

Words of Life
Metawriting Project
By Sean Madden

“Words on a page... they’re useless without meaning behind them...” the young man thought to himself as he sat in class formulating ideas. He had been brainstorming and writing for days straight without rest, and at last it was nearly time for the weekend break. Even though he had no one in particular to write for, he made sure to give each character a life behind all of the words that made up their world. At last, after a seemingly eternal lecture, the class came to an end. The walk back to his college dorm was more difficult than usual considering his recent struggles, but he somehow made it back. With all his ideas for his work written out on paper and no classes or homework to worry about, he could finally get some well-deserved rest. As he climbed up the edge of his bedside onto his bed, he hoped ideas wouldn’t plague his mind as he tried to sleep. Flopping down onto the extremely comfortable mattress, he shut his eyes slowly.

The instant his eyelids came down, a sound unlike any other he had ever heard sprang them wide open again. The loud noise sounded as if someone had torn a giant piece of paper in half with an echo that made it sound as if it were underwater reverberating around the dorm room. The young man sat bolt upright in his bed expecting his roommate had come to prank him, but his door remained firmly locked. Glancing around looking for the source, he laid his eyes on a startling sight: what appeared to be a gaping hole in the middle of the floor. He rubbed his eyes, thinking they were playing a trick on him, but the swirling void remained on his floor, and three humanoid figures emerged out of it, and it slowly closed. Staying out of clear view but watching carefully, the young man eavesdropped in complete and utter disbelief as they began speaking to each other.

“Where are we...? This place looks strange,” said a young man with short, dark hair. He had what appeared to be two scabbards on his back with a moderate sized sword concealed in each, wearing a stylish red jacket under them. A pair of red and white shoes shown beneath his black leather pants, clenched tightly around his lower body. He wore a black t-shirt under the jacket, but most noticeable of all his features was the large, sharp, almost blade-like looking silver letter “R” on the back of his jacket. He spoke again, “Gizmo, any idea where we ended up?”

“No, we’re definitely in the right place, Robin,” answered a young looking girl with yellow hair. She had her hair in two long twin tails on the sides of her head, each held in place with what appeared to be large cog wheels. She wore an orange vest with short shorts and what looked like cowgirl boots, with dull green gloves covering her hands. “Guy can’t be too far from here,” she muttered as she fiddled with some remote-like device.

“Well, we should go ahead and hurry up,” added a dark skinned young man with short, curly black hair. He wore what appeared to be a t-shirt that appeared to mimic the costume of one of those superheroes that appears on a children’s TV show. “I don’t want to miss this week’s episode of Super Megaforce after I got screwed over with the last two,” he said while adjusting his glasses.

“Really, again with your silly superheroes?” queried the dark haired young man, folding his arms. “You never do anything else, anyway. Would it really kill you to miss *one* episode, Tristan? Besides, I doubt this will take that long. This alternate dimension doesn’t look to be that big.”

“How do you even know?!” the dark skinned young man retorted, a spark of frustration in his tone. “This place could be just as big if not even bigger than our own world.”

“That’s not the point. The point I’m trying to make is that you spend too much time watching TV shows with superheroes when you could be doing something else. You’re completely obsessed with superheroes!”

“Oh, please. I do plenty of other things. Should I be obsessed with superheroes, may God strike me down!”

Right as he said that, the young man who had been quietly observing atop his high bed lost his balance and tumbled over the edge. He landed on the floor on his behind, right behind the dark skinned young man, landing with a crash.

“SHHEEEEEAAAAATTT!!” screamed the dark skinned young man, jumping into the air. He then immediately fell to his knees and started whimpering, “I’m so sorry, God! Please don’t kill me! I didn’t mean it! I really didn’t!”

“Ouch...” said the young man, clenching his buttocks in pain. “Good thing I didn’t break anything, at least...”

“Oh my gosh! Are you okay?!” exclaimed the blonde girl, bending over to check on him. “You’re not hurt, are you?”

“No... I’m... I’m fine,” said the young man, getting to his feet, still shocked that these people were in his room. “Can I ask you guys why you suddenly appeared in my room for no reason at all?”

“Ah... so this is your room, then?” asked the girl, innocently. “Sorry about that. We came into this dimension without any idea just where we would show up... anyway, it looks like you have an explanation to give, o fearless leader,” she said in a sarcastic tone to the dark haired young man.

“Quiet, Gizmo!” he snapped. “Well, I suppose it’s the least we owe you for invading your privacy like this. Anyway, we’re a part of the Guild of Chaos, a group from another dimension that basically does whatever they feel the need to do. I’m Robin Aether, the leader. And these are my allies, Tristan Bedsole and Gizmo Daedalus. We came here because our adversary, Guy, escaped into this dimension right before I was about to defeat him in battle. If we don’t catch him, he’ll start killing innocent people for his own sick needs.”

“He’s bound to be hiding somewhere in the surrounding area,” Gizmo added. “He’s really dangerous, so we have to get after him right away.”

“And with that, our explanation is done,” declared Tristan. “Well, I think we’ll be on our way now. Take care, dude. It’s for the best you forget we were here at all.”

“Wait!” the young man shouted. Knowing something was undeniably strange here, he was not about to let this opportunity walk away from him. Even though he felt it wasn’t a good idea, he had to try. “Let me go with you! I know it sounds crazy, but need to see this go down myself!”

“No, absolutely not,” Robin sternly declared. “People who can’t fight or help us in any way are just a hindrance. Besides, this is a dangerous job we’re going to be in for, and spectators are some of the last things we need.”

“Now, hold on Robin,” Gizmo protested. “We intruded on this guy’s room without his permission... the least we could do is let him observe. And besides, I think it might be helpful to have someone who can navigate the area. In actuality, it would likely benefit us more than if we went out on our own.”

“Oh... oh fine then,” Robin sighed. “I suppose I was too hasty to make choices. It would help if we had someone familiar with the area with us, after all... what is your name anyway?”

The young man who had been leaping for joy internally a minute ago grew silent at his question. “My... my name? Well... it’s...,” he hesitated greatly. “You know, I’m not really comfortable with sharing it with most people. All you need to know about me is that I’m a writer.”

“Hmph...” Robin pouted. “Well, whatever, Mr. Writer. We need to get after Guy right away. Every second he spends here is another second that someone could get hurt. Anyway, let’s go!”

They all hurried out the door and began exploring around the campus in a group. The evening would be setting in soon, so they all agreed they would have to hurry. The young man listened at the back of the group, still shocked at what has been happening for the past hour. While he really wanted to talk with them, he only joined in the conversation when no one else was around. Eventually, they came across something peculiar. Robin stopped to sniff the air, and his pupils seemed to dilate at the smell.

“... Pizza,” he muttered, as if in a trance. “There’s pizza nearby!”

“Oh, how wonderful,” Tristan sarcastically declared as they stumbled across a pizzeria. “The one thing he likes just as much as if not more than himself showed up.”

“Silence!” Robin demanded in a big voice. “There is pizza before us, and I will not just let this opportunity go to waste! Besides, pizza is not just any normal food... it is the most glorious food to ever be shown on this planet! It is one of the great forces of ultimate glory in this world, along with Anime, Video Games, Music, and of course, Myself! Now then, I for one am hungry and would like to stuff my face. What about you guys? I’m buying, if you want.”

“I could go either way. I’m not necessarily hungry, but it wouldn’t be a bad idea,” said Tristan.

“Well... I for one don’t really care, in particular,” murmured Gizmo with her eyes to the floor, frowning. “I mean... it’s not like I *want* you to buy me pizza or anything.”

“You two are so disappointing. I thought you would have known by now I would buy it anyway,” Robin growled. “To think, I have to be in the same guild with people like you who are that non-fanatic about pizza.”

“Oh, you idiot!” Gizmo shouted, her face flushed in red. “Of course I want pizza! God! Shouldn’t you have realized that I clearly *did* want pizza?! You don’t understand me at all, do you? You’re all a bunch of ignorant bungholes...”

“Whatever, I didn’t care whether you people wanted any or not to begin with... damn it! I must have left my wallet back in our dimension! Well, I’m not even sure if they would take my cash anyway. Hey, Mr. Writer, you don’t happen to have any money on you, do you?” Robin turned towards the young man, eagerly awaiting a response.

“Sorry...” the young man said quietly, hoping nobody would hear him. “I don’t have my wallet on me either.”

“I see,” said Robin, looking mighty disappointed. “Well, that gives us all the more reason to finish up this quest faster. The sooner we confront Guy and put this issue to a close, the sooner I can gorge myself on pizza back at the guild. Alright then, well let’s keep looking.”

As Robin continued trekking on with the others following behind him, the young man felt somewhat guilty. He felt his wallet full of cash deep in his pocket press against the side of his leg. But in truth, he knew that getting pizza for a group of people would be pointless in this situation.

As evening fell, the pale crescent moon rose softly into the sky. The street lamps lit their path as the four people walked along the empty campus together. Since there were no spectators around anymore, the young man found it much more comfortable to talk to the three people before him. However, as their conversations continued and became ever livelier, he couldn’t help but wonder how much longer it would last.

“He absolutely hates it when other people find this out,” Gizmo snickered, “But Robin’s totally afraid of girls.”

“NO! SHUT UP!” Robin bellowed. “I’m not scared of anything, it’s just that some things make me very uncomfortable! I’ve always found it difficult to be around girls in the past, but it never got to be a severe issue until after that traumatizing experience we promised not to mention!”

“Ah, yes. That was quite the experience for you, wasn’t it?” Tristan said with a big smile. “Still, he has gotten better after a while. He’s gotten used to some of the girls around the guild, for one. And also, he does have a crush on that blue haired anime singer girl. What’s her name again...?”

Robin stopped dead in his tracks and turned to face Tristan. His face was bright red, with sweat trickling down his face like his head was freshly watered tomato. His eyes seemed to shoot lasers that were boring directly into Tristan’s skull, and his nostrils were so flared they looked as

if missiles were about to launch out of them. “For the last time...” Robin hissed through gritted teeth, “Her name is Hatsune Miku. She is not an anime character, she is a Vocaloid. And I do NOT have a crush on her, I just have a lot of admiration for her. If you dare disrespect Miku-Sama again, I will end your pitiful life.”

Despite the absolutely terrifying situation, Tristan was not phased in the slightest. “Such big talk from the person who’s afraid of girls,” he remarked.

“Oh my god, will you two idiots shut up?” shouted Gizmo stepping between the two young men. “Besides, you’ve got your own flaws too, Tristan. Need I remind you of your irrational fear of bananas?”

Tristan’s grin instantly vanished at the mention of the dreaded yellow fruit. “Well, those two things are completely different! Besides, why on earth would anyone want to eat a fruit that has bones in it?”

“And let’s not forget your fear of roller coasters, either,” Gizmo said with a devilish grin as Tristan’s condition worsened from her words. “Come to think of it, I wonder how you would react to a roller coaster that was fashioned to look like a banana...?”

Tristan shrieked at her words. “Don’t even say things like that! Stop pointing out my shortcomings!”

“Oh boy, and those aren’t even the worst of his flaws,” added Robin, seeing an opportunity to retort. “Let me tell you, at least I’ve never grown up my entire life believing a lie about one of my favorite things! You should be ashamed that you grew up believing that Power Rangers originated in America, while it actually started with Super Sentai in Japan! Your entire childhood was a lie!

“Stop it, stop it, stop it!” whined Tristan, covering his ears in desperation. “You’re making thousands of little kids cry right now!”

“Well, it was your own fault for pissing me off!” Robin roared. “And now I’ll make you feel even worse by insulting all of your fandoms! Sailor Moon isn’t real! Kamen Rider has terrible cinematography! Your favorite Sentai group has the worst plotline out of the entire series!”

Tristan continued to flinch at everything Robin spouted out. “Actually, Gokaiger was pretty good,” said the young man. After all three of the guild members turned to look at him with very confused looks he realized his mistake.

“Hold up a second...” mumbled a confused Tristan. “How did you even know that Gokaiger was my favorite Sentai group?”

“Oh...” the young man stuttered. “Well... I just made an assumption since you liked that kind of stuff so much. It features everything from other Sentai groups, right?”

“Well, yeah. That is true,” Tristan agreed. “But just remember, when you make an assumption, you make an ‘ass’ out of ‘U’ and ‘Mption.’”

“Who the hell is ‘Mption?!’” shouted Gizmo.

It looked to the young man as if Tristan and Gizmo had let the odd incident that had just happened fly by them. As he sighed in relief, he saw something out of the corner of his eye that worried him. While Tristan and Gizmo seemed to be having some ridiculous chat discussing the identity of “Mption,” Robin was shooting a suspicious gaze at him. Had he figured something out? The young man silently hoped for something to divert their attention.

Luckily for him, that “something” came.

“Fancy meeting you here, pests!” belabored a voice from a tree far above them. As they looked up, a figure jumped down from the top and landed on the ground in a crouching pose. Slowly standing up, the figure hissed, “I’ve been expecting you to show up... Guild of Chaos.”

“Guy,” Robin spat. “So, you’re here at last.”

Guy was quite horrible to behold. He seemed normal enough in some ways. He had short blonde hair, and wore a tight, pale blue jumpsuit with a dark cloak. A scarlet letter “G” was sprawled across his chest in a cruel, hateful font. But most defined was his face, with what looked almost like a set of human sized shark teeth spread open in a massive grin. His eyes were like two giant red spotlights, peering out at the four of them with a wicked, bloodthirsty glare.

“So, you had the nerve to follow me all the way here, too.” Guy said, every syllable having the power to send a chill down someone’s spine. “For that, I really commend you. Do the people of other worlds really mean that much to you? I thought I told you all before: human lives that hold no promise of power in them should be eradicated. I shall save our world by consuming the weak and letting the strong survive, and yet you always stand in my way. However, you three and your new friend are out of luck. Why, you ask? Well, guess what time it is?”

“Is it Guy Time?” Gizmo asked with an unamused tone.

“No! IT’S GUY T-” Guy stopped abruptly in the middle of his sentence. His terrifying face suddenly had a less-terrifying, confused expression upon it. “Okay, how the hell did you know I was going to say that?”

“You say it almost every time we run into you,” Robin grumbled. “Anyway, I’m not in the mood to be fighting you right now. I got severely let down when I missed my opportunity for pizza today, and I want to get back to our own dimension, so I’m going to finish this battle we started back then instantly. Stand back everyone. I’m going to use it.”

Suddenly, Gizmo’s expression darkened. “No way! You can’t be serious!” she pleaded.

“Are you mad?! It’s a lot more risky if you try that here!” cried a grave-looking Tristan.

“You wouldn’t... you wouldn’t use that skill here of all places, would you?!” whimpered a surprised looking Guy, with even his face showing a mark of distress.

“Yes!” Robin proudly declared. “I’ll unleash everything I have right here and now! Behold, my ultimate attack! Chaos Maelstrom!”

The next minute was all too much to take in. Robin’s eyes glowed with a mysterious light and a bright aura surrounded him. What looked to be a sheet of flame formed around his neck in the shape of a two tailed scarf. As he began to rise slowly into the sky, he drew both swords out of the scabbards on his back, and two identical crimson blades emerged and immediately ignited with burning flames running across them. And then, Robin spoke with his voice echoing across the sky:

“Ignis, Dragon of Rebellion, let lose your burning flames of disaster and incinerate my foe in your wrath!”

Suddenly an enormous spout of flame emerged from Robin’s body, taking the form of a huge, serpentine dragon made of fire. The dragon flew into the air and spun around at breakneck speeds, creating a giant vortex of crimson flames in the sky. Guy became sucked into the center, and as the flames swirled around him, scorching his body, Robin appeared in the center. With his two swords shining brightly, he began a coordinated attack around the center of the vortex, almost like a dance, with too many slashes for the naked eye to count. Finally after the flurry of blades, Robin charged energy into both his swords and slashed, causing the vortex to explode and light up the sky.

After they both fell back to the ground, the badly injured Guy crawled towards a newly opened dimensional gate. “You win... this time... douchebags,” he weakly said as he crawled through, closing the portal behind him.

“So, it’s over,” said the young man. “Can you guys take me back to my room?”

With a quick agreement, they guided the young man back to his dorm and brought their journey to a close.

“Well, thanks again for all your help,” Gizmo said as she opened up the dimensional gate on the floor once again. “We never would have been able to find Guy without your help... probably. Anyway, if you’ve been awake as long as you said you have, you definitely need to get some sleep.”

“Yeah,” Tristan added. “You really shouldn’t have followed us out if you were that tired. If you don’t get some sleep soon, you’re going to start seeing things that aren’t really there. Anyway, it was great meeting you, Mr. Writer.”

“Of course. I’ve had a wonderful time with you guys. I don’t think I can ever remember the last time I’ve had so much fun,” said the young man as he climbed up into his bed, a sincere smile spreading across his face for the first time in a while. “Well, take care. Good bye.”

“Just one more thing...” said Robin, stepping forward glancing up at him. “It’s something I’ve been wanting to ask you for a while, and I can’t hold it in any longer. You, who are you, really?”

The young man smiled back down at him. “Hey, no need to get so worked up. After all, this isn’t really goodbye. Besides, I don’t really think I need to answer that. After all, you’ve already figured it out, haven’t you?”

Robin looked back at his two companions, and then back at the young man, who seemed far above them now. It all seemed so clear now. “Yes, I believe I have,” he declared.

“Well, then I suppose I don’t need to say anything else then,” the young man said. “But still, the answer is the same as it was before. In the end, I’m just a writer.”

As the three figures descended into the portal, Robin glanced back up at the young man, with a slight smile on his face. “I see, well, take care then,” he said as the young man finally closed his eyes and drifted off into sleep.