

Messenger's Hand

By

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EXT. FARMHOUSE

JOSHUA Bell walks toward the house, carrying two bales of hay. He sets it down and takes a rest.

A few moments later, WALTER Bell comes up to the house. He is also carrying two bales. He approaches his son.

WALTER  
You finished?

JOSHUA  
I...

WALTER  
It's the last load, let's keep  
moving.

WALTER moves off toward a large barn with a treeline on one side. JOSHUA picks up his bale and follows.

INT. BARN

WALTER drops his bales in a corner of the barn. JOSHUA follows behind and drops his bale on top.

WALTER  
Son, I'm concerned about you.

JOSHUA  
And there it is.

WALTER  
You must admit that you haven't  
been working as hard as you used  
to.

JOSHUA  
There isn't anything wrong with my  
work, Father. You have no reason to  
be concerned.

WALTER steps in front of JOSHUA and stops. JOSHUA pulls up short.

WALTER  
Oh, I don't? Then tell me why I had  
to ask you three times to milk the  
cows and finally had to do it  
myself? Or why I found Alton  
mending the fence I charged you to  
do specifically?

(CONTINUED)

JOSHUA looks angrily at WALTER.

JOSHUA  
You want to know why? You still  
treat me like a child! I'm almost  
seventeen and you still treat me  
like a boy!

WALTER  
Ah. This is about enlisting in the  
Valley Militia.

JOSHUA goes quiet. He looks at WALTER.

JOSHUA  
So what if it is? I can enlist if  
you allowed me. Old Tom let Garret  
enlist and he's a year younger than  
me.

WALTER  
Old Tom also has four other sons  
and three daughters besides. I have  
only one son. Would you deprive me  
of my only child?

JOSHUA looks away from WALTER.

WALTER  
Listen, Joshua, a soldier's life  
isn't the way the bards tell it.  
It's hard, tiring work. More so  
than tending a farm and with less  
reward.

JOSHUA shakes his head and looks off into the distance.  
WALTER stares at him for a moment.

WALTER  
I'm not promising anything. But I  
recognize that you're becoming a  
man. We'll discuss it.

JOSHUA snorts in frustration.

JOSHUA  
I know what that means.

WALTER  
Oh, do you?

JOSHUA  
Yes. It means no.

JOSHUA walks out of the barn and toward the house. WALTER stares off after him before closing up the barn.

INT. DARKNESS

The area is fuzzy and gray. The camera bounces up and down in the darkness.

ACE (V.O.)  
Why would you do this? Why would  
you give yourself over to them?

SPADE (V.O.)  
I want revenge. They offered the  
means, and the price was worth it.

The scene begins to clear up.

EXT. BEACH

We open up on a beach nearby a coastal city. We see two men standing on the beach, blades drawn, with two bodies nearby one of them. One of the men is covered in blood.

ACE  
What do you mean revenge Spade? We  
did not do anything to you?

SPADE  
You did nothing you say? Bastard!  
You took everything from me! My  
ship, my honor, and almost my life!

SPADE charges at ACE and the two clash swords briefly before ACE backs away.

ACE  
Can't you see that they are just  
using you? Even if you kill me.  
Even if you get this revenge of  
yours, they won't let you go.

SPADE  
I know.

(CONTINUED)

SPADE once again charges at ACE but this time before reaching him raises his off hand. From it bursts a rope, cloaked in shadow. It grabs ACE by the ankle and SPADE throws him to the ground. SPADE positions himself over ACE, his sword point at ACE's throat.

SPADE

It's over Ace. Now be a good first mate and die!

SPADE thrusts at ACE but he gets his sword up just in time to block it. ACE uses his blade to force SPADE back and then quickly cuts the rope and gets back up.

ACE

Was that the extent of the magic they gave you, captain? I'm disappointed. I thought the Gods were stronger than this.

SPADE

No, that was only a taste.

A shadow suddenly envelopes SPADE. After a few moments it dissipates and SPADE now appears to be one of the corpses.

ACE

(taken aback)

What?! Why do you look like Jack?

SPADE

I do not just look like him.

SPADE charges again, this time using a more acrobatic fighting style. He jumps behind ACE before he can react and cuts him diagonally down from his shoulder.

When ACE turns around to retaliate he finds that SPADE has changed appearance again.

ACE

Diamond?

ACE reacts just in time to avoid being impaled on SPADE's blade. He stumbles backward.

ACE

Is this how you killed them Spade?  
You made them fight each other to  
the death?

(CONTINUED)

SPADE

Yes. It was quite fun actually.  
Hearing them scream in both agony  
and bewilderment. I almost wanted  
to let them live, so that I could  
enjoy the pain a bit longer.

ACE

Monster!

ACE blindly rushes towards SPADE but is caught by another shadow rope. He is quickly wrapped up as he attempts to cut through one. SPADE returns to his natural appearance.

SPADE

Your loyalty betrays you Ace.  
You've made this all too easy for  
me.

ACE

Spade please, see the truth. We did  
nothing to you. You abandoned us.

SPADE

Fool! You left me to die after the  
Morovian raid we botched. I escaped  
only because of the power the Gods  
bestowed to me.

ACE

No no, Spade that's not how it  
happened. You left us...

SPADE thrusts his sword into ACE's heart. As ACE bleeds out SPADE suddenly grabs his head in pain as the scene begins to grow fuzzy and dark again.

INT. DARKNESS

Once again the scene is grayed out and silent, aside from the sound of waves.

JACK (V.O)

We have to abandon ship!

ACE (V.O.)

No, we can beat them Jack.

DIAMOND (V.O)

What do you think we should do,  
captain?

The scene begins to clear.

EXT. SHIP DECK

We see a sweeping view of two ships locked in naval combat. The view comes down and we focus in on SPADE, on the deck.

SPADE

Report!

A crew member approaches hurriedly.

CREWMAN

Captain Spade, we've taken heavy damage to port side. We cannot take much more sir.

SPADE

Damn it! Go get me Jack, Ace, and Diamond. Tell them to meet me in the navigation room.

The crew member rushes off as SPADE heads toward the navigation room.

INT. NAVIGATION ROOM

We fade into a large room, with a circular table with chairs in the center. On the table rests a map and a compass.

SPADE is standing over the table when DIAMOND, JACK, and ACE enter the room.

JACK

You wanted to see us captain?

SPADE

Yes. I want to know what you three think we should do here?

JACK

We have to abandon ship!

ACE

No, we can beat them Jack.

SPADE

How do you propose we do this Ace? They have us out manned and cannon-less.

ACE

They've stopped firing their cannons and have focused on

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ACE (cont'd)  
boarding. If we can sneak someone  
onto their ship and capture their  
captain, we can win.

SPADE sits in one of the chairs and thinks.

DIAMOND  
What do you think we should do,  
captain?

SPADE sits up.

SPADE  
I agree with Ace. You three go and  
attack their ship. I'll stay and  
rally the crew.

ACE  
(salute)  
Yes sir!

The three walk out of the room.

SPADE follows shortly afterward. However, he heads towards  
the lifeboats. The scene grows fuzzy once more as he boards  
one.

INT. SHED

JOSHUA opens up the shed and enters. A large Golden Eagle  
screeches in response. JOSHUA grabs a heavy leather glove  
and puts it on.

JOSHUA  
Yes Galos, I'm here!

He goes over to the eagle and carefully unties him from the  
perch. GALOS screeches again and moves from the perch to the  
gloved hand.

JOSHUA  
Trust me, bird, you aren't the only  
one who's being made to wait.

GALOS regards JOSHUA intently. JOSHUA goes to a bag and puts  
the strap over his head. He takes GALOS and walks out of the  
shed.

EXT. FIELDS

JOSHUA walks through the field with GALOS in hand, searching for birds to hunt. A rustle is heard behind them.

CAITLIN  
(V.O.)  
Catch something?

He turns and sees a teenage girl in working clothes walking toward him.

JOSHUA  
Caitlin. You look like you finished  
in the fields.

CAITLIN  
I was heading back to get my  
things, then go home. And you?

JOSHUA  
I'm not heading back yet. Galos  
still needs a bit more exercise.

CAITLIN  
We could go back together after  
Galos is done. Besides, I love  
watching him fly. If you don't  
mind?

JOSHUA  
I'd like that.

They start walking. JOSHUA keeps looking for birds to hunt. Every so often, he sneaks a glance at CAITLIN.

CAITLIN  
You seem tense, Joshua.

JOSHUA  
Am I?

CAITLIN  
(laughing)  
Stop being so obtuse. You're always  
quiet when there's something  
bothering you.

JOSHUA  
I suppose there is some one  
bothering me.

(CONTINUED)

CAITLIN

Your father refuse to let you join  
the Militia?

JOSHUA nods.

JOSHUA

He said we'd "discuss" it. Which  
means he'll tell me why it's not a  
good idea and refuse to listen to  
me.

CAITLIN

Militia life isn't all glory.  
Garret is away most of the year and  
the tension with Morovia is getting  
worse. I also hear there's more  
bandit raids this year, attacking  
villages like ours.

JOSHUA

You sound like you're on my  
father's side.

CAITLIN

I think I am.

JOSHUA looks stunned and a little angry.

CAITLIN

Don't look so mad. After all, if  
you go away, we won't be  
spending much time together.

CAITLIN walks ahead and turns.

CAITLIN

At least, not as much as *I'd* like.

She walks on. JOSHUA, at a loss for words, moves to catch  
up. A pigeon is startled from the underbrush. JOSHUA looses  
GALOS and the eagle flies off after it.

CAITLIN

Oh look at him fly!

JOSHUA

He's a decent enough hunter, I  
suppose.

CAITLIN

Decent?! Don't be ridiculous! I  
doubt there are ten hunting birds  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CAITLIN (cont'd)  
in the country that could match  
him.

JOSHUA  
You're the falconer's daughter.

They watch GALOS' hunt of the pigeon.

CAITLIN  
You've never told me how he came to  
you.

JOSHUA  
I haven't?

CAITLIN  
No, you haven't.

JOSHUA  
Well, it's not much of a story.

CAITLIN  
(teasingly)  
Tell me anyway. Or else.

JOSHUA  
Or else what?

CAITLIN  
Or else I tell my father you pay  
for leather straps like everyone  
else. No more handouts because I  
like you.

GALOS brings down the pigeon. JOSHUA and CAITLIN run over  
and get the birds. JOSHUA secures GALOS to his glove.

JOSHUA  
Remember that storm four years ago?  
The really bad one?

CAITLIN  
Yes.

JOSHUA  
My father and I were in our cellar  
when we heard something crash  
through the window panels. When I  
went up to see, I found Galos.

(CONTINUED)

CAITLIN

I remember the first time you brought him to my father. He was young, barely able to hunt.

JOSHUA

I fed him strips of rabbit. We didn't think he'd last the night.

JOSHUA looks at GALOS. The eagle stares intently at him for a moment, then looks around the field.

CAITLIN

Why did you name him Galos?

JOSHUA

Dunno. Just seemed right.

CAITLIN

(wryly)

Really?

JOSHUA

Honest. After he'd been with us a few days, I named him. I guess the name just came to me.

CAITLIN

It's a perfect name for him. It's as if he chose it himself.

JOSHUA

Now who's being ridiculous?

The two laugh and make their way back to the house.

EXT. FOREST NIGHT

SPADE suddenly awakens, startled. He grabs his chest with one hand and rubs his eyes with the other. His hand comes away with blood.

He looks around and sees a downed tree, with one of his ropes attached to it.

SPADE

That dream again.

Almost immediately SPADE finds himself surrounded by darkness.

(CONTINUED)

UNKNOWN VOICE

Ah, nightmares again, Hand of Hell?

SPADE

You ask that each night? I haven't had a peaceful sleep since I took your deal.

UNKNOWN VOICE

I just want to make sure you're ok. Now, you should take this opportunity to continue your assignment.

SPADE

I know. I heard a rumor about a border village being attacked. He may have been residing there.

UNKNOWN VOICE

Good, good. You know what to do. We'll be in touch.

The darkness fades away from SPADE.

SPADE

I can only hope he's still nearby.

SPADE makes his way deeper into the forest.

INT. FARMHOUSE

JOSHUA wakes to a room on fire. He looks around the room in confusion.

JOSHUA

Father!? Where are you!?

He runs out into the upper floor hallway. The house is beginning to go up in flames. JOSHUA makes to go down the stairs.

GALOS

No, Joshua! Don't go down!

He turns and sees GALOS sitting on the floor. The eagle seems unperturbed by the fire.

JOSHUA

Galos? How did you-

(CONTINUED)

GALOS

I can explain later, but don't go  
down those stairs.

JOSHUA stares at the eagle in disbelief.

JOSHUA

You can talk? How can-

GALOS

*There's no time!* Hurry, follow me!

GALOS flies to a room on the opposite end of the hallway.

JOSHUA stands confused for a moment, then follows him.

The room has not been touched by the fire. GALOS perches on  
a window sill. JOSHUA enters and shuts the door. He regards  
GALOS with disbelief before going to the window.

JOSHUA

Galos, what's going on?

GALOS

Bandits. Many of them. They came to  
the village in the night. We need  
to escape.

JOSHUA

What about my father?

GALOS

He's safe and out of the house.  
Now, we *need* to get away. We can  
use this window.

JOSHUA

Okay.

JOSHUA opens the window and climbs out. GALOS follows after  
him.

EXT. FARMHOUSE

JOSHUA climbs down from the roof and lands on the ground.  
GALOS lands on his shoulder.

GALOS

Keep low. There are a few bandits  
around. Make for the barn.

JOSHUA makes quickly for the tree line side of the barn,  
keeping his head low. He is almost there when a BANDIT's  
voice sounds behind him.

(CONTINUED)

BANDIT  
Hey, who's there!?

JOSHUA quickly darts around the side of the barn. He comes up short as he almost runs into WALTER.

WALTER  
Joshua!

WALTER looks at JOSHUA, then looks up at the sound of armed men approaching. He grabs a length of wood.

WALTER  
(whispering)  
Make for the woods! Don't stop!

He pauses.

WALTER  
I love you, son.

WALTER charges out. He sees the BANDIT and rushes him. He takes him down, but two more come at him. Eventually, WALTER is subdued by the armed men.

JOSHUA stealthily watches this from the side of the barn. He flinches as GALOS tightens his grip slightly.

GALOS  
Joshua. We have to go.

JOSHUA  
I can't just leave him here.

GALOS  
If we don't, we'll be found. We can come back after they've gone. We must move.

JOSHUA looks at his now captive father for a long moment. Finally, he turns away and carefully slips into the woods.

EXT. BURNED VILLAGE, NIGHT

SPADE exits out into a burned village. The wreckage crumbling around him. There are no corpses to be found.

SPADE starts searching through the village. He stops after a couple of minutes.

(CONTINUED)

SPADE

There are no signs of any survivors  
having fled. Perhaps I was wrong...

Just then SPADE notices a set of footprints. He walks over  
and examines them.

SPADE

These don't match the boot prints  
from the wreckage. It must be him!

SPADE darts back into the forest.

EXT. WOODS

JOSHUA goes quickly through the woods. We see GALOS flying  
close behind, maneuvering between trees and branches.

After a while, JOSHUA comes to a halt. He finds a log and  
sits, catching his breath. GALOS lands next to him.

GALOS

Are you tired?

JOSHUA

Yes.

GALOS

Wait here. I'll find a safe place.

GALOS flies off into the woods. JOSHUA sits, looking back  
toward where they came. GALOS returns after a few minutes  
and flies back to the log.

GALOS

There is a tree a few yards away  
where we can rest.

JOSHUA

Lead the way.

GALOS takes off and JOSHUA follows. They come to a large  
oak. JOSHUA climbs the tree and finds a large limb 20 feet  
up. He reclines against the main trunk. GALOS flies to a  
nearby branch and lands.

GALOS

You should get some rest.

JOSHUA

I don't think I could sleep.

(CONTINUED)

GALOS  
That is understandable.

JOSHUA turn his head and looks at GALOS.

JOSHUA  
I can't believe this.

GALOS  
What do you mean?

JOSHUA  
I mean that I'm talking with my  
hunting eagle.

GALOS shakes himself in irritation, then calms down.

GALOS  
Considering the circumstances, I  
will let that go. However, from  
this moment on, I am not *your*  
eagle. I am my own eagle.

JOSHUA  
I've never seen an eagle talk  
before.

GALOS  
I doubt you ever will again.

JOSHUA  
How do you do it? Talk, I mean.  
It's not as if you have a mouth.

GALOS  
I can speak without needing a  
mouth.

JOSHUA  
Convenient.

GALOS  
Indeed.

JOSHUA turns away and stares off into the woods. There is a  
long silence. GALOS is getting ready to rest when JOSHUA  
turns to him again.

JOSHUA  
Are you a demon?

GALOS comes awake and looks sharply at JOSHUA.

(CONTINUED)

GALOS

Excuse me?

JOSHUA

Are you a demon? I've heard that demons can pretend to be anything they want. That they take different shapes.

GALOS

No, I am not a demon. Demons do not keep their shape for so long.

JOSHUA

What?

GALOS flaps over and perches on JOSHUA's tree limb.

GALOS

If I were a demon, you would have known long before this. You've cared for me. You've seen me hunt, feed, and groom. I am, in all respects, an eagle.

JOSHUA

Except for the talking.

GALOS

I am a very *special* eagle.

JOSHUA

Indeed.

There is a long silence.

JOSHUA

So, what happens now?

GALOS

Now we go for the Militia headquarters. They must be told about this. This attack was too quick, too well organized to be a simple bandit raid. I fear this is only the beginning of something more.

JOSHUA makes no response. GALOS looks over and sees that JOSHUA is asleep. GALOS looks out over the forest, keeping watch.

EXT. FOREST NIGHT

SPADE moves through the forest. After a few moments he stops.

SPADE  
Damn it! I won't find him at this  
rate. No choice then I guess.

SPADE puts his hand on the ground and a shadow begins to form around it. He hears the sound of a hawk flying through the forest. The shadow dissipates.

SPADE looks up and sees the hawk circling over a part of the forest.

SPADE  
Perfect! He's given away his  
position.

SPADE makes his way toward where the hawk is overseeing but stops short. He sees a young man sitting on a stump, looking into the sky.

SPADE silently makes his way toward the man.

EXT FOREST

JOSHUA sits on a stump, waiting for GALOS to return. We see SPADE circling JOSHUA, regarding him intently. JOSHUA is unaware of SPADE.

SPADE places his arms out toward JOSHUA. A dense fog seeps from his hands and encircles JOSHUA. He stands up and starts looking around wildly.

JOSHUA  
Who's there!?

SPADE moves closer to JOSHUA, drawing his sword.

SPADE shouts and charges toward JOSHUA. JOSHUA quickly tumbles out of the way and retreats. He sees the sword in SPADE's hand and looks around. He finds a thick branch and holds it out defensively.

JOSHUA  
Who are you!? What do you want!?

SPADE  
That is something you need not  
know.

(CONTINUED)

JOSHUA  
Are you Morovian!?

SPADE  
No no. Consider me a freelancer. I  
have no nation.

JOSHUA  
A bandit then. If you want money,  
we don't have it.

SPADE  
What do you mean we? I see only you  
and I.

JOSHUA hesitates.

SPADE  
It matters not.

SPADE comes at JOSHUA again, thrusting his blade into the  
branch JOSHUA is holding. With a quick flip of his sword  
SPADE disarms JOSHUA.

SPADE laughs maniacally as he slowly advances on JOSHUA. He  
retreats further, looking around for GALOS. He tries to  
avoid SPADE. SPADE toys with JOSHUA, feigning attacks toward  
him.

SPADE  
This? This is the great mage I was  
sent to kill? A child, unable to  
hold his own against mere human  
tactics, let alone the power I can  
wield.

SPADE rushes JOSHUA and brings him to the ground.

JOSHUA  
*Galos! Help!*

SPADE stops. He gazes intently at JOSHUA.

SPADE  
Galos?

A loud, booming voice speaks and indiscernible word and  
SPADE falls to his knees, grasping his chest. With a few  
wing beats, GALOS glides to JOSHUA and stares at SPADE.

SPADE  
(painfully)  
So you're the one I was to kill?

(CONTINUED)

GALOS

Listen to me very carefully,  
*rakesh*. I don't know who you are,  
but I know who sent you. Those who  
sent you did not tell you  
everything, so I will.

GALOS jumps up to SPADE's shoulder and digs his talons into  
the shoulder. SPADE spasms in pain.

GALOS

I am not some helpless target to be  
hunted by an abomination. I have  
seen more than you could ever  
imagine.

GALOS looks over at JOSHUA and regards him.

SPADE forces himself to stand up, surprising GALOS and  
JOSHUA.

SPADE

(painfully)

Then I can save you some  
explanation. You know who I work  
for and I know who you hunt. I know  
where they'll be and I can help you  
end them.

JOSHUA looks from SPADE to GALOS.

GALOS

I assure you, ghoul, if I was  
hunting, they would already be  
dead. You don't know as much as you  
think you do.

GALOS releases SPADE and the pain in his chest goes away.  
GALOS flies over to JOSHUA's shoulder.

GALOS

Let's go, Joshua.

GALOS looks intently at SPADE.

GALOS

If I ever see you again, *rakesh*,  
you won't get a second chance.  
Leave this land. You have failed.

SPADE stares back at GALOS

(CONTINUED)

SPADE

Your arrogance betrays you, mage.  
You protect a child instead of  
gathering allies. You will regret  
not having my help.

Before GALOS can react. SPADE summons another fog and  
disappears into the forest.

EXT. WOODS

JOSHUA and GALOS are camped beside a fire. JOSHUA is pensive  
and neither are speaking.

JOSHUA

Who was that?

GALOS looks to JOSHUA, then to the fire. He doesn't say  
anything for a long moment.

GALOS

A *rakesh*. A ghoul.

JOSHUA

Ghoul? I've heard of those. Aren't  
they demons who possess human  
bodies?

GALOS

Close. They are human beings who  
are brought back by twisting their  
true name.

JOSHUA

Their true name?

GALOS

The secret name given to all beings  
by the Immortal Emperor. Written in  
Prime, meant to be sacrosanct.

JOSHUA

Prime? What is Prime?

GALOS sighs. He turns to look at JOSHUA and regards him  
intensely.

GALOS

What I am about to say goes far  
beyond everything you know,  
farmboy. It is knowledge that *magi*  
and scholars would give their right

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GALOS (cont'd)  
arm to know. Normally, I would not speak of it. But if that...*thing* intends to pursue us, then you need to know. I ask that you do not speak of it to anyone else.

JOSHUA nods and listens.

GALOS  
Prime is the language and alphabet the Immortal Emperor used to make the universe. It gives all things meaning and form. To use an analogy, Prime is the skeleton, muscle and lifeblood of all existence.

JOSHUA  
Including me?

GALOS  
Yes. When the Emperor names, it comes into being. All things are because they are named.

JOSHUA  
What does that have to do with the ghoul?

GALOS  
When the Emperor named this world, it was the last world he made. As a memento, he allowed human beings the ability to change Prime. Though they could never write with it or erase it, they could manipulate it.

GALOS takes a pause before continuing.

GALOS  
There were some who were jealous of this world and sought to take this ability for themselves. When they tried, instead of manipulating it, they twisted it. Corrupted it. And became corrupted themselves.

JOSHUA  
Is that what this...rack-esh is?

(CONTINUED)

GALOS

No. Those are what you call demons.  
A *rakesh* is made by a demon from  
the corpse of a recently killed  
human being. The deceased becomes a  
twisted shell of what they once  
were.

EXT. FOREST NIGHT

GALOS

(V.O.)

And no idea of what they've become.

SPADE runs through the forest. He notices a cave nearby and  
takes refuge.

INT. CAVE

SPADE collapses against a cave wall, grabbing his chest, in  
clear pain. A few seconds later the pain fades away and SPADE  
stands up, spitting out a bit of blood.

Suddenly SPADE is enveloped in a whirling darkness. A hand  
reaches out and grabs him by the throat.

UNKNOWN VOICE

(Booming)

Why have you failed us, Hand of  
Hell?!

SPADE

(struggling)

It's all part of the plan.

The hand lets go of SPADE.

UNKNOWN VOICE

(Booming)

We did not instruct you to come up  
with any plans, Hand of Hell. Now  
explain your failure.

SPADE

I did not anticipate the turn of  
events. You did not tell me Galos  
was not human.

UNKNOWN VOICE

(Booming)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

UNKNOWN VOICE (cont'd)  
This is why you are supposed to  
examine the target. We are not  
omniscient.

SPADE  
You sent me to die. That mage could  
have destroyed me with a thought.

The hand wraps around SPADE's throat again.

UNKNOWN VOICE  
(Booming)  
How dare you question our judgment.  
We should finish you for what  
failure you've brought. However, we  
would like to hear what you have  
planned for them before we decide  
your fate.

The hand releases SPADE and he drops to one knee, gasping  
for air.

SPADE  
I will lead them to the coast. They  
will have no where to run when  
their backs are against the great  
ocean. There you can ambush them  
easily.

SPADE hears nothing, as if the voice is waiting to hear  
more.

SPADE  
Galos is both powerful and  
intelligent. I know I can't  
convince him to follow my "advice".  
I can, however, manipulate the  
child, Joshua. He is terrified of  
me and I can push him into a corner  
where he'll have no choice but to  
listen.

There is a distinct change in the voice, going from the  
booming of before to a more whispery one.

UNKNOWN VOICE  
(whisper)  
Good, good. That is what I like to  
hear, my child. If I may suggest  
one more thing. You should travel  
their path and help them gather  
allies, our allies. There are many  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

UNKNOWN VOICE (cont'd)  
humans that still worship us or owe  
us favors.

SPADE  
Ah, I see. Perfect. If their only  
allies are ours, then they will not  
have any possibility of success.  
However, I need to know one thing.

UNKNOWN VOICE  
(whisper)  
Yes?

SPADE  
I need to know that you will allow  
me freedom in execution in this  
task. I need to know that I can do  
what is necessary.

There is a long pause as the darkness starts to fade.

UNKNOWN VOICE  
(whisper)  
Yes. Now go, Hand of Hell. This  
discussion is over.

The whirling darkness dissipates and SPADE is left in the  
cave, alone. He slumps to the ground and passes out.

INT. DARKNESS

Everything is fuzzy and gray. muffled noises can be heard,  
but nothing comprehensible is said.

After a few moments the scene begins to clear.

EXT. BEACH

The scene opens up on a coastal beach. SPADE has just  
impaled ACE and has grabbed his head.

After a moment the pain subsides and SPADE falls to his  
knees. He looks at ACE's body and is shocked.

SPADE  
Ace? Ace? What have I done?

SPADE get up and walks around the beach and notices JACK and  
DIAMOND's corpses.

(CONTINUED)

SPADE  
No. Not you two as well.

SPADE falls to his knees again.

SPADE  
Why? Why can't I remember doing  
this? What am I becoming?

SPADE stands up.

SPADE  
Come out! Explain what I am!

As if on command a familiar darkness surrounds SPADE. The scene grows fuzzy once more and fades to black.

INT. CAVE

SPADE wakes.

SPADE  
That child is the key to  
everything, especially my freedom.

SPADE unsheathes his blade.

SPADE  
And when I'm free, I will avenge  
your deaths, comrades.

END