

Buzzing.  
Flesh burning.  
Bone sawing.  
Mind numbing.  
Ecstasy invasion.  
The metallic whirring keeps me sane.  
The stench I hate.

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-My Face-

With the sky forever black it's difficult to keep track of these rolling days. My ever-increasing tolerance in the artist's taste, h-8, makes it damn near impossible. What is it they always say? Everyone has a vice. Masochism is the world's newest (and oldest) vice. The trimming of flesh. The installation of mechanical warfare. The final metamorphosis of art, blended with the scum of technology. Trading meat for sleek new chrome is in. The modern battlefield; a holy trend.

The room around me seems smaller than a few moments ago. Borderline claustrophobic. I notice a new crew of unfamiliar faces sitting around me. More Phasers. Blue and yellow neon. When did they come in?

"How many pincers can it really take?" Brock, the brute of my waking nightmares, sits his broad build on a zipping holo-chair spitting his crude jokes. The room bustles formulaically. The joke was shit.

With a gold tooth grin he watches me unblinkingly. With a master's eye.

Thirty-two percent of my body does belong to him. All thanks to a selfish lover. My selfish lover.

*Her.*

*Heaven.*

Heaven is her name.

She passes the floor. Her bare legs catch the eyes of every Phaser in the sardine room. Robotic and real. I can't keep my own off of her. But it's not her legs I look at.

Her short hair deathgrips my gaze. A hue of magenta shimmering to violet. Cut just above her sleek shoulders. One of which is toned with trim flesh covered muscle. The other, however, is chrome shiny, reflecting the flashing neon lights fighting its way into the confinements of this agitating room.

Heaven carries a tray. Three glasses of Essence. Towards the brute.

A wink is sent my way as she passes me by.

"Here we are." she utters. Her voice is sex. One whisper would make any man crumble into debris.

I turn to find a shuttered window. I can't stand to look at her like this. At the mercy of these animals. And with little bother as well. If she could change it...she still wouldn't. I've known this.

Burning rain tatters away. It drowns the jungle noises of the street. A street full of self-pleasing pain inflicting infidels obsessed with the newest of implants. At least mine were forced upon me. Mine aren't of my choosing, and somehow that makes it better.

My bronze fingers tap. If my legs weren't alien machinery in need of an oil change my knees would bounce aggressively with anxiety like they used to when blood coursed through them.

I've been here for too long. Brock enjoys my presence but by this point I would've earned a few gut punches and a joke describing, in gruesome detail, which body part he'd wish to trade out for the shabbiest piece of metal on the grid. Except it wouldn't be a joke.

But none of that has happened. And so I worry.

I try to catch Heaven's eyes but instead they dart to the other men in suggestive manners. I look back out to the filth that clog the streets to save myself the disgust.

I hear her giggle behind me. Brock's deep voice whispering in her ear.

"Careful now." I hear him say. Louder. For me to hear. I know it's bait. Just as I know that I'm meant to take it. He wants me to.

"Little Damian might not like that coming from his *woman*."

I turn around, already knowing what to expect.

Heaven sits on Brock's lap, giggling as she caresses his face. The other Phasers are looking at me as well.

Though some of them don't seem fully present. The Essence has practically immobilized them. A few are completely out cold. Not much of a tolerance for the h-8, I suppose. This makes me smirk.

"Something comical, bronzie?" a faceless Phaser says.

"I just wonder why you bother..." My words silence the room. They must be wondering if they've heard right.

"I've been sitting here thinking about which limb you'll be taking from me today and I wonder what's got you waiting."

Brock pushes Heaven off his lap. I can tell he doesn't know yet whether he should lash out or hear what more I have to say. But I say no more. I hold my tongue. I stare defiantly, mimicking the strength and stupor of a man I am not.

His Phasers look to him now.

Realizing he's waited for too long, Brock chuckles and sits back.

Heaven doesn't even seem to realize what is happening. She won't even attempt to. Instead she'll stare out the shuttered window like it's a work of art.

"And what makes you think I want another limb from you?" he says.

At this point my bravery seems to have melted away from me. Short lived. Like a lit match in the acid rain.

"I just-"

"No, it won't be a limb today. Damian." Brock smiles chrome ear to chrome ear. "As of now I wasn't quite sure which piece of you I would sell but now I know. Marketers should be happy."

Fear fills me. Any prior hatred has been dampened.

Brock grabs Heaven firmly by the back of the neck. She likes it.

He whispers into her ear as her eyes widen. Shock and disgust tell me it's not good. Not a moment after she is smiling again. Another crude joke at my expense.

She looks at me. Stands and approaches smoothly.

"My love," she says to me. "One last kiss for memory's sake." She bends down and locks her lips with mine for the hundredth time. Each time feeling like the first. But it is not.

My vision blurs. Her lipstick must have been stained with a new sedative of some kind. I've grown invulnerable to the others.

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What I know to be only later that night I find myself under a familiar dreaded light. Strapped to an old surgeon's table. Head affixed.

Brock stands overwatching my procedure. Heaven hugs his arm, looking down with pity. And disgust. A Biofex surgeon analyzes the lower part of my face. His punk rock appearance tells me he has long since been retired. Perhaps purchased from a dark market. He fashions a green mohawk and implanted digital eyewear.

This isn't good.

A facial model glitches on the phaseless monitor. It highlights and lists specific items rising in high popularity. Lips. Teeth. Tongue. Jaw. Skin.

A live bidding is occurring. Numbers rise next to each of the items.

My items I've realized. My lips. My teeth. My tongue. My jaw. My skin. Panic will take over the edge. I wriggle to no avail.

The whirring starts. The metal comes. Soon to be followed by immeasurable pain.

"Heaven!" I attempt to utter through the blood and shock.

Before the darkness comes.

—These God-Forsaken Streets—

Monster.

Now I am a monster.

My new jaw aches oddly enough. Cold now against the diesel wind of these god-forsaken streets. The raw skin that makes up my leftover face burns. My cheeks. My eyes and eyelids. My twisted nose. They beg to be ripped off too. To be done with. I narrowly fight off the urge to claw at them myself.

Along with the pain, a recurring concern haunts my thoughts.

*Heaven.*

Surely she'll throw me away now. Surely.

I trip over needles and shrapnel walking down this advertisement street.

Lighting my pathway are seven foot tall interchanging commercials and promotions. Holograms wink and dance revealingly. They sell new cellular implants, holo-devices, cybersex, modern digital property and so on.

I pass by a throbbing holo-billboard of automated warnings regarding a "*serial murderer*" on the loose.

Bright white and red neon flash repeatedly, shaping the blacked-in shape of a man. The message above it blinks: "Murderer known as *The Biter* on the loose. 11 Dead Already. Are you next?"

Silly name. *Biter*. I wonder if that's how he murders his victims. Curious. If I still owned my old mouth I would twist my lips into a grin. Maybe even chuckle.

Another holo-billboard with the same message lights the road only ten feet past the last. It casually illuminates the acid-heads huddled in the crevices. How they try so desperately to escape the passive rain.

Watching them scurry around foments the hatred within me. Not for Heaven or for my horrid appearance.

Not even for Brock, truthfully. But for these cursed streets.

Looking to the blackened sky I watch as hover-crafts also evade falling rain. Some host slaves made of steel and artificially intelligent life forms. The spoils of the vicious hidden from the burn of a long lost sun. It seems the skies have sinners too. Perhaps even more than these streets.

Once I thought this city was beautiful. How could one ever be so naive?

“Whaddya looking for?”

Catching me by surprise I quickly spin to find the voice. A body mechanic by the looks. They wear densely-oiled rags and multi-colored stains on their baggy pants. Rough-tough type with a titanium arm as an eyesore. No other metal.

Upon closer examination I realize that the body mechanic is a woman. A young woman. And again I am reminded of Heaven. Though *this* woman looks nothing like her. Not even close.

“*Ieee-*” is all I can manage. My new vocal downloads will take a few more hours to adjust.

“New?” she says, gesturing to my face. I nod.

She looks me up and down making note of my creaking legs and my grating fingers. My metal.

“Could polish them up if you need.” Her voice croaks and hums like a car of old as she converses with me knowing that I can’t yet answer. “Switch them out even.” *Too expensive* is the first thought in my head.

“Come on.” She tilts her head to the small entrance behind her. “Won’t cost you much. Looks like you need the help.” She walks inside knowing she’s grasped my attention with talks of lowered price.

I have half a mind to just keep walking on, but looking once down the street’s oncoming filth pushes me to follow after her. Away from all this grime at least. Where else am I meant to go anyways?

— —

The place is packed inside.

First we pass through a loading chamber. Techno-fabrics disguise the suffering crumble of the walls. A hoard of different experimental metals litter the holo-desks and buzzing floors.

We pass through into the digital room. An ancient one at that. It’s a small confinement with old dismembered computers attached to one another. Wires sag high and low. Plugs stab the ceiling, the walls. She pays the tight compaction no mind, continuing on.

The room we stop at is a *trimming* workplace. Simple. Larger. Not as filled.

At the center of the trimming room sits an electric table-bed. It looks an awful lot like the surgeon’s table from only hours ago. A shiver works its way halfway through my spine.

I soon notice four much smaller rooms circling this one like hubs. Bubble-rooms large enough to host only one client at a time. Three of these doors are closed. The last is open. I peek inside to find a withered looking man with body gear and eye covers. He croaks in pain and tweaks with joy. I can only imagine what he’s here for.

Quickly noticing, the mechanic rushes to close the door and leaves me in the room alone in favor of adjusting their settings.

Not much time has passed in this room and already I grow bored. Feeling like I’ve made a mistake I stumble for the door before something catches my eye.

On a wall-screen the blueprint of two heavy mechanized bodies rotate and exchange information. The rapid pace makes each model look as if they are both changing at the twitch of every second. I can't tell what the exchange of data is for but clearly it focuses heavily on the brain. Both of which are humanly intact.

The longer I stare at the blueprint the more I understand.

"Just a little project of mine." The mechanic extracts a keyboard from her hips and taps at it aggressively prompting the blueprint to fade away.

She moves closer to inspect the rotten work of my implanted jaw but I flinch reflexively. I don't yet know her, and the stench of her garments repels my highly sensitive nose.

"I'm Grima." She offers her hand so that I might shake it. I don't.

Not giving up, she finds a tablet and a zipper-pen to hand to me. I scribble "Damian" on it, to which she nods.

"Iron sweat. That's a *millenia* name."

I can't tell whether she comments to compliment or insult. Already this Grima is beginning to worry me. Not because she's possibly insulted me or suspiciously interested in my condition. Not even because she's a stranger with mysterious intent. She worries me because already she is starting to infuriate me. A new habit I am unable to shake.

Only a dozen minutes of knowing this woman and already I have condemned her for being less than me.

She pulls a box of equipment from under the table-bed. An assortment of metals I can choose from.

I dig my metal fingers through it. A pipe of brass. A wrench of steel. Digits of bronze. But then I see it.

My eyes refuse to blink as if this metal would change right before me by the time I could open them back up.

Immediately Grima notices what it is I want.

"Ahh, strong one. Not too much of that around here. Especially not used for fingers." she says. But that won't change my mind. Tungsten has been rare ever since the authorities have resorted to utilizing it for defense weaponry. True plates of armor, made flesh-like ironically.

"If this is the one you want...only fingers. Nothing else. And that's already a lot." I nod my approval.

She moves her hand near my jaw once more. This time I don't flinch. I allow her to run her finger along my brass pointed chin.

"I'm sure you had a good face." she whispers, looking at me like a new project. Like a long lost puppy waiting for the right care. And for the moment I give that to her. I make my eyes water. I make myself pathetic.

But, in truth, I want this metal. In truth, even though I don't actually feel it, I can't stand her touch.

-A Bigger Dog-

My fingers grate no more.

But my artificial nerves stun my legs. I sit in a pool of techni-liquid to heal my aches. Six electrical plugs connect to the nodes on each leg starting from the hips to the ankles. I can't stop ogling my new fingers.

They're incredibly strong now. Earlier I tested them by crushing the edge of my marble countertop. I'll have to clean that up.

A call purrs on the wall across from me. It's from Brock. I don't answer it.

A minute passes by before another call shines on my wall. This time it's from Heaven. So I answer.

“Honey...” she starts, and already I am won over.

“Where are you hiding, honey?” her voice is as euphoric as ever.

“I—” My vocal cords still hurt. *“I. heal. home. my. voice-”*

“Yes, I can see that. Brock needs you, honey. Here. I’m waiting. Come and find me.” she says before the call ends and leaves my wall dark again.

I know I have little choice. I know this won’t be good. But I feel an impossible urge to see her again.

A need.

And now I have new fingers. Weapons. For the brute. My *new* metal.

— —

It’s been nearly a full day since my last mechanical implantation. Being back in this room makes it feel like no time has passed at all. It looks the exact same.

The seven Phasers surrounding me look at me with curiosity and horror. My new appearance is still jarring. Brock and Heaven are not here. Not surprisingly.

A clunk at the door lets us know more Phasers have arrived. Four more. Why could they be gathering so many?

At the back of these Phasers I find Brock. Without Heaven.

“Let’s get this started then.” Brock mumbles. “Ready to act tough, champ?” He passes me by and pats my jaw lightly. It still hurts. My fingers tense tight. I imagine what they could do to his throat.

“This won’t be nothing. Right Brock?” a Phaser says. He looks worried.

“Right.” is Brock’s response, but he doesn’t seem so sure.

Three ominous knocks gently rattle the entrance. The men around me sit up. Even Brock.

One of them opens the door and sits back down. Slowly, three men enter.

Two of these men wear short gray tech-coats with titanium lacings and imitation gas masks for theatrical effect.

The last man doesn’t fashion either. Instead he wears a long, black captain’s trench-coat (like the ones of the old world). Patches of the Ministrus cover his coat’s shoulders. An Inspector I deduce. Most noticeably his face is free of any metal whatsoever. No mechanical implantations, no piercings, not even any jewelry. Slowly I notice that the rest of his body also shows no signs of implantations. He walks with a very human stride and refrains his arms restfully behind his back. It’s majestic. He is a full, natural human. Very few of his kind. We all notice it.

Brock shifts to stand from his holo-chair but the man puts his hand out to stop him. Waves for him to sit back down. He does.

“I am Inspector Cain and I’ve come only for one small thing.” the man starts.

“Would you like to sit, Inspector?” Brock asks. Almost a whimper.

“This won’t take long.” The Inspector slowly starts to circle Brock, hardly taking note of his small army of Phasers. He does, however, take note of the ugly setting of this room.

“I’ve come to adjust rates. My superiors aren’t happy with our current arrangement and request an increase.”

His voice reminds me of old world documentations I used to watch.

“I believe we settled-”

“Mr. Brock, this is not a conversation. This is a message. I am the messenger.” This shuts him up. “Our cut will increase...15%.”

The room shifts to this news. The Phasers give themselves away.

“15% is...”

“Reasonable.” the Inspector cuts in. “This will make your final adjusted rate 30%. We expect the next payment in the following rotation.”

“Why?” is all Brock can muster.

The room sits with the question hanging in the air before the Inspector walks over to Brock. He crouches before him calmly.

“Your business is deplorable, Mr. Brock. The price must be worth the sacrifice.” And with that the three men leave the room, disappearing into the rain.

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I stalk the streets from above. Jumping from roof to roof. I am looking for something in particular.

I stand across from an array of tech-flats. Like stars splattered on the canvas of this building. I hastily remove my bino-glassware and use them to see directly into the living conditions of these techno-flats.

A couple arguing in this one. Teen junkies shooting up in that one.

It takes me a full twenty-seven minutes before I finally find the one I’m looking for. On the top floor.

Walking around in it is my object of obsession.

*The Inspector.*

I watch for a long time, taking notes throughout the night. The straps of my duffel-bag squeeze with anxiety as the weight shapes it into a long range device.

#### —The Body of My Ancestors—

Dragging such weight unbalances my makeshift knees. But I am almost there now.

I strike the door. Anxiety and excitement rise inside me.

“What is it?—”

Grima opens the thick metal door between us. She stands across from me, attempting to understand what I carry beside me. Granted, it’s an odd sight.

“Come in...” she says hesitantly.

I drag the body behind me like a flesh, bone-made duffel-bag. I’ve gotten rid of my remaining gear. Lost forever in a forgotten black tar river.

I carry on, strictly to the room I need. The trimming workplace. Grima follows behind me. Clearly she is in want of an explanation.

“Damian. What the fuck is-?”

I step past the computer room into the central room. The table-bed sits undisturbed. Just like before. The four hubs are empty. I throw the body onto the digi-floor.

“Who is this, Damian?”

I look over to her, elated. “*This is Inspector Cain.*”

“An Inspector?!” She sounds petrified. “You can’t kidnap an Inspector, Damian. And you definitely can’t bring him here—”

"*I need a transplant.*" I interrupt.

"So now you wanna steal from an Inspector now?"

"*Not of the body...Of the mind.*" My words stunt her. She's piecing it together now.

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"*I know about your experiments.*" She begins to panic. Caught. Cornered. She'll have no choice. "*If you do this...everything can change. Imagine an Inspector at your side.*"

She thinks. Slowly I notice that this might convince her. No. This *will* convince her. I only need to push.

"*I need...your help.*"

Her eyes tell me that I've won.

Within ten minutes I am strapped to the surgeon's table as another has been elevated next to mine. The Inspector is maintained unconscious on this one.

"This is gonna hurt a bit." Her voice quakes as she connects wirings to my head, reaching into the crevices of my dirty mind. My brain buzzes. She forces leather in between my teeth as the grinding starts. The Inspector won't even feel this agony. We won't even share that. How lucky.

Instead his punishment will be waking up to find himself in the bounds of another body. A doomed body. Too damned for redemption.

A compression to the brain. A high pitched screech only I can hear. Lights flashing. And once again the all too familiar darkness that awaits me.

— —

I've been staring at this stranger in the mirror for hours. It looks back into my eyes. Confused and scared. I test my new body like an acrobat. I stretch and bend to feel the tug of real muscle and the crackle of real bone. I arch my feet and pull my legs.

It's been years since I've known what this was like. An all natural body. A human once again.

Though it will take time to fully adopt this face, once I do it'll be worn like a badge of honor. A staple of authority. Just like the Ministrus badge on my shoulder.

The muffled grunts of my old body begin to stir as the Inspector has realized what this means. The first half of the hour was claimed by confused shock. Perhaps he even thought he was in a dream. The remainder of the hour has assured him that this is reality.

Beside him Grima lies on the floor. Her head has been leaking blood for a long time now. A torso-sized pool of red dampens her hair.

I convinced myself that she would be a problem. Long before knocking on her doors. Secrets tend to fall apart easily. Having that loom over me would drain the power out of my new stature.

I move to the old me. He scurries back. A petrified weakling now. How pathetic I must've looked to the Inspector the first time he laid eyes on me. How pathetic he looks now before me.

I unhook his metallic hips at the base without any defiance. Next I unbuckle his fingers. Lastly I disarm his jaw, leaving him half a face.

Instead of fighting, the Inspector cries.

I push his condensed body into the duffel and zip him up. I will come back for my old metal another time.

Now I have work to do. Long overdue.



–The Trumpets–

Nothing changes. Even through these new eyes.

I walk through the same grime. The same filth fills my nostrils. The same rain lightly burns my skin.

The only recognizable difference is that the Phaser house has now changed to green and purple neon.

The carrier I took from Grima's workshop rattles over cracked gravel. Towards Brock's Phaser house. The Inspector lies inside.

With one loaded kick the door jangles open. The same faces I am familiar with watch me now. Observing the performance I aim to make believable. Judging by their faces it's working.

"I'm looking for the brute that leads you. Brock. Where is he?" I hide how foreign these new vocal cords are to me rather well. My head extends. My flesh and bone back sits straight and tall.

The room is quiet. The Phasers don't know what to say.

"This way, Inspector." *Heaven*. That lovely voice.

I see her at the back of the room. Looking glamorous. Her seductive eyes attempt to draw me to the room she stands next to. Oddly enough, her ominous pull on me has greatly weakened. I can feel the power in *my* hands. It feels...different. Though I have not decided yet if this is a good thing.

Instead of pondering, I walk to the back room for my intended purpose. Brock.

I grab a Phaser's gun and leave the Inspector at the door. They can't possibly piece together what it is I want or what it is I am about to do.

I walk inside as Heaven follows. I stop her. "Leave us." I say.

Brock looks up at me. He has just taken a heavy dose of h-8 and doesn't seem composed. But the fear is still there.

Heaven watches us for a moment before leaving. I close the door fully.

"Brock..." I start.

He mumbles. Tongue catching onto itself.

"Brock, Brock, Brock." He watches me, noticing the gun in my hand. "This may come as a shock to you but before we begin I must admit that I am not who you think I am." He doesn't understand.

"Inspector?-"

"Not Inspector actually. The Inspector sits limbless in the cart I've brought here. He is trapped in the body of my former life."

"What?-"

"I have stolen the Inspector's body. Replaced it with my mind instead." I speak in such a casual tone. Brock must think I'm joking. But my new eyes flash with the same malice as my old ones. He'll realize soon enough.

"After you ruined my image, my body, I chose to seek and take that of another. One larger and grander than yours. One Heaven could learn to love."

I watch him gently realize, and it gives me ecstasy. More than any drug I've ever consumed. More than any love Heaven has ever given me.

"Damian?"

"Yes, of course."

"Can't be. That's impossible." he whines.

"I can assure you, it's not." He moves to stand but by the motion of my gun he sits back down.

"Clearly you know what position this places you in, Brock. You won't survive the night. And with this new body my intentions will not be found out." He lingers in his growing horror. I bask in it.

"You can't do this-"

"I can. I will." The confidence in my voice terrifies him. It excites me.

"After all I've done for you! After all I've-"

"Yes. After all you've done *to* me. That is why."

"No, I won't allow-" he snaps back at me, standing aggressively. Hoping to take back control of the situation. But I let a bullet fly into his chest. It sits him back down for me.

He stares at the growing wetness on his chest. I hear the Phasers shuffle worriedly in the other room.

"Your Phasers will be mine now. Heaven will be..." I trail off. A cloud of shadow thoughts. "You're done, Brock. I'll find you in hell." And with that I send two more bullets neatly next to the hole already in his chest. He convulses. The wounds have taken him out of his high. His shock contorts permanently on his face. He looks pathetic. Just like Grima did. Just like my old body does.

I leave him dying in the room.

By now the Phasers stand in wait. Not sure if they will receive the same treatment. I watch them now without giving them a proper clue.

"Ease up, men. Brock was unfit for this guard. I will watch over you now." They loosen up at the calm of my words. I give the gun back to the sitting Phaser and leave.

I find Heaven outside. Looking over the crater I have brought my old body in. She stares down pitifully at the Inspector. He is still crying.

"What will you do with this one?" she asks me.

"What do you suggest I do?" I ask back.

She stares at my old body for five heartbeats. Slowly her pity leaves her. Her all too familiar disgust replaces it.

She looks to me now. With the eyes of new property. She comes close. Lets her hand caress my face. I allow it.

"I don't care." she finally says.

My increased heart-rate slows. Her answer has ruined me.

"Inspector Cain, isn't it?"

I nod.

"I am at your service. Finally out of the hands of that brute and away from this monster." She refers to Brock *and* to me.

Suddenly I catch glimpses of Grima. I sense the dread of how I felt towards her. Lesser than me. Nothing compared to me. I see the same now in Heaven. What I once loved, what I once adored. Nothing now.

Even her hair disrupts me. It is dull now.

My heart sinks as I know I have her.

I push her to the side and drag my crate home. She watches me with intrigue. She will love me now. And it makes me sick.

-Epilogue-

Walking into this tech-flat feels most foreign.

I drop the build of my old body onto a holo-chair. The Inspector appears more comfortable than I do. Which makes abnormal sense.

I wander the room analyzing the frames and corners of each square-inch. It is a sleek and simple tech-flat. I appreciate its style.

I walk to the tech-kitchen and pour an old type of liquor. One I've never tasted before. I down it. Suddenly an emphasized groan comes from the Inspector's new charred vocals. A laugh. Or at least an exhausted attempt at one.

I walk over to him.

"What's so funny, Inspector?" I ask.

He doesn't appear intimidated. He only points with his phantom fingers. At a bare wall across the room. He *laughs* hysterically now as I walk over to the wall.

I don't see any obvious signs of a tracer-door. It's just a wall.

The Inspector motions his fingerless hands as if to tell me to place my hand on the bare wall. I do, but nothing happens. I move it to the left, to the right. But nothing.

I raise it higher when a blue handprint glows. I align it with my hands prompting a tracer-door to unhinge and open wide. Behind it lies a contained room. The Inspector's laugh crescendos as I walk in.

Dim and invasive neon lights brighten the room as I cautiously walk in. The interior walls are littered with unrecognizable items. Tools. Builds. I don't understand what this room is for.

Then I see it.

A bio-cage.

At the very back of the room.

In it there is a fatigued figure looking back at me with fear. This...thing seems to have been tortured for a while.

New neon lights flicker brighter now, illuminating the items on the walls. The items on the holo-desks nearby too.

Next to me I see a wall of adjusted techni-paper. News covers them. Warnings of the serial murderer, *The Biter*. Text on how they have yet to find the monster.

Below these stamped walls sits a plethora of unrecognizable trophies. Mangled trophies.

Body parts.

Heads. Eyes. Limbs. Remains.

Then the panic sets in. I have walked into the dungeon of a serial monster. The lair of the Biter.

I look back to my old body on the holo-chair still laughing wildly. My old pathetic body doesn't appear so pathetic anymore. It looms impressively menacing.

Terror shifts our dynamic. I am the slave now. *What have I done?*