

Short Story Summative Assignment

"Brothers"

On a fiery red planet that belonged to a galaxy void of any other forms of life, a man resided amongst a community of strangers. Sloth-like creatures dominated most of the strange world, they thirsted for power and were eager to start trouble. These creatures were short and globular, with ivory fur and long slender arms. Their roundedness hinted at their gluttonous tendencies. They had white faces with blank expressions to match, with protruding black eyes. These eyes seemed to bulge from their faces, giving them the appearance of curious beings. It was a wonder that the man lived amongst these ghastly beasts, as it was clear he looked much different from them. The man, small and plump as he was, hid amongst these creatures with the simple goal of staying alive.

The man could remember a time when people like him co-existed with these creatures. His earliest memories included his mother cowering over his fragile body amidst the shrieks and howling of war outside. She had carefully unwrapped her son from his swaddling clothes, moving quickly and with intent. Battling with her shaking hands, she dipped her infant boy into a small pool of silvery-blue chemical. The boy's russet-brown skin and hair transformed into a mundane ivory. Once the boy was completely stripped of all divergence, the mother left him in her one-room dwelling to be rescued by the enemy. When the rescuers finally arrived and shredded the boy's screaming mother apart with their swift, jagged claws, they peered down at the silvery child and assumed he was one of theirs. The vicious white creatures were very temperamental and dim-witted, but infinitely loyal to their own kind.

The man lived amongst the beasts in the bland and lifeless hills of what once was a forest, rich with life and culture. Most trees were reduced to stumps, and each blade of grass had an ashen quality, almost as if someone swept over the land with a grey paintbrush. The man had quickly grown accustomed to the banality of his living space, and the ferocity of the creatures he lived with.

After many years in their company, the man was mostly familiar with the barbarous nature of the species he lived with and had learned their language and customs. He blended into their society very well, and he managed to avoid the mass-murder and recreational torture they engaged in. From a young age, he had begun to wander off when the beasts' initial siren, declaring slaughter, was released into the hollow sky. One day, the air was especially moist and thick, and it entered the man's tired lungs languidly, almost fighting to stay in. The air was filled with the familiar shrieks of bloodshed, but they were lacking the whimpers and cries of the typical victims. Only the creature's high-pitched alarm was heard. This continued for minutes, forcing the man to investigate. He cowered behind a large stump and assessed the situation. Something seemed to be pulling the man towards the center of the conflict. The subject of observation was trembling with fear, hiding behind merely a coat of chocolate brown fur. The being was small and scraggly, and its image sent shivers down the spine of the cream-coloured man hiding behind the bruised bark of a dead tree.

The general excitement of the crowd enlarged when the blank-faced beasts had begun sniffing the visitor, trying to discover its origin. Shrieking with delight, the monsters had concluded that this was a familiar entity, one they had not encountered in a long time. This dark and scrawny figure was a rare sight for the bloodthirsty creatures, and their appreciation for such an occasion was visible. Their gleaming black eyes danced around the scene, relishing in the idea of destroying this long and lost enemy of theirs. Their heightened excitement was displayed through the short, lunging jumps the beasts took towards the innocent new being. They snarled in its face and snapped with their teeth. The leader, most round and gluttonous of all, insisted that the russet skinned creature be caged until they came to a decision on what way would be best to kill it. The man looked down at himself and studied his arms and traced the veins with his forefinger. His lips were quivering, and he turned away.

From his dingy sleeping quarters, the man could overhear ongoing chatter between the creatures outside. They discussed their preferred forms of torture and debated which one should be used to destroy the small brown creature that showed up on their site. The man, glued to the bed of hay and grass, began to cry. He pushed himself deeper into the abrasive mattress and wept into his bleached and forlorn hands. Earlier by the stump, he had sensed a familiarity from the new entity that was immediately recognizable. The realization had caused him to think of his true family, and his mother, from long before. He continued sobbing, reflecting on all the immoral activity he was a part of, since he had to live with such vicious creatures for survival. He imagined the brown fuzzy creature being clawed alive or scorched with flames. The image troubled him, yet he dozed off into a deep sleep.

He woke up countless times in the evening, and eventually rose from the floor and started towards the forest. He traced the squeals and screams to a clearing in the woods, popularly used for torturing small creatures and enemies the beasts could find. In the center of the clearing, the worn brown body the man so profoundly related with, was resting in a small cage. With only enough space for the creature's arms to extend at the elbows, it was clear that it was tired and distraught. Much like the man, this innocent creature spent most of the night shaking with regret. The man peered at his caged counterpart and acknowledged his environment. There were no beasts for miles, and he seemed to be alone with the sweet creature. They had not a reason to suspect that someone would free the innocent soul, for they were infinitely loyal to one another. The trembling man regarded the boy's cage as though he was trapped in one too. His heart was pounding out of his chest as he reached into the cage, offering the boy with a tender caress on his head. Then, the man started back for his residence, staring at his feet the whole way back.

The next morning, the man welcomed the new day with a few blinks, and rose from bed. He felt so detached from the night before that he convinced himself it was only an apprehensive dream, much like the ones he would have on nights when his friends talked of the gruesome details of their murders. He wandered outside, feeling light with relief and curious to what the beasts were doing th at day. He came to find them all huddling together in the shade of the woods, giggling amongst themselves. The man continued toward the clearing where he would typically eat, while being stared down by an unforgiving sun. The man was so swamped by the weight of the humidity that he failed to notice the tufts of chocolate brown strewn on the tired grass below him.