

Absolute Precision
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Before a Blink

“Why don’t you just start talking and save yourself from a lot of pain? Trust me, this will get ugly and you won’t like it. Not just the physical stuff, but the mental and emotional shit too. You don’t think we’ve already found your family and are torturing them as we speak? One phone call and you’ll hear the agonized screams of your loved ones. Do you want that? “

A person in black said to another. The second was tied to a sturdy wooden chair and wore only a pair of black shorts. The seated one had heard what the one in black said, but it would not change how the next few moments would unfold. The one in the chair had already seen exactly what would happen, not by way of premonition, but by instinct. In a blink of an eye it unfolded.

And then it was over.

Slow Motion Replay

"...Do you want that?" the one in black said.

The one in the chair did not respond.

"Alright. Then let's get started." The one in black said before he picked up a pair of small pliers and pulled off a fingernail.

The one in the chair let out a low, soft chuckle.

"What's so funny? Are you a masochist? You get your kicks from shit like this, don't you? You asshole." The one in black said to the person whose nail he had just been torn off.

"No. You just gave me a weapon." The seated one then shifted his weight in the wooden chair so that it rotated, bringing the seated one's right hand close to the torn fingernail still held in the black clad person's hand. The nail changed hands so quickly that there was no reaction. Not just in that room, but in space and time itself. The change was so infinitesimal that no atom or molecule was disturbed. The nail was secure in the grasp of the right hand of the seated one.

In the following instant, the seated one reared back the chair, like it was their steed, so that it remained balanced on a single leg. He shifted his weight down into that chair leg and pushed off. The seated one raised himself, chair bound, into the air a full metre and nicked the slightest part of the black clad person's neck with his own torn nail. It took an entire second for the blood in the major artery to find the minute laceration created from the nail's strike. When it was found, though, it unleashed a torrent of bright red blood the likes of which this torture chamber had never seen before.

The one clad in black fell to the ground the same time the seated one's chair did. They landed at the exact same moment, down to the nanosecond. To someone listening outside the room, it would have sounded as if someone had fallen over, completely void of the sound of the chair landing.

Such a deathblow could only be described as having absolute precision.

Leaving the Scene

He leaves. Nothing deters him from his path. He passes through the guards trying to stop him like most would pass through mist and fog. The walls he pushes aside with an open handed strike, but only making a hole large enough for his slender frame to fit. Once outside, he looks up to the night sky. A star twinkles in a galaxy far away. He tears open the fabric of reality beside him with an unspeakably quick slash, creating a small wormhole. He steps into it and closes the portal behind himself.

The Royal Engineer's Exam

Thallos sat up and gazed at his work. He had just fashioned a small robot from twigs and rocks, then powered it with sunlight. He told the wooden robot to search the area for more twigs, rocks, and sea glass. A few minutes later, the robot returned carrying the desired materials. Thallos built a few more robots quickly and gave them the same order that he gave the first. He repeated this process once more and then shut down all the robots. He looked around at all the materials his minions had collected. Not just twigs, rocks, and shards of sea glass, but felled tree trunks, massive boulders, and fully intact glass bottles. The wood for bodily frames, stones for joints and balance, and glass to amplify the power of the sun through magnification.

Thallos felt accomplished. He had gathered an absurd amount of raw materials in just under two hours. As a creator and maintainer of mechanisms, Thallos knew all too well the importance of gauging his supplies before setting forth into any sort of building endeavor.

Thallos then stood up and looked at what would now be his task. A colossal ocean liner lay dead on the beach. Its hull was missing a great chunk near the bow, though this was the greatest of its flaws. Thallos had already done reconnaissance on the ship the second he spotted it, noting all the problems he would have to solve before it could be seaworthy again.

He had the materials and the knowhow to fix the ship, but it would still take him weeks to repair such an old, broken ship by himself. He grimaced and re-activated his wooden robots. This time he told them to build bigger, better robots. Quite a neat trick Thallos had picked up a while ago. Humans who were great with mechanisms and machines could build and command a robot with great efficiency if they do so correctly. But a robot that creates another robot is something altogether different. The precision in which robots perform their task, regardless of what it is, is always far superior to what a human can do under normal circumstances. Therefore, when a robot builds a robot, the being that is created usually has no flaws detectable to the average human.

After an hour, Thallos looked around in wonder at the magnificent wooden men standing around him. His small wooden robots had created not just better, more efficient robots, but beings with sentience and sapience. Thallos looked to all the wooden men individually and asked them to help him fix the ocean liner. The wooden men looked confused for a moment before looking at the ocean liner and agreeing to help.

Together, Thallos and his new wooden friends repaired the ocean liner and made it fit to set sail once more. It took them the better part of two weeks to do so, but that is still much quicker than Thallos would have managed by himself. Now, the

only thing that was left to do was get the ship into deep enough water. This would be no simple task, since usually doing so would require massive cranes of the highest industrial magnitude. Sadly, this sand dune of an island had no such mechanisms. Not yet, anyways.

Thallos gathered his wooden men and his wooden robots and they had an intense discussion on what to do. It came to a general consensus that the best course of action would be to somehow gently push the ship back into the water. To do so they would need something like a large bulldozer.

They set to work, creating a bulldozer from the available materials. Their final invention was a large bulldozer with a wooden frame, treads made from palm leaves, and a front scoop made of driftwood. Thallos had never driven a bulldozer before; therefore he asked one of the wooden men to do it.

The wooden driver slowly pushed the ocean liner down the sandy beach. With great care he managed to get the ship into water deep enough to allow it to right itself. The bulldozer ended up too deep in water and stopped moving permanently. The wooden driver got out and began to walk along the sandy floor up to the beach where the others were. When he reached them he was greeted with cheers and applause. Thallos smiled and knew that his task was almost over.

He began to make his way to the ship but then something emerged from the water. A humanoid shape that was completely blue. As blue as the ocean and seemingly as undulating. The blue being had gills and sharp teeth, with deadly all-black eyes. When he was mere metres from Thallos when he spoke in a voice as deep as the darkest waters. "These waves are mine and mine alone! Nothing may inhabit them but I!" The blue being then began to exude a cerulean aura and Thallos knew this creature meant to kill him.

Before Thallos could move or turn to his robots for help, the blue beast threw a devastating punch that would surely decapitate a normal man. Luckily for Thallos, a wormhole opened up right in front of him and the blue being's fist disappeared into oblivion. He retracted his arm to find most of it missing from the elbow down. Then, from the wormhole came a figure doing a front flip. As the figure ended his flip his heel came into contact with the forehead of the blue beast. The blue man was sent flying by the unseen strike and ended up in the shallows bleeding profusely from the head. Within seconds, the blue man's life ebbed away into the waves that he once claimed were his own.

Thallos jumped back in shock. "Whoa, where did you come from?!" he sputtered.

“I am but a vehicle for precision.” Was all that the stranger said before he opened up another portal with his hands and walked through it before closing it behind himself.

Thallos was utterly unsure what to make of the recent events. First, a mysterious aquatic humanoid crawled up on shore and tried to punch his lights out, but then a stranger appeared out of a wormhole of some kind to promptly kick the blue thing in the face and kill it. And then the stranger left through another portal.

The young engineer decidedly that he should be more concerned with what he should be doing now that he was free of the blue menace. He gathered his robots up onto the newly repaired ship and set sail for the designated meeting point. There, he would have to tell his story to the examiners and hope to be found worthy to join the Royal Engineers Guild.

Thallos took out his map and did some quick calculations. He was only a day and a half's trip from his goal. He looked out to the sea with determination and smiled. Now, the only thing left to do was to learn how to sail the ship. Thallos was great at fixing things because of his experience in engineering, but this was the first time he's even been on a boat. Only time will tell how they fare on the open seas.

Rift Stations

They arrived through individual portals at exactly the same time. Vehicles of traits congregated here to remind one another of the different aspects of the universe. Precision met Blunt Force; Quickness encountered Gradualism. All the different ways one can be killed met at this place. Anyone unlucky enough to stumble across such a meeting would be slain in every single possible way in one instance.

A tentacle covered asteroid dweller glided in from the Eastern sector and clumsily bumped into a crowd of aspects. Not fond of being bumped into while on important business, the aspects dispatched the dweller in a flash of brutality.

In that single moment, the unfortunate dweller was sliced, chopped, pierced, crushed, hacked, felled, drilled, struck, incinerated and beaten to death simultaneously. It was the most overkill this quadrant of the universe had ever witnessed.

After the aspects concluded their business, they opened their own portals at exactly the same moment once more and walked through them as if they had coordinated it beforehand. All that was left of that could indicate that this meeting had taken place was the mangled, unrecognizable corpse of the tentacle covered asteroid dweller.