle. There is no getting around it. By some accounts he WAS in fact right; and yet his methods couldn't have been more wrong. Now- enough of this dreary talk. Have Raven and William awoken yet?"

"No, I don't think they have."

“The rascals. Well you had best run along to the market for those supplies. I’ll send those two scrubs along shortly.”

“Alright,” she murmured, rising from her seat.

The girl moved from her seat across the room to a simple wooden door, a coat rack sitting next to it. Her arm reached out to grab hold of a dark gray cloak. Throwing it around herself and flipping the hood up, she turned to the door and turned the knob. Walking right out the door what greeted her was a rather quaint sight, an average looking old world town with cobble streets and lanterns on the corner.

Buildings of brick and wood, rain pouring down from a dark crimson sky. People about in the streets though of little note as she turned and began her walk down the road with her hood right up. A rather bleak and empty expression wore and wrapped around her. Her arms not even swaying as she did little other than move her legs with that cloak wrapped around.

Back inside the building by the window stood Almec. His gaze followed her movements until she disappeared around a corner and out of sight. A sigh briefly escaping as he turned and walked towards a counter where a fresh cup of coffee had just been poured. Stopping there he took hold of both the cup and the small plate it had been sat atop earlier before returning towards the table.

“{Sometimes I wonder how much that girl really knows? How much I know?}”

He stopped at the table, placing the cup down. Raising himself back up he looked ahead, sights set stonewall ahead. The hazy image of a figure in black, hair white with the dark blue eyes that had been in Danielle’s dream earlier. As soon as he had looked the very image faded out like a fog, adrift and burning up.

“Hmph, that bastard. Even in death his presence still clings to the living world like a the pungent smell of death itself. Perhaps one day.”