

The Heart Shaped Box

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This is the first piece of my novel. If I get good feedback, I'll post the rest. Thank you.



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â It hurts to see the wrinkles on my face. To realize that at a time, my face was young and attractive, but now it sulks with deformation. The mirror mocks me. It held and will hold many reflections, so it itself will be young again. But I only age. What sickens me the most is the wide range between my mind and my body. I want to run, it wants to walk; I want to scream, it wants to whisper; I want to live, and sadly it wants to die.

This disagreement is in my body's favor, so I find myself feeling this way for the majority of my day.â

â So why do you continue to look in the mirror?â

The gray figure stood by a window, watching the raindrops race down to the window sill. He balanced a small wooden pipe in between his lips, slowly blowing out a dull looking smoke that stuck to the window.

â Well,â he licked his lips, â as wise as I seem to be, I look in hopes that one day, my face will become more bearable.â

â I see. Do you mind if I smoke?â

â Do as you wish son, you're an adult.â

â So,â the young man standing at the entrance of the large room pulled out a small white and orange stick from his pocket and ignited it, â it's midday you know? I'm supposed to be home.â

The old man near the window set the pipe down for a time before grabbing a crystal glass and sipping a smooth liquid.

â I realize that.â

â Can I ask why you called me up here then?â

The old man chuckled.

â Should I be direct, or would you like to take a seat?â

The younger man in the room, with his shoulder leaned up against a small wall, blew a white smoke out of the doorway before guiding his head back to the forward direction.

â You've always told me to be direct, so with all do respect I'd like to hear it straight forward.â

â I've taught you a lot, haven't I?â

â Quite a lot, I agree.â

The sharp sound of thunder touched base with the ground, erupting between the ears of both gentlemen in the room. The man standing in the doorway finished the short cigarette before throwing it in a waste bin beside his legs. He watched as the elder walked away from the window slowly, almost fatigued with the way he led his feet to a velvet chair.

â I have a proposition for you.â

â I thought you were going to tell me something?â

The old shadow put his hand up, implying patience.

â I teach you one last lesson,â he said as he placed the wooden tip of the pipe back onto his dry lips.

â If?â

â If you deliver something for me when I am gone and no longer here.â

â What do you mean gone?â He asked, lifting his shoulder from the doorway.

â Isaac, I am,â he paused, searching for a sentence that made as much sense in his mind as it did when

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spoken, "I am withering. My bones hurt, I am constantly tired, and I don't have the will to do anything anymore."

The large hollow room contained the sound of silence. A small candle's flame near the doorway whispered as it danced momentarily.

"I see. So, one last lesson is what you're saying?" Isaac said with an indistinct volume in his voice. "Please, sit."

They spent the long hours of the sun's absence speaking about a topic that they had yet to cover. The mood was dull; the room filled with a dying man's remaining knowledge. The candle next to the door had died out, due to the long time of its assistance to the dark room.

"I believe that I've shared everything that I know."

"Why is your last lesson about trust?"

"Trust is an important concept, you know. Whether it's widely accepted or not, for anything to work successfully, trust must be established."

"Well that's obvious. Trust is the foundation," Isaac stated.

"Indeed it is," he took another sip from the rim of the glass then tapped his lips together to cope with the bitter taste, "but for every positive attribute, emotion, or belief, there is an opposite."

"Deception being the opposite of trust?" He asked, seeming to know the answer.

"In most cases yes, but more important and one opposite that you may not see often, is greed."

"Greed," he spoke lightly, almost surprised.

"Remember son, no matter how firm the trust is, greed can, and most likely will find its way through."

Isaac thought about the lesson, then immediately thought about the last sentence that he heard his mentor say.

"Wait, so you say that being at the end of your life, greed has never overturned you from trust?"

"No, not yet at least," he drank the last bit of liquid in the cup and placed it on his desk, "not yet."

In an unlit room, only accompanied by the moon's presence, they both pondered on an unusual encounter. The teacher, wondering if his words got through to his student; the student processing the teachings of his dying elder.

"I just remembered," Isaac interrupted the silence.

"Hmm?"

"The delivery you mentioned."

"Ahh, I completely forgot. You see how age plagues us? It truly is sad."

"Well? Why am I delivering it?"

The old man seemed taken back by the question. He pulled his body back slightly and curved his eyebrow like a question mark.

"You've become quite skilled at asking questions, haven't you?"

Isaac smiled almost unnoticeably.

"And I see that age has impaired your ability to answer them."

The old skinned-skeleton stood from his seat and lit a different candle; one that occupied a small circumference around them.

"Very well. You're delivering it because I trust you more than anyone else."

"Trust? You aren't afraid that greed will overturn my trust?"

"Haha! That's quite rich," he coughed as he sat back down. "But no. Simply because the item in the delivery would not be in your particular interest, nor would it benefit you the slightest to keep it."

"You've made your case. What is it that I'm delivering?"

"When I am gone, you will find it lying right here, tightly wrapped inside of a wooden, heart shaped box," he said, pointing at a miniature pedestal on his desk.

"I'm confused, why can't I deliver it now?"

"Because, it isn't ready to be delivered just yet. It'd be very difficult to give it to you now," he smirked.

"Very well," Isaac looked at the pedestal briefly, then back at his mentor, "I'll take my leave then."

"Oh and Isaac," said the elder still in his chair, "expect to make the delivery sometime next

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week.â

â Alright,â he said before leaving the room, â I guess Iâ ll prepare for your funeral also.â

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