
The Token

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【小説タイトル】

The Token

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【あらすじ】

fantasy novel for young and old.

chapter 1 and 2

And the Maker proclaimed light to the world, and so there was

From the earth the heavens opened and spewed out life

And life was in the hands of the Prophet whom was entrusted with great secrets

But the Prophet desired power, so tried to conquer the Maker

And the Maker, grieving inside, struck down the Prophet and laid him to rest in the Mountain of Fire

And the Maker found that human kind was found wanting in the desire for power

So the Maker made a token, to control the life and substance of the world

And to entrust the safety of t

his token, drew a prophecy to
control it's fate

Let the earth open and draw in
life, and the heavens fall to
consume

Chapter 1: Prologue

Geoden Yviskova slowly paced t
he stark black halls, hardly n
oticing the deafening silence
or the apparitions of tortured
faces molded into the walls;
only the weak were intimidated
by sound or sight. He did not
even feel the slightest panic
or suffocation that illusions
placed in him possible thicknes
s around the palace usually ma
de you feel. The Hall of the N
ight was a fitting name for this c
old, resounding temple.

He himself did not think or fe
el at all; just lived. He felt
hollow and numb inside, at th
e same time not realizing it.
A small price to pay for immor
tality and the number of other

gifts that were bestowed upon the faithful. He lived to serve and carry out orders. Sensations were not meant to be squandered by meaningless thinking. No. Thoughts should be possessed and controlled by people much more knowing than he. Knowledge was a precious gift that was meant to be honored and used. He had known and agreed to this before he had even begun changing. He was not worthy to control his own thoughts; on the other hand, His Greatness was.

Turning numbly into an open archway, Goden glided between rows upon rows of kneeling pallets; all the dead athly black which made them disappear into the floor. At this time of the day they were all filed, or being filed or vacated, veiled servants dragging away the weaker ones from their pallets. He himself remembered his first meeting clearly; he was allowed that small privilege to pon

der and meditate on. That was what filled his daily hours when he was not serving His Greatness; pondering and meditating.

Kneeling on his selected pallet near the front of the room, Godden closed his eyes, then doubled himself over as though to hit himself like the clasp of anavalanche. Not his thoughts at this time, though. His name was Boedrick Dalani, only in to his mid-twenties, with no wife or family to hinder him. He liked drinking excessively, and frequently got involved in tavern brawls. He lived in the High City of Galandore, located in the center of the Yurasia Province. He was a stable worker and in the Golden Crown Palace, earning his living just barrel y. His favorite inn was . . .

As Godden? no, Boedrick? crooked there on his pallet, galloons of memories gush into his head, a slow smile crept u

p on his face . The pleasure of
having thoughts ? if not his
own ? was like being able to b
reathe again ; a privilege not t
o be wasted . He consumed every
thought , memory and small det
ail . He delivered in the polls of
knowledge that were seeing i
nto his head . More knowledge t
han plain old Boedrick had eve
ry even dreamed of having , he
was sure .

With the years of experience a
nd knowledge , also came bits a
nd pieces of the mission that
he was about to be sent to acc
omplish . Bits and pieces only
? His Greatness did not usual
ly let his subjects know the ex
tension of his planning . Only
a few chosen knew more than wa
s necessary , and those were us
ually disposed of in a few sho
rt months before their knowledge
ge could be used against them .
In a way , Boedrick was lucky
that he was not privileged wit
h more details .

Words drifted through the intricate pattern of his mind. Arched hives: Nargak: Prophecies: Even with the stopper placed on the flood of knowledge that he could have, Boedrick knew the where of what he was to do, where he was to go? The only mystery was how he was to do it. With the knowledge of what he was about to do, Boedrick shivered.

His memories trickled to a close, but the words that acted as guides to his senses remained burned into his peripheral sight. Wherever he went, whatever he did, in which ever circumstance she was in, he would see those words and remember them? all ways.

As Boedrick regained his senses from the semi-conscious haze of the experience, he realized that he was being dragged towards the two, mindnight-blacked double doors by a pair of strong hands. Irritably showing

them away with a back handed blow? he was that kind of man now? he straitghened, and the nstrode purposefully towards a direction he did not know yet. He was drawn there by some invisible force.

Striding past trickles of empty-eyed men and women, Boedrick sniffed contemptuously. To think that once a very long time ago he had been like that; brainless fools! One day every one would serve His Greatness in this way, Him controlling everything mind, body, and spirit. Boedrick chuckled gleefully. And the people like him would be rewarded plentifully, of course.

Slamming open the iron-bound wooden doors, Boedrick strode outside, directing his attendant in towards the Travelling Dock. Roped off with steel braids, Hardnan from the six corners of the world mingled with each other, exchanging notes or writing down reports against steel

l platforms, encasing them in small ivory tubes and striding off purposefully with them. Viled servants bustled around with a smother, easy gait, holding trays full of refreshments for the recient Travelers. As moorh, iron desk was full to overflowing with maps and drawings, surrounded by armor and soldiers and indent Haridan. Near the back, Boedrick could bare ly see a solemn black line of people making their way towards the palace's back gates.

As Boedrick stalked towards the roped off area, a slim, almost stoop pretty girl came to fall in stride with him, casting him a coy smile. Dressed in a filmy taven maid's dress, her nicely formed curves and voluptuous bosom showed pleasingly. Her bronze colored curls fell down to her waist in small braids like vipers. Boedrick returned the smile with a sly grin, then turned his attention on to where they had arrived. He h

adn't even noticed that they had already crossed the iron rope and were in an empty cubicle now.

Smiling at him, the Hardnan gripped his hands in her silky, soft ones, then blinked her eyes lashes slowly. Ashiver and thorough his body like a cascade of ice, and the Hardnan nodded approvingly.

"That is better." she said in a low, husky voice that contrasted nicely with her slim figure. Still holding his hands, she stepped sideways, and:

Blacklinght streaked around them, spinning the round and round like leaves in a storm. The Hardnan was still smiling, and Boderick forced the grimace back off his face. He had done this before many times. Before he could even finish his liaison of thought, though, they landed with a thud in Boderick's room which he rented from the

Tiana inhaled deeply of the cool, fresh air, then smiled faintly. The polished, glimmering white walls sparkled in the early morning light which streamed in from colorful paint on the glass windows. Similarly whit

on.
to forget all about his missi
rs, at least, Boedrick managed
wards his shirt. For a few hou
satisfaction, then fumbled to
o meet hers. Sheila groaned in
en lowered his lips fiercely t
rason?" Boedrick grinned, th
ok me up here for some special
rds his. "And I believe you to
ered, tilting her head up to wa
"My name is Sheila," she whisp
ok me up here for some special

l held his hands. She walked a
step closer, and their bodies
were pressed tightly together.
back to the Hardman; she still
e anybody, silky black hair and
ng his reflection in a mirror,
he smiled. He had a strong, l
e anybody, silky black hair and
e anybody, silky black hair and
back to the Hardman; she still
l held his hands. She walked a
step closer, and their bodies
were pressed tightly together.

eclosets and stands held open books and fancifully painted portraits that shimmered slightly from the protective shield covering them. Wall hangings and tapestries, intricately woven, stood out starkly among evenly spaced slabs of white marble. The hall, or maybe even the whole Royal Archives, seemed not to contain a speck of dirt. She herself was dressed in a spotless, white silk dress, married only by a small necklace, chained that dangled between her breasts. She touched the small key dangling at the end briefly out of habit; you could never be too careful these days. Even with the shields and alarms set against unlawful authorizations, some rapscallions still seemed to slip in for a moment or two and try to wreak havoc on the Archives. Try. They never got more than a few specks of dirt on the floors before Hardnan arrested them. She sighed. She faintly remembered bered days when people would s

teplightly in the shadow of the
the Hardnan and hold the ir bre
th when they entered a room. N
ow they were in a much danger
as any of the common folk. No
t that that was much danger, a
nyway. Hardnan were mostly inc
lined to show the majority tha
t they were indeed above the n
ormal population; that they we
re to be treated with respect
and honor; Hardnan these days
grew spoiled with the care lav
ished on them. Often that lead
to taveren brawl knocked un
conscious or a Hardnan with a
knife thorough their knee or ar
m. Never a fatal blow. It was
unwritten law to not kill Hard
nan, but these days you could
never be too careful. She grim
aced. She seemed to be saying
that a lot of late.

Today was her rounds to guard
the Nargak, an honor only give
n to those who had served as l
ong as she. It took surprise in
ly great knowledge and vigilan
ce to be able to keep watch on

the Nargak, a thing younger Haridan did not seem to comprehend. More than a few had thrown fits over not being given a throne of Watchings; sixty years old she often as twenty years old. She herself remembered when she had thrown herself, but on a much quieter scale. Discipline had been much more strict, then. She sometimes wondered if some of the forsaken customs should be brought up again, to ingrain more respect and humility into the Haridan. And also to see the lords on their faces when the Elders made them jump and down on their heads. Naked. She found herself unintentionally desiring the latter effect more than the first.

As a rooster crowed somewhere in the distance, Tiana found herself instinctively going over the start of the prophecies, a habit that had to be ingrained in anyone before they even dreamed of achieving the Watch

h . Constant vigilance ; that was
the key . You never knew when
a prophecy would spring upon
you . You must come prepared a
t all times .

The cock crows thrice the horn
it blows ,

The white slashed walls fall
lumber ,

The room that glistens in the
night ,

Falls under open awake .

Thieves steal in the night , br
eaking open doors ,

The stone is gone , forever los
t ,

Until child comes to show .

Turning into a heavily shielded
corridor , she used the air a
round her to form a set of inv
isible hands that pushed large
iron-strapped doors open . As

she passed through them she felt the hair on the back of her neck rise, then set the back down as she crossed the threshold. The doors swung shut behind her ominously. Her stomach lurched as she took her second step. Suddenly she was in a room of pitch black, seemingly endless in all directions, seeming to roll under her feet as if she was in a large hollow ball. To the untrained eye, of course. Most Hardnand took years to master the uncomfortable feeling of the weightlessness of the room, and the illusions were nothing compared to reality. Tiana had come to enjoy it, though, embrace the strangeness.

Lightly kicking off with a slippered toe, she floated in the pitch darkness, suddenly surrounded by millions of small dots like so many stars. It was a wonder to her that this room itself was not one giant illuminated sphere. Now. This room had been made from the beginning of time;

a gift to the people of the world. She herself, one of the eldest Hardnans, still did not truly understand it. A mystery if there ever was.

Focusing her thoughts on one, small dot, she felt dead air rush past her as she traveled forward? or, at least it felt like she traveled. In a fraction of a second she was looking down into a dim room, the brightness in the middle casting shadows. Some of the room into shadows. Somehow floating down onto the black and white tiled floors, she landed softly, then started rightened and gazed with a verted eyes at the Nargak. Looking straight at it was a sure way to burn your eyes out, even with shades. It rested on a span-high pedestal with straight black lines curving gracefully and contrasting with white interior. In comparison to the column's intricacy, the Nargak itself was almost hilariously plain; a simply white, bl

Careful not to get caught in exultance? another mistake of yournger Harndan? she packed serenely around the pedestal, keeping her face down turned in placating thought. She reviewed prophesies in her head, each just more extravagant version of the first, yet still important. Some scholars said there were more than two hundred renditions of those seven simple lines. The first phrases were the most easiest to understand, though. The cock crows thrice, followed by the horn. Perhaps the Horn of Destiny, or may be just a simple soldier's tr

ue-veined stone about the size of her head. It was peppered with small dents, as if hit by a hammer unmercifully. It radiated the only light source in the room, specks of clean dust sparkling like diamonds when ever a shaft of light swung through hazardly. Just being close to it made her feel as though she herself was radiating light.

umpet. The white slashed walls
could be several different lo-
cations, yet some believed that
it was the Royal Archives it-
self. Either that or the Tower
of Glory. In any case, the pl-
ace would fall under slumber.
If maybe just a few minutes of
light-headedness, or perhaps
the endless sleep, none knew.
Tiana herself believed it was
just a metaphor of dark days
to come. The heavens knew they
had enough dark days already
to last millennia. The room that
at glistered in the night was ob-
viously this room; the Nargak
never ceased to glow in brill-
iance. Some argued that it must
have a deeper meaning in that
it, yet this was the general id-
ea. Falling under open awake-
id not make any sense at all.
Perhaps it was just there to of-
fend lines. Yet Tiana of all pe-
ople should know that no word
in the Prophecies just 'filled
lines'.

The verses after that all hint

ed of a great thiever, the culprit
someshow escaping, with
or without the Nargak; that was
the great mystery. Ponders
sat awake all night biting
their nails over that one, and
wouldn't? If the Serpent
ever got hold of the Nargak:

Shuddering, Tiana crooked her
hand in a sign toward
him, then gave herself a firm
shake. She had never been
so surprised, yet late events
admitted to every one taking
antic measures, from ornamental
onion roots to bathsin
liver oil. Yet another sign
of the approaching, the
Prophecies said.

And yes, of course, the Child
in the Prophecies. Hundreds
of pages of Prophecies had
been dedicated to that
particular element. It
all hinted about a
child? a girl, scripted
into need? destined to
save the world somehow.
But how on earth could
a simple, ignorant child

ever be able to defy the Serpent in his face? It made no sense at all. Of course, the Prophecies would sort things out. They always did. And if they...

An explosion racked the room, throwing Tiana bodily against one shadowed wall that was illuminated by the sudden burst of fiery light in all directions. Tiana screamed as pains consumed her, threatening to overpower her, then it was over, leaving her panting and sobbing and aching all over. Half-blinded by the bright after-image, Tiana could barely make out dust swirling wildly in the center of the room, tilting her realized that there was no center anymore. A clean, two-span crater gaped open from the tiled floor, just where the Nargak had been. Tiana widened her eyes, then winced and forced them shut. Heavens behold, but even that hurt! She felt her right leg broken, her spine a mass of bruises, and blood oozing

out of her ears and nose .

Suddenly a shadow loomed over her ; strange she hadn't heard the approaching footsteps . Come to think of it , she couldn't hear anything at all . The dark figure's mouth moved harshly , but all she could hear was in finite bleakness . A Hardan could heal her for sure , if she lasted that long . The dark shadow's fists knotted , but a slightly slimmer shadow came to stand behind it to touch its shoulder . It glanced behind at the slim shadow , then loosened its muscles . The figure moved its mouth , but she heard nothing . She squeezed her eyes shut . Pain was dominant in her senses .

Suddenly she became aware of rough hands searching her , then felt a flare of panic as the keystrung around her neck was ripped from its place . She tried to move , but found herself paralyzed . Even so , she found

herself strangely calm. If this was death, she was ready to embrace it. Even the pain had muted to a hot, dull thud.

Sighing contentedly, she let her body relax as numbness climbed her body. The Prophecies had begun, and Tiana had been there to witness it. And she knew, deep inside her heart, that the Serpent had not stolen the Nargak. It had merely gone into hiding, to be found by a girl who would know nothing, yet be controlled by prophecy. Where she was, none had ever known except for Sylvia and now, and the finder of the Prophecies. The most vital Prophecies had been locked away by Sylvia and passed to the Maker's hand, the instructions to let none open it till the ended came. Well, they hadn't opened it. But now they would go to the Serpent. The Heavens help the world!

Her last conscious thought was
to offer prayer to the Maker,
and to wish the Child of Prop
hecy the best of luck. She wou
ld need it.

As the light of the dawn opene
d fully, three cock crows rang
simultaneously after each oth
er, followed by the music of s
ounding trumpets. Leagues away
the Tower of Glory erupted in
to a ball of flames, then fell
silent as the inhabitants dro
pped to the floor, not dead, y
et not alive. And from the mos
t sacred of rooms in the Royal
Archives came a bellowing sho
ut as the iron bound box erupt
ed into flames, not snuffed qu
ickly enough by balls of air,
and leaving only one charred w
ord. Wyndi.

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