

Harrison Brame - Paradise

I awake cold and lost. I push myself up off the cold, wet grass. The sound of the howling wind fills my ears. I appear to be trapped in a small safe-haven of a garden, surrounded by a thick, tall stone wall. They're covered in moss, but it seems like they're aware of its presence; but don't care about the life using them as homes.

As I look up I see the gathering clouds, swirling in formation, acting as a veil, shrouding this paradise from the sun. I peer through a hole in the towering wall and see the outer lands, dead and dry, sand and decaying vegetation for miles. This so called "Paradise" was built on a small hill, physically and mentally above everything else. It's as if it was built to deride all outside its walls.

The landscape began to morph around me, but when I looked down I saw I was merely walking forward absentmindedly. As time past I observed the landscape and I decided to lay down under the gigantic, bottle green oak tree. As I heard the sound of rushing water; I was slowly lulled to sleep.

I woke to the sound of cracking stones. I opened my eyes to the sight of a murder of crows, all perched upon the stone barrier, not daring to cross it. Their hungry eyes staring me down, their beaks clicking. I decided to ignore the birds and walked to the stream I could hear. I took a drink and washed my face before seeing the shattered wall. Stones scattered everywhere with a hot breeze flowing in. It was like a portal to another world. I went closer to examine it before walking outside. There wasn't a soul in sight as I peered around the barren wasteland. Just deep orange sand and dead, decaying plant life. I decided to venture out into the wastes. As I stepped out I saw the flock of crows flapping their wings and filling the sky. My trek had just begun.

After hours of roaming I came across a torn parachute, I examined the following area and came across a mauled corpse of what seemed to be a pilot. I took his backpack without getting to close, hoping it contained food and water. I had so many questions; Why is he here? How did he end up like this? How long has he been here? And how did he die? The overwhelming scent of rotting meat sickened me, as I moved away I saw a rusted handle sitting in the sand. As I uncovered it I discovered a rusty handgun. How did it rust? It couldn't have been here for that long. As I examine the weapon I count 6 bullets all loaded into one magazine. 6 shots, and 6 chances. 6 chances to ruin, save and end lives. Each little capsule capable of destroying a family, physically and figuratively. I take it telling myself only to use it upon the occasion that whatever mauled this pilot decides to target me.

After several hours I found another soul wandering the empty plains. His silhouette like a hole in the orange sky. I follow him in an attempt to communicate in some way but once I get close I see that he's holding a rifle, could he be hostile or is he just protecting himself. What if he thinks I'm hostile? What if he's been running from me so he doesn't have to shoot? What if I try to fire warning shots and he turns and shoots me? What if he's lining up my head in his sights? Should I draw my gun? I fall to the ground in stress as I felt a shiver down my spine. It's becoming night, the pack I stole was full of alcohol and empty cans.

Cold and tired I collapse unable to start a fire or build a shelter. There's merely sand for miles on end in every direction. I lay in the sand paralysed in fear. Unable to do anything I let the sand blow over me, creating a cold, rough blanket. I force myself to fall asleep but fail as I lay in the sand.