

Foreword

SUPREME YODELAGE!!!

That's just my way of saying hello.

How do you view life and death? Everyone in this world has their own opinion on subjects as complex as these. Life is short, life is the greatest gift of all, death is the most horrible fate of them all, death is inevitable blah, blah, blah.

Listen to me. You must think I'm some kind of wisecracking asshole who doesn't take anything seriously. That's far from the truth. I know that there's a time to joke and a time to take things seriously. Everyone should know that. Introducing what I wish to share is the time to joke, explaining the content of this story is when I want to be serious.

How do **I** view life and death? I could go on and on about that. There's so much I want to tell but this is only an introduction so I really can't go into too much detail at this point. Otherwise you'll stop reading this book, take it back to the shop you got it from and get your money back so you can blow it on booze, fags or whatnot.

Hence blah, blah, blah.

I want to tell you how I feel about the wonders of life and the horrors of death, but I think these words shouldn't come from me. They should come from the characters in this book. In the final analysis, I reckon that's the best way to tell a story. Characters from the world of fiction are more effective tools in expressing how you feel. They make the story more enjoyable, more captivating.

I don't mean any offence or disrespect to any autobiographical or biographical authors out there who may be reading this. I'm not talking about my life story here. If I was, I'd

be telling the story and I wouldn't need characters of fiction to do it for me. This isn't my life story, this is just how I feel on a very complicated subject. There's no need for me to give a four hundred-page essay to the world about life and death because that'd just be as boring as hell.

And just in case you were wondering, no, this is NOT about Jesus or God or anything else associated with religion. I'm not a religious person, so don't be fooled by the title. This is a story about a different kind of saviour, a young boy who represents sheer strength and determination. A boy who possesses a will to survive and carry on no matter how much tragedy he endures. A boy who learns many lessons and realises that in the end, life is always worth living.

You know the like. Now that that's all sorted let's GET ON WITH IT!!!

Daniel Christopher Wood (24th January 2004)

Prologue

To die is to live; to live is to die.

These are the words that represent everything I stand for; these are the words that represent everything I believe in. At this moment in time, you probably cannot understand what I mean exactly when I say these words. Rest assured, you will when you have heard my story all the way through.

All I ever wanted in the beginning was a normal, peaceful life. Is that too much to ask? I assume it probably is. Nothing and nobody is perfect. You can't wish for everything to be exactly the way you want it. Why is that? Is it fate? Is it to do with rules? I don't know, I probably never will. I thought I knew why everyone has to suffer at one major turning point in my existence. The reason why I thought I knew certainly had a lot to do with why everyone has to suffer, but in the end, it wasn't the whole truth.

What is the whole truth? That is a question that seemingly has no answer. All I know is that it just happens and we can't stop it, no matter how hard we try. That's no reason to give in to despair, however. We can't be crippled by it. If we let it immobilise us, we can never cherish and utilise the greatest gift of all.

The gift we call life.

Am I starting to sound as though I DO know everything? I sincerely apologise if I am starting to sound arrogant and starting to boast about the knowledge I have accumulated. In answer to the previous question, of course I don't know everything. Nobody knows everything. And I certainly don't delude myself into thinking that I do, unlike the countless arrogant fools that think themselves better than everyone else. I have come across many of them.

Some have reason to be arrogant. Those that are more than capable of backing up what they say are arguably evidence of this. I should know. They have risen out of the rabble to the ranks of my deadliest and greatest enemies.

Arrogance can either lead to an individual's victory or downfall. Again, I should know. I have had more than my fair share of victories and downfalls. As have those around me. Every time I have emerged victorious, I have felt either satisfaction or emptiness. Every time I have been brutally defeated, I have felt like a failure. A pathetic loser, who would never amount to anything and therefore, should have no right to exist.

Were my triumphs and losses caused by arrogance? No, far from it. Unlike my friends and enemies, my victories were due to total focus, belief and calmness. As for my defeats, they were caused by despair, hatred and blind fury.

My losses in battle weren't necessarily my greatest. What I have lost in my existence is far more important than ANY confrontation. Defeats in battle should mean nothing. If anything, they should only make you fight harder next time. Personal losses on the other hand, are damn near crippling. Being broken physically meant nothing to me; I could recover from injury and endure the pains in my body. Being broken emotionally on the other hand, was a different story. It made me believe at times how truly helpless I was. Personal losses nearly tore me apart, they drove me to total despair, making me want to just quit and commit suicide.

But time and time again, I learned to survive, thanks to those closest to me. Taking your own life after numerous failures is pathetic. There's no reason for it. If you killed yourself because of a setback, you would be taking the easy way out, and in doing so, you'd be letting so many of your loved ones down and giving your enemies complete satisfaction. That's not what I wanted to do. I never did and I have no intention of doing so now or in the future.

What about my victories? Why did I say I sometimes felt emptiness after vanquishing an opponent? Because there are times when victory doesn't necessarily make up for any loss or

mistake prior to conflict. Sometimes you can never make up for errors you have made, no matter how much you wish to rectify them. When you lose something forever, nothing you can do will return it. That is the reason for emptiness.

And the times I have taken satisfaction in triumph? Doing so has led to vindication, which has led to delight and has led to some of the greatest moments of my life. There have been very few moments of happiness and pleasure that I have had the privilege to treasure, and those that have occurred will stay with my heart forever. That should apply to everyone.

And what about when it all comes to an end? What about when we finally die? Understandably, it is very frightening. I've seen people die. And it hurts. It hurts a lot. It makes me realise how vulnerable we really are. I know that death is inevitable. We can't stop it no matter how hard we try. And that is what makes it so frightening. Knowing that when somebody you love more than life itself is finally gone, you may never see them again.

Maybe.

When we are alive, we are using the greatest gift of all. A gift that we are fortunate enough to receive. The gift of life isn't just a gift. It's an opportunity, a chance. To love, to laugh, to do whatever you see fit with it. Without it, we wouldn't be able to do the things we love doing. We wouldn't be able to appreciate the people we love. Without life, everything else just couldn't happen.

I think the real reason why so many of us fear death is because of uncertainty. All of us become so used to living, that when it is finally our time to pass away, we don't know for sure what is going to happen next. Is it just like going to sleep and never having to wake up? Are we stuck forever in a dream world where everything is happening for real this time because we won't wake up ever again? Is it just time for us to take a page out of a caterpillar's book, go into our coffin-shaped cocoons and emerge as something similar to a butterfly? A beautiful soul to receive its long deserved rest and problem-free rewards in the skies of heaven?

Or do we just die and become one with eternal darkness forever, totally devoid of everything that life has to offer? Do we

just cease to exist like we have never been here at all? Nobody in the land of living knows for certain. Those who do are those who are no more in our world.

The living can't ask those who are dead. They can't give answers because the voices of the living may not be able to reach them where they are. And even if they do, the dead know they can't hear the replies. There's no other way for those that are still alive to know what becomes of those we love. There's no proof. So the living can only theorise.

And they have developed religion. Many forms of it. Beliefs in gods who may or may not exist. There are those who go around preaching to others about their beliefs, trying to make them believers, sometimes succeeding, sometimes being dismissed as fanatical cretins who should, for the lack of a better term, 'get a life.'

Am I religious? No. Do I dismiss those who are as 'fanatical cretins?' No.

Everyone has the right to believe in whatever they choose to believe. I respect that. I always have and I always will. Personally, I think everyone should respect the beliefs of others and leave it at that.

When I say that, though, I say it with regards to religion. NOT to everything on the planet.

Do I respect people who believe in violence and hatred committed against others? Of course I don't! What a ludicrous thing to say! There are things that make my blood boil. People who hate others just because they are different from the rest of them. So? Does it matter what colour people's skin is or what gender they are?! Does it matter if there are those who believe in something you don't and vice versa?! Does it really matter if people are good at something or not?! I'll tell you this. It shouldn't.

If it does, then why? Because there is a person or people or things that you consider to be 'vastly inferior?' That there is someone or something that you consider to be 'out of your league?' That is pathetic. Truly pathetic. Those are reasons that

are tired and simple. They are not worthy to justify why you resort to violence and discrimination against others.

Am I telling everyone on Earth to stop being violent and just put aside their differences? If I was, I wouldn't be telling everyone what I truly feel. There are those who just can't because of their own damn arrogance. Sadly, there are people who are their own worst enemy. There is nothing we can do no matter how much we want to change things for the better.

And what about when I am forced to resort to hate and violence? I hate it. I do not like hurting others no matter how much they may deserve it. Do I like inflicting punishment on my enemies? No. I consider it barbaric. Really, there is no need for it. When I am forced to fight, or hate for that matter, I am forced to go against everything I stand for.

I take no satisfaction in harm, despite the satisfaction I sometimes take from victory. The reason why I find solace from one and not the other is because when I have stopped someone, I have prevented further conflict, at least for the moment. That is one thing that makes me all the happier.

As for hate, I don't enjoy it. I know it's impossible NOT to hate but there's nothing I can do. Whenever I feel hatred towards someone, I admit that there are times when I want the worst to happen to that person. I'm ashamed to admit it. I'm even more ashamed after the occasions when I've succumbed to it. The reason being because if I hate, I fear that I'll end up being like those who live for it.

And the sad truth is, there's nothing I can do about it. There's nothing any of us can do about it.

Even sadder, hatred leads to despair.

I do have my limits, though. And I do have my morals. As I have said earlier, the gift of life is the most precious of all. It is not for me or anyone else to just take it away selfishly. No-one has the right to steal the life of another, regardless of the reason. No one has the right to destroy families and shatter the happiness of the innocent.

Which is why I have sworn never to kill.

Every bit as much as I have sworn to stop evil and stand for what's right.

So what is the point of me telling you something you may already know? The point is that I've kept things to myself for so long, I've nearly forgotten what it's like to share. I've nearly forgotten what it's like to allow others to help me. I've eventually realised that there's no point in keeping things to yourself. Bearing with whatever's troubling you only makes things worse.

That's the remarkable thing about family and friends. Strength in numbers can help you overcome anything. When you're with those you love, their help can allow you to conquer life's toughest obstacles. And in the end, isn't that what makes us strong? Isn't that what helps us to survive?

I think it is.

As for arrogance, hatred and violence, they still make me sick. They still make me want to lash out at everything. But at the end of the day, it doesn't matter. It shouldn't. It's not important.

To those who are listening to my words, I'll say this. Whatever intense hate you have lingering inside you, let it go, or you'll end up your own worst enemy. You can never embrace what is really important. Arrogance, violence and hatred are never important. Ultimately, it just boils down to total rage, which in turn, leads to total despair.

And that leaves you crippled.

Don't allow yourself to be crippled by despair. Don't allow yourself to be crippled by anything negative. It just isn't worth dying for. Think positive.

That's the only way you can ever enjoy life.

And in my opinion, that's what life should be worth living for. Enjoyment and what is really important.

And what is important? Love.

Out of all the things I have existed for, love is what takes first priority. I exist for my family and friends first and foremost. Why?

Because I love them.

I'd do what is right for them, what they think is best for themselves. In the end, that is what makes life worth living. Living for those that you most care about.

I care about those that I hold close to me. I have protected them with my life and will forever continue to watch over them. As well as all others who are innocent. Why?

Because it is my responsibility and because I care.

You may have noticed I have said 'existed' instead of 'lived.' Why this unusual choice of words? You'll know why when my story is over.

As for my beliefs, do I believe in an afterlife? Find out for yourself.

Do I believe in God? Do I believe in the other gods of other religions that I have heard so much of? Wait and see.

The only thing I can say is this. I have seen a god. I have battled a god. Not a god of noble creation or a god of good. But a god of total darkness. An evil that represents all that is negative. A god that is the scourge of all. An entity that for a time, made me think of the false reason why we all have to suffer.

Listen to me. I must sound like a preacher. Forgive me if I do. I do not mean to.

Have the words that I have said so far sounded like total nonsense? Perhaps they have. Perhaps I haven't realised it yet. You decide.

Do you want to know why I think like this? Do you want to know why I have said what I said?

If you do, then you shall be told. Not by me, but by another.

And just exactly who am I? Do I sound like an old man who possesses a vast amount of wisdom and knowledge? I can assure you I am not. I am just a boy. A boy who has learnt a lot. A boy who wishes for the best, but receives the worst.

But I never let fate cripple me.

My name is Jaron. Now and forever, whether in life or in death, you can be certain of one thing.

I am the Saviour.

Chapter 1

The Start of the Crusade

London.

The rain beat down heavily, billions of drops of water poured from the clouds, thundering onto the vast streets below. To the majority of the population of Britain's capital city, it was considered to be merely bad weather, the worst kind you could get. To others though, lurking in the shadows of darkness, it was a sign. A sign to burst out and unleash.

A flood from heaven, washing away the past, cleansing the dish of its filth and allowing a new beginning to take place. Removing the traces of mistakes and allowing the freshness of a new era.

Or a continuous reminder of how miserable life can be. A *haunting* reminder.

To one individual, it was taken as all of these things.

The boy sat huddled on the top of Big Ben; right on the edge of the roof, resting above the enormous clock faces. It was the first time he had ever done such a thing. He looked down at the city below him. It was a tremendous view. He had never looked at one of the world's most beautiful cities like this before. Beneath the safety of his mask, he smiled. To him, it was a pleasure. He'd been terrified of his past and what it had done to him. He was still a petrified little boy, afraid of telling what the cold, cruel world had done to him, fearing that if he confessed, the world would punish him even more.

Which is why he hid. Hid his viciously scarred face from the people who would surely stop and look at him, only to cower in fear, shudder in disgust or laugh in cruelty.

But despite the pain, despite the fear, the boy knew he had a choice. He could either be crippled by his past, or put it behind him and use it for something positive. He had a choice. He had no interest in punishing the world for what it had done. Vengeance was petty and unnecessary according to his consideration. To give into hate, would be to become an animal. A heartless, unfeeling animal. That was the last thing he wanted.

To be cruel and malicious would just help to make the world worse. And he didn't believe in making things worse. He was here to change things for the better.

After all, it was what he had chosen.

The rain was very symbolic. It signalled how miserable his life still was, yet at the same time, it signalled change, washing away the dirt that was comprised of trauma and pain and making way for a clean beginning.

The rain was cold. It beat down hard against the boy's skin. It wasn't surprising that he was shivering, albeit ever so slightly. He was wearing only a T-shirt, jeans, trainers and gloves with metal studs. All coloured black to allow him to hide in the shadows of darkness. His mask, also the colour of darkness, covered his mouth and one half of his face. The scarred half. The continuous reminder.

The boy didn't care about the cold. He didn't care about the hardness of the raindrops as they pounded relentlessly on his head, dripped off his short, black hair and trailed down the exposed, undamaged half of his face. He'd been collecting his thoughts for the last hour or so and realised that he was ready to endure and be ready for whatever may cross his path. So what if he had suffered? So what if he was scarred for the rest of his life? It didn't matter.

As the boy looked down at the beautifully lit streets of London below him, the view had reminded him of one thing.

Despite its problems, Earth is a beautiful place to live.

He stood up and prepared himself. It was time.

All of a sudden, a bright light rose in front of him. The boy just stood still on the edge of the roof and glared at the light, not wincing at all despite its bright intensity. He felt vindicated.

Regardless of the tragedy that had scourged his life, there were those who genuinely cared for his welfare. Proof that there is, was and always will be a small glimmer of light no matter how much darkness plagues the world.

“DON’T JUMP, KID!!!” cried the helicopter’s pilot, “WE’RE HERE TO HELP!!! DON’T DO ANYTHING STUPID!!!”

The simplicity of the statement was understandable. After all, how many people had climbed the highest architectural structures that the world had constructed as vast landmarks, only to use them as diving boards to the pool of death, swimming in concrete grounds below for the briefest of seconds of life left? Countless lives. All of them squandered without meaning.

He looked down. Bright searchlights were fully operational below, bathing him in light even more and making him the centre of attention. Thousands of people were looking up with dread and shock. The majority of them were citizens, opinion divided on the situation as it usually was between them. Others were members of the local constabulary trying to devise a strategy for handling the situation. Others were medics on standby. Others were members of the press.

The boy hid his disapproval. There were times when he wondered whether members of various news factions actually cared about human life, or were just in it to make money to fuel their greed. As always, television crews and newspaper photographers seemed to turn a life and death situation into a media circus, to try and make things more entertaining than they were supposed to be.

He understood and respected the fact that there were things the world had to know but nowhere near as much as he appreciated the truth that there were times when people had a right to privacy. The boy didn’t ask to be the centre of attention. He wasn’t in it for the glory or the publicity, he was just here to make a difference. Most of the time, the boy viewed the press as a flock of vultures who fed on the misfortune of others and pissed on what was left.

The teenager viewed the police as a more than necessary force for combating evil. There were countless people who defied rules and spat in the face of everything that was good and decent. Despite the sad truth that there was horrible corruption that sometimes plagued it and destroyed hope for others who really needed it, there was also genuine honesty that existed within the police force. Furthermore, it seemed to greatly outweigh whatever corruption *did* exist. To the boy, it was reassurance that good would ultimately prevail.

The medics went without question. Doctors saved lives. Every hospital in the world represented hope. Hope that total health could one day be brought to total perfection and life could possibly be made everlasting. At the moment, lives of millions could only be prolonged but they could still be saved from being cut tragically short. Further proof that there was *still* hope.

As for the civilians, he viewed them as his property. Not in a sense that he owned them and could dictate terms to them but rather in a sense that he should look after them and protect them with his life. Just like the city.

“Kid, we’re dropping a ladder!” one of the rescue team cried through the megaphone. “You’ve got your whole life ahead of you! Don’t waste it!”

The teenager continued to stand tall, not paying attention to the powerful gales created by the helicopter’s rotors that blew through his hair and hard against his face. His balance was uncanny. Even as he stood on the edge of Big Ben’s roof, the force of the craft’s downdraft threatening to make him fall, the boy remained calm and poised, never showing signs of toppling.

The boy looked above him as the rope ladder trailed down from the hovering vehicle and unfolded before him. The people in the helicopter seemed genuinely concerned for the teenager’s welfare. The boy admired and respected their courage, ascending so high into the night sky, risking the serious possibility of falling hundreds and hundreds of feet to a horrible demise, all to save a human life. That was the kind of compassion that the boy cherished and made him feel honoured.

“We’ll help you get down!” offered the rescue crew,
“Please! Let us help!”

“Your invitation honours me,” the boy said to himself, “but
it is unnecessary.”

“What? I can’t hear you!”

The boy paid no attention to the reply. He shut all the noise
out. He shut everything out, preparing himself for what he was
about to do.

It was midnight. The clock tower struck.

One.

The boy knew that he could do it. That he *would* do it.

Two.

And those who would bear witness would continue to
express their horror.

Three.

The boy thought about how reminiscent the situation was.

Four.

Of how it would be like a great sinner had been cast into the
pit of Hades, to be eaten alive by demons that were hungering for
his soul, leaping up and down, each creature frantically trying to
be the first to dine.

Five.

But the boy knew it wouldn’t happen to him.

Six.

He wasn’t a sinner, only a victim.

Seven.

And the crowd wasn’t a horde of demons, only citizens,
police, medics and the media.

Eight.

He wasn’t dead, he was still alive.

Nine.

He wouldn’t let this fate happen to him.

Ten.

He knew he was going to die.

Eleven.

But he knew it wouldn’t be tonight.

Twelve.

At the stroke of midnight, the boy leapt off Big Ben, into the abyss below, where certain death would surely await.

Hundreds and hundreds of screams of horror roared and echoed from the vastness of the panicked crowd, the intensity of the noise increasing gradually as the teenager's descent into the abyss continued to accelerate, the enormous power of gravity pulling harder and harder.

At the last possible moment before impact, the boy pulled a cord from his backpack. A giant glider unfolded out of it. The storm was rising in ferocity. Riding the almost uncontrollable air currents with finesse, the child swooped above the crowd that stood in awe, riding higher and higher into the night sky, ignoring the bitter showers that even now continued to hammer away at him.

He landed perfectly on a rooftop far away from the houses of Parliament.

Far away from the public eye.

The boy removed the glider and the backpack from his shoulders and proceeded to disassemble his equipment and neatly repack everything. Donning his backpack once more, he ran as fast as he could. The thunder and lightning making its presence known to London in the meantime.

He leapt from roof to roof, running atop buildings, all the while acknowledging the weather as being appropriate to his situation.

He arrived at an abandoned warehouse, climbed down a ladder and entered via a broken window. All was dark in the cavernous room, the darkness occasionally being cancelled out by the flickers of intense white light that only lightning could offer, only to succumb to darkness once again. He walked over to the table and turned the lamp on. Now a small trace of light existed within the vast darkness. He took his backpack off and threw it at the coat pegs nearby on the wall where his wardrobe also stood. The backpack slammed against the wall, the straps grappling the pegs where it now hung like a chain on a hook.

The boy walked over to his wardrobe, opened the doors and took out the sword that was resting against the back. He picked it

up and strapped it to his back. Closing the doors of the wardrobe and turning the light off, he headed out of the window and climbed back up to the roof of the warehouse.

The teenager looked at Big Ben faraway in the distance, the bad weather still wouldn't relent.

I didn't ask to be the centre of attention, the boy thought to himself, Still, they know of my presence. Perhaps it won't be necessary to keep a low profile. Does everything have to be kept secret?

He looked up to the sky.

The flood from heaven begins or the reminder continues to haunt. It is up to me to decide. It is up to me.

The boy ran across from the rooftop, leaping from building to building. Now officially patrolling.

Jaron is my name, the Saviour is who I am.

The crusade had begun.

Chapter 2

The Arrival of Reluctance

The taxi pulled up outside the block of flats. The passenger got out.

“Give me a minute to get my stuff out of the boot, will you?” said the passenger.

“Yeah, whatever,” the cab driver gruffly replied, as he opened the boot so the teenager could get his bags. Once the boy had gathered his belongings and closed the boot, he went back to the driver’s window and took his wallet out of his pocket.

“How much is that, mate?”

“Eleven quid.”

The boy handed him a twenty. “Keep the change.”

“Have you got money to burn, or something?”

“Too much,” smiled the boy, “but then again, you can never have too much. I suppose I should be singing ‘I’m in the money’, but my singing’s shit according to everyone else and I might become an audible mugging target.”

“Smart move,” agreed the taxi driver. “Cheers, mate.”

The taxi drove off as the teenager walked up the stairs to his home. It was a bright, sunny morning. For once in his life, fate was smiling on him. His life was problem free. So there was every reason for him to be happy. For now, anyway.

When he reached the level where his flat was, he knocked on the door of his home. The door opened, and a middle-aged man stood before him.

“Well, you said don’t come home if I don’t win,” smiled the boy. “Bloody good thing I won then, ain’t it?”

“It’s called sarcasm, Adam,” replied Paul, his foster father.

“Well, duh.”

The two smiled at one another before hugging.

“Welcome home, champ.”

“Great to be home, Paul.”

As the two entered the front room, Adam’s foster mother, brothers and sisters ran into the room, each taking their turns in hugging their adopted brother.

“Had any breakfast?” asked Gemma, Adam’s foster mother.

“Really should have eaten something on the plane,” confessed Adam, “but you know how much of crap that food tastes.”

“I’ll fix you up a full English breakfast. A champion’s breakfast.”

“Nothing but the best in this place”, smiled Adam as he licked his lips.

Adam looked at the television. Last night’s dive off Big Ben was being shown on the news.

“Take it you’ve heard about this nutter, then?”

“Heard about him?! Everyone’s heard about this stupid git, Alice. If it had only been off a bog standard flat building, it would’ve just been news in *this* country. It’s not every day you have a ninja jump off one of the greatest landmarks in the world.”

“Nobody likes a show-off, I guess,” shrugged Tracy.

“Nobody sane, little sister,” nodded Adam. “Nobody sane.”

“He looks your age, Adam.”

“I’d say about fifteen to seventeen, yeah.”

“And here comes the champ!” cried Dave as he switched over to one of the sports news channels where images of the kickboxing world championship finals that had taken place in New York, at Madison Square Garden, were being broadcast. Adam Soranatos had spent the last three months away from his foster family in America, training for the tournament. His victory a few nights ago had given him his first ever world kickboxing title.

“One more for the road, eh?” said Dave, “First those karate championships, then that tae kwon do tournament, and now this. There’s no stopping our champ.”

“Not now, anyway. No one’s unbeatable. I’ll lose one day, but it sure as hell won’t be now.”

“We were rooting for you all the way, big brother.”

“I know, Alex,” smiled Adam. “That means a lot to me. Every bit as much as you guys being my family. I couldn’t ask for anyone else.”

His foster brothers and sisters smiled at him, knowing that he meant what he said.

“Come on, you softies,” smiled Adam, with his arms spread out. “Big group hug.”

Later that night, a huge celebration was underway at the Soranatos’ home. Family and friends were there to celebrate Adam’s victory and more importantly, his return home to London. This was the one thing Adam treasured more than anything else, being with his family.

The Soranatos’ partied for hours. They boozed, danced and laughed until they could do so no more. Adam was reunited with those that he cared for more than anything else, he had come home.

And for the first time in a long while, he was *completely* happy.

“Surely, things can only get better from here, can’t they?”

Adam looked where he was standing. He was in a spotlight, approximately five metres in diameter.

“You’re happy in the light, aren’t you?”

Adam looked around and above him. His surroundings were completely pitch black.

“But unlike *him*...”

Adam looked to see a masked boy running towards him. Despite the total darkness, Adam could see the boy as clear as day. Adam looked at him with curiosity. He was roughly the same age as him, more likely a year younger.

“...you’re most happy taking centre stage.”

The boy faded out of sight like he never existed.

“The spotlight is all you really care for, isn’t it? Being the centre of attention is all that has ever mattered to you.”

“THAT’S NOT TRUE!!!” bellowed Adam at the top of his voice. The voice echoed for several seconds. When the echoing had subsided within the cavernous environment, the mysterious questioner paused for a few seconds before continuing.

“Oh, really?”

“Yes,” Adam fiercely replied, becoming more and more infuriated by whoever was taunting him.

“You cling onto your precious light as though your life depends on it. You like being a good little boy, don’t you? Even though you don’t have to.”

“I do it because it’s right.”

“So noble,” the voice continued. “But you know that nobility only holds one back.”

“I don’t let anything hold me back.”

“Yes. You do.”

“If you’re such a big know-it-all,” asked Adam, “then why don’t you tell me what’s holding me back?”

“Fear,” answered the voice. “Fear of being unable to survive without it.”

“Without what?”

“The light. Try to deny it all you wish, but there is a small part of you that likes what’s outside, isn’t there?”

Adam had had enough. He tried walking out of the light but he couldn’t get out. It was like he was in a large glass cylinder, with his hands firmly pressed against the invisible barrier that wouldn’t let him leave.

“Let me out of here!”

“You want to go to the darkness, don’t you? Yes, I knew it all along.”

Adam continued banging against the barrier.

“And so did you.”

“LET ME OUT OF HERE!!!” roared the teenager as his stress continued to build up.

“You never realise how unhappy you are with what you’ve got until it’s too late,” continued the voice. “You aren’t happy with your family or anything else that light can offer.”

“THAT’S NOT TRUE!!!” shouted Adam as he stopped banging, fell to his knees and placed his face in his hands, “It’s...not...true.”

“Then why are you acting like it is? You like what darkness offers. We were all born in it, just like we all die in it. So in order to survive, we accept truth, embrace it, become it. That is the only place where hate can survive. And you have lots of it, don’t you?”

“Yes,” whimpered Adam, clearly ashamed.

“It is a shame that you have so much of it, and you can’t put it to good use while you are deluded. Things can never get better. Light only lasts for the briefest of moments before it goes out and darkness reclaims its rightful place.”

The light went out and Adam could no longer see where he was in the darkness.

“You’ve enjoyed the light while it lasted, but now it is time. Time to become one with darkness. The worst will happen to everyone and everything you love sooner than you think and all you’ll have left is hate. Just vast, accumulated hate that you’ll unleash on everyone that has punished you.”

Yes,” sneered Adam.

“And there are a lot of people you want to share that hate with, aren’t there?”

“YES!!!”

“THEN SHARE IT!!!” ordered the voice, “IT IS TIME!!!”

“YES!!!”

Adam smiled with savage glee as at long last he could see himself in the darkness. He could see his enemies all around him. He ran up to them and brutally murdered every single one of them. He stood atop the mountain of bodies, covered in their blood, laughing with sadistic joy, realising that this was him. The darkness was him. The path of evil was where he belonged. And he knew that in darkness, he was truly free.

He was at his happiest, completely without trouble, restriction or misery.

Then he realised, as he looked all around him, and at his stained hands, that he was wrong.

Dead wrong.

“NOOOOOOOOOO!!!!!!!!!!!!!!”

Adam sat up from his bed immediately, screaming from the depths of his voice.

He breathed heavily, in and out, tears flowing from his eyes, horrified with what he had just dreamt.

“Oh, God.”

He looked towards his bedroom window, it was still dark outside.

“Fucking hell,” said Adam, exasperated as he placed his hand over his face. He looked at the view of London again. He noticed a full moon, as bright as it possibly could be. Adam smiled a little.

“Adam, are you alright?”

Adam looked to see the door open and Gemma standing in front of him, looking concerned. Adam wiped the tears from his eyes and smiled at her.

“I am now.”

His foster mother smiled and hugged him.

“Had that nightmare again, huh?”

“Yeah. Happens every once in a while, don’t it?”

“You’ve had it about two, three or four times every year since you were eight years old.”

“Dreams are supposed to go away,” said Adam as he shook his head, “Why this one won’t is a mystery beyond me.”

“It’s a mystery to every psychiatrist you’ve been to,” said Gemma, “Maybe it’s just one of those things that can’t go away. Don’t let it get you down, love.”

“I won’t, Gemma,” replied Adam. He then sighed and said, “I just wish I knew what it meant, that’s all.”

As Adam and Gemma went back to bed, a mysterious figure looked at the building below him. He had monitored the conversation.

“You will soon, boy. You will soon.”

He turned and walked away, retreating to where he belonged.