**The Overseer**: How about life on earth, **Jonos**? Did thou find any respite there?

**Jonos**: How could I have found respite on earth, Sir? Earth is barren and nourishes nothing but spikes and spines? Tell me Sir, how could earth grant the one standing in front of thee respite when it never stopped adding to my misery and undoing me with terrifying ordeals? Could I have found respite in my toil to find shelter since I was a child? Could I have found it in the nights I was hungry without even a morsel to sustain myself? Or could I have found it when I lay down in the freezing cold without a cover to protect my frail body? Did I find comfort when I watched my loved ones on their deathbeds overcome by illness when I was but a little boy unable to heal their bleeding wounds? Did I find comfort in my youth when I hoped to build a home to keep my wife and my child safe only to have it blown like a candle in the wind? Where was comfort when I had no companion on the road to enquire, “How art thou, friend”? How could comfort be found when fate deprived me of my dearest ones, the dearest of whom was my son, whose life it was thy Will to take so that nothing but coldness filled my heart throughout my years of mourning? After all of this, could I have found comfort in any aspect of living on earth where every hope I had was crushed?

**The Overseer**: We have been apprised of thy suffering throughout thy life, **Jonos**. Nonetheless, thou hast withstood nothing but a drop of the flood.

**Jonos**: That drop was sufficient. Here I am at the doorstep of a new beginning. The prospect of reuniting with my beloved son and of residing in Urhobo’s eternal bliss would compensate for my consistent suffering on earth.

**The Overseer**: So marvelous a dream delights that

it blinds the eye of the mind.

I beseech thee, sons of dust,

Grant me but a little more sleep Before

the glorious morning star shines and

the truth reveals!

**Jonos**: I do not understand.

**The Overseer**: Thy time with us is yet to come.

**Jonos**: How “yet to come”?

**The Overseer**: Thou hast been summoned here for no more than a brief council.

**Jonos**: A brief council?

**The Overseer**: Thou hast heard me correctly, son of dust. This council hath been convened to deliver to thee a message regarding thy destiny.

**Jonos**: A message! What message compelled thee to disturb my peaceful death and near my soul to the edge of deliverance only to deny me that which I thought I had attained?

**The Overseer:** A message whose light, if thou were to follow, would guide thee to the City of Eternity where thou wilt win thy salvation and reunite with thy loved one. Therefore, heed thee the words of **The Overseer**, the owner of this wondrous title, so that thou might solve the riddle and find solace.

**Jonos**: I am listening.

**The Overseer**: I am here to address thee as the descendant of the Throne that hath originated from the righteous Holy Spirit at the beginning of time, the temple of His manifest divine Oneness, the almighty Word which hath bequeathed upon dawn its majesty and infused creation its divine breath. I preside over everything, including the Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of Earth with all their soldiers. As for the stewards of God’s creation, they are its noblest beings and the loftiest goal of our being. These are the ones made from dust, Adam and his offspring, first created in the Image of the great Lord and His example and, henceforth, holding a Sparkof his divine Spirit. These are the ones whose earthly affairs we oversee from the moment they are dropped in the womb to the time of their births and throughout all the stages of their lives until they meet their deaths. Thereafter, we judge their fates based on the shapes their hearts’ wishes have taken and the ways their words and actions have materialized. This is to determine the most virtuous paths for them and for those they have encountered in their lives, thus to honor the gift of life they have been given and reach the highest purpose of their existence. However, in all our extensive deliberations, we rely on the same sacred laws of justice which are planted in their consciences, so that they are capable of intuiting the difference between right and wrong. Our goal is to strengthen their judgment with kindness and fairness so that they can find salvation in the arms of our eternal kingdom in the glorious Urhobo instead of perishing in the darkness of infinite space. Now the moment hath arrived to determine thy eternal fate in this here court of ours.

**Jonos**: And?!

**The Overseer**: Yesternight, poor soul, thou imbibed countless amounts of alcohol and narcotics to force thy mind into a state of oblivion, as thou art wont to do every night alone in thy dwelling. However, due to an overdose, this time thy heart stopped beating and thy blood slowed down in thy veins. Eventually, thou succumbed to a deep coma and were on the verge of dying. As Death caught thy life in its claws and was eagerly about to devour thee, the accursed Abaddon found an opportunity in such circumstances as he always does and hurried along with his top officials to the court of the universe’s great King to demand thy soul among others. They presented the court with conclusive evidence to immediately sentence thee and the rest to the bottomless abyss with no hope to ever return. Since we have scrutinized the details of thy life and calculated thy options with absolute precision, we decided that the total sum of thy account supports the case for thee to perish. This is because thou hast shown no respect for the gift of life thou hast enjoyed on earth and hast succumbed to despair as evidenced by causing harm to thy self and others. Still, we did not wish for thee to be deprived of every chance at salvation and sentenced to perish outside the kingdom of eternity. Therefore, we carefully went over thy case with **King of Universe** and asked for mercy in the form of a summons to take place within a dream. Thus, we are able to warn thee of thy dim prospects and offer thee a new chance to finish the full course of thy life on earth, hoping that thou would overcome despair and choose the path of light. This is how thy life would reach its purpose and thy promised salvation would be granted in the kingdom of the great City.

**Jonos**: O Lord, and?

**The Overseer**: This brings our message to a conclusion. Thou hast the right to respond to our decision. When thou art done, **Dawn-Arrow** and **Beam** would accompany thee back to thy failing body and thou wilt regain consciousness.

**Jonos**: Regain consciousness! Woe to me! The words of my Lord’s message have prodded my wounded heart towards the source of its undying sorrow.

**The Overseer**: My son, we only prod those whom we love in order to take them from oblivion to awareness. We heal their broken hearts afterwards.

**Jonos**: Were all the toils of my posthumous journey and the prospects they held nothing but a drunken stupor? Then how faint the line is between fact and foolish fiction.

**The Overseer**: Dost thou have any recollection of what transpired at thy house last night?

**Jonos**: I have no recollection whatsoever of where I was, what transpired, or how I died. I remember nothing but my funeral, the appearance of thine two angels, and leaving earth with them.

**The Overseer**: ‘Tis no wonder thou hast blocked the memory of thy last few days on earth. How could thee not when despair hath often nested in thy soul? Or could teetering on the edge of eternity hath given thee false hopes in thy future and cause to obliterate thy past?

**Jonos**: I know not which. But I have no interest in dwelling over the twists and turns of my disappointing life. I have intentionally sought to sever the past from my mind and to make as if it never happened. But, now, as I am on the brink of bliss and a mere step from my son who resides in this very kingdom, how could I abide the denial of my heart’s wishes and return to my wretched life on earth as thou hast pronounced?

**The Overseer**: ‘Tis only in returning that thy salvation lies, son of dust. Wouldst thou return?

**Jonos**: Return to death? No, I would not.

**The Overseer**: Not return?!

**Jonos**: Nay, I would certainly stay here and let come what may come!

**The Overseer**: Thou hast no power whatsoever to alter this decision. This is not the land of decision-making or choice. Thou hast no say in the matter. This edict is stamped with an irrevocable seal.

**Jonos**: What edict is this? What reckoning is being held here? After everything that hath taken place, should my fate be so harsh? This here is neither an epiphany nor a dream. This is a nightmare or an absurd play.

**The Overseer**: Dost thou see that this discourse of thine exposes thy inner soul and shows the justice in the edict that banishes thee from here?

**Jonos**: I see nothing but a game that hath drained and deprived me of everything I had, a game with a mirage. Do I see justice in thy judgment? Thou art in error, Sir.

**Beam**: Dear Lord!

**The Overseer**: Woe to thee, oblivious fool! Art thou denying Heaven’s justice? What dost thou know? Hast thou measured the Spirit of Truth? Art thou the Guide who teaches right from wrong? Better to have own thy mistake. Thy ignorance! Should not thou, naïve fool, fear that, in my anger, I could annihilate thee?

**Jonos**: Do annihilate me, Sir!

**Beam**: Beloved Master . . .

**The Overseer**: What if I were to utter a word that could send shivers down thy spine and make thy teeth chatter?

**Jonos**: What word would that be?

**The Overseer**: The word whose letters are made of ice.

**Jonos**: Give me one letter.

**The Overseer**: E. L. H. L. Arrange these letters on thy own.

**Jonos**: Welcome, Oh, Hell!

**The Overseer**: What if I were to sentence thee for only one single hour in the City of Death? What wouldst thou say?

**Jonos**: I would say sentence me to thy City of Death forever so that I might never return to my former life. How could thy Death be harder than mine? Tell me how could thy hell be vaster than mine? What more dost thou have? I have lived for many years and have seen so much in my days. I have traveled and wandered remote areas and lands. The scars and wrinkles on my face bear witness to my anguish and loneliness. The cracks on my hands draw a map of the roads I have traveled. Behold my skin color; it was burned by the sun in my search for comfort while naked. Examine the lines on my body; thou wouldst see the mountains and valleys I have climbed and descended by myself, hot or cold, day or night. How could thy hell be worse?