

8. Loss.

We dance till our shadows are separated by the break of dawn. Two pieces. You and me. Marvelous.

I reattempt to breathe and recognize I will never breathe again. No air escapes my lungs when all the pain culminates in a single shout. Finally, I kiss the sun goodbye and go back to black.

An emperor without a kingdom to rule. A bloodstream without a heart to beat. A prisoner for eternity. That's what I am without you.

9. The Pit.

"Found 'im near of 'ere. Tell you, never saw something like that. Said 'e cut 'is eyes with 'is own teeth!"

"What a bunch of shit."

"Said, a few teeth still remainin' in the sockets. Surrounding it like a fence."

"Please. You don't believe this bunch of nonsense they were telling us?"

"Why is 'e wearing a mask, then? Can't be that ugly."

"Look, let's just agree on the fact that you've never been the brightest. Otherwise you wouldn't believe such bullshit."

"Bullshit? Doesn't 'e occur a little strange to you?"

"What a fine understatement for those people in the Pit. Have been here long enough to face the facts. They are all animals, rotting in this place, barking for redemption in their kennel."

"This one won't bark for a very long time..."

"Watch your step. These creatures are like sleeping volcanoes, erupting in the least expected moments. See that scar? She was only 17, unconscious and spitting more blood anybody can imagine. At least we thought so. Next thing I remembered was three dead wardens and a knife sticking in my jaw. And the self-contented grin on her face before she slit her throat. Can't always be so lucky, though."

"'eard of that story. Said, it was only a legend."

"Wishful thinking of those cowards sitting in their ivory towers, surveying everything and understanding nothing. In fact, nobody of them ever cleaned the bloodstains of her cell. Only time did."

"You tellin' 'bout what they say is the cursed place? Where people got missin'?"

"An obdurate superstition, nothing more. We lose various parts of those fuckers day for day. Bodies, minds, morales, hopes. Another endless day in paradise. This one here might join the party as well. End of journey, my friend!"

My empty head smacks against a wet wall. I smell cloves, roses, ivy and death. Death. I know that too well. He sticks on me, soaks my mind, mutes my world. I start getting familiar with the thought of being one of the last vital signs of a dying, long forgotten time. Then I hear the voice. With an reluctant awareness I start listening.

"One... two... three... four... no charges anymore... the bird flew high to the sky and kissed his plumage [(?) Who are you? (-) Stop talking... stop talking] well goodbye... he fell back to the ground, last was heard this spooky sound... then his soul emerged again, yet its ascension hard to explain... I owe them all too much, silence in their heads and such... so I

Speak only to myself in this neverending tale: Murder, torture and pain buried inside one female... [1] five... six... seven... eight... no one left to bargain... betrayed them all, not on purpose... claimed misery in overdose... yet the only present I could spare: My one and only welfare! [(?) What are you talking about? (-) Don't wanna hear such nonsense! (+) Poetic...] [2] Who offers more? Who offers more? No one? Are you sure? [(?) More of what?] Well... anyway... got this necklace full of blood... the finder's throat might stay shut. (kills herself)

[(-) Stop talking... stop talking]

"Too late, already made my choice and sacrificed my voice. Remaining as the unspeakable..."

[(?) Who are you?]

"The unspeakable [(?) Unspeakable?], the inexistant [(?) Inexistant?]. [(?) Unspeakable? [(?) Inexistant?] [(?) What are you talking about?] I only exist because of their denial. <2>"

(-) What the hell are you talking about?

(?) Pardon?

(o) You are talking in riddles.

[-?o] Already told you what I knew before and will repeat nevermore! [1] or [2]

(+)(-)(o)(?)

All of a sudden I'm being dismissed back to silence. Have I been talking to a fading memory? I never knew for sure, but was aware of the obdurate past, gnawing at my conscience with unbearable pain.