

Brown suppressed a smirk.

He never liked George.

There were many reasons why. First, the President liked George better than he liked Brown. Brown knew he was a jealous, envious man. So was his lord and master, the Evil One. Brown considered those properties necessary for life in this world. If you didn't covet those things that are better than what you already have, then you can't get ahead. And Brown always wanted to be out ahead of everybody.

When Brown was not yet twenty years old, his mother took him to his first worship experience. He met the Evil One there that very evening. He emptied himself and allowed the alleged enemy of mankind to take possession of him. He kept his own soul. He knew that the uninitiated believed that the human soul was lost when one was possessed by his master, but that was not always so.

Brown welcomed the possession as an exercise of his own will. He gained a great physical and mental toughness, dexterity and depth that he could never have achieved without his master's blessings.

His wishes were also granted. He prayed to the god of this world for long life and enormous strength. As a result, Brown had never been ill, and was, to his knowledge, the oldest human alive. And his knowledge was reliable. After all, he was the right-hand man of the most powerful person on planet Earth, and he was privy to information at the highest possible levels.

The only problem that Brown had early in his life, even after his possession, was his temper. For many years, Brown could not harness his hot, burning anger. As a result of this lack of control, he had started many fights, beaten his wife and given away a child. After the divorce (he vowed to never re-marry), he consulted a hypnotist, Dr. Guzman.

It was a last-ditch effort to get himself under control. He had no idea he would live so long. If he had, he might have waited and matured before he tried hypnotism.

Dr. Guzman was hypnotist who was a psychiatrist. First, he gave him a thorough physical examination and gave him a clean bill of health.

Next, Dr. Guzman gave him a battery of tests to determine whether his perceptions were all within the range of normal for human beings who had no underlying pathologies. Even then, the body of science about the human brain and the human mind had advanced to the point where norms could be measured and quantified. Dr. Guzman found no abnormalities.

Finally, Dr. Guzman asked Brown if there were any secrets he was trying to keep. Just asking was infinitely simpler than going into a man's mind and finding closed doors, mazes and other

obstacles to getting the desired results. Brown told him that he “worshipped the devil.” Dr. Guzman’s reaction was mild.

“Really? Well, let’s see what that does to your trance.” And that was all.

Guzman put Brown into a trance, an altered state of consciousness where he was entirely dissociated from his surroundings. The doctor had asked Brown a series of questions about how he felt when angry, what his physical perceptions were and what he would really like to have happen. He made the post-hypnotic suggestion that Brown could control his anger, that he would be a nice guy from then on, making peace when it was left up to him. After the deed was done, Guzman made the last mistake he would ever make.

“Mr. Brown,” said Dr. Guzman, “you do not believe in the existence of the devil.” Guzman was not a Christian. He was just a doctor who believed that people shouldn’t believe in spirits, ghosts and devils. He believed such objects were figments of the imagination, psychological artifacts that could not lead to successful living or any positive outcomes.

The Enemy of men’s souls spoke to Dr. Guzman using Brown’s voice. “I assure you that I exist. This man is sure that I exist, and now you will be forever certain that I exist.” Brown rose from his chair and turned away from the doctor to his medicine cabinet.

Guzman was frozen in place. Not because of what Brown uttered, but because the man had risen from the chair, cast off his trance and started moving even before he stopped talking. More swiftly than the doctor believed a man could move, while the temperature of the room fell twenty degrees and the lights dimmed until Guzman could not see his hand in front of his face, Brown took from Guzman’s medical store a psychotropic drug.

It was Dramamine. Not a bad drug used at the correct dosage, and usually prescribed for motion sickness. But at high doses, it can cause vivid hallucinations that are stark visuals of beings of various kinds, visions of real objects ceasing to exist and the dual perception of being alone and being watched at the same time. Finally, an overdose of Dramamine causes rage.

Thanks to the medical technology of transdermal inoculation, Guzman was given an overdose of Dramamine in an instant. He knew he was in danger. He did not move, but asked “What is it?”

Brown answered, “Dramamine.”

“How... much?”

“Not enough to kill you, but enough to make you wish you had died. You know that you will never be the same.”

The doctor remained frozen in place in the dark, while Brown replaced the inoculator and removed his fingerprints from most of the places in the room he had touched. Brown was a shadow that moved with a physical precision and speed that made the doctor think that he was already hallucinating.

He was not. Not yet anyway. This was the first significant demonstration of the power of the devil to affect Brown's physiology. Brown stopped and addressed the doctor before he left his office. "Don't believe for a moment that my master did not know what drug to give you to make you regret the attempt you made to disaffect me from him. Your hallucinations will be of him and his spirit followers; you will not know whether the tools of your trade are in your hands or elsewhere; and you will always know that my master watches you, always, and he will destroy you should you ever again dispute that he exists."

Brown left the office at a casual pace. He did not stop to speak to anyone, turning his head slightly away as he passed the reception desk. The doctor did not die. His delirium lasted so long that his testimony to UEPD that Brown had been responsible for his psychotic break was not credible. Especially so, given the fact that he testified that Brown became like superman, blowing out the electric light, causing the temperature drop in the room, and moving too swiftly for his eyes to follow in the darkness.

They did find the chemical remnants of the breakdown of the Dramamine in the doctor's blood, but they believed that he was self-treating, and made an error in inoculating himself.

Brown smiled at the memory. He knew then that life would be wonderful under the reign of his god. As he moved from place to place, changed identities and his physical characteristics, and engaged in espionage on behalf of the man who would become POTUE, he became the President's and his god's most valuable asset. He knew it.

He took sinful pride in his worth to both of them. For this reason, he was unhappy when the future ruler of the globe hired George to be one of his operatives. He didn't need him, but friendship seems always to trump the employer/employee relationship. Brown considered that truth to be an unfortunate fact of life for George.

