

## Betrayal of Friendship

This story was written by Justin Kelley. All thoughts and comments can be sent to [JDKelley18@aol.com](mailto:JDKelley18@aol.com). This story involves strong language, violence, death and other subjects of a very mature nature. If these subjects offend you, do not read the story. Well, here we go.

### **Chapter 12: A Fatal Mistake.**

For nearly two hours, Chaozu had stood there, his mind filling over and over, being stretched in a way. He also noticed that this process was slowing down, but he made no move to question it.

Below him, Yamcha had given up on trying to console Krillin, and stood close to Piccolo. He had thought of a few ways to try and talk to him, but he had never started them. Somehow, he could tell Piccolo was in no mood to talk.

"Too bad," he thought to himself, "there are things I want to say."

"Piccolo, I've been wondering why Ursapha decided to help us."

The Namek looked down at Yamcha, and snarled. He turned his head, and was quiet for a while. Yamcha was about to try to get Krillin to talk again, when Piccolo answered.

"He has his reasons. I doubt he unlocked so much of what he considers a deadly form without some kind of plan. If I had to guess..."

Yamcha stepped closer, to listen to Piccolo's almost silent conclusion.

"...he wants you to kill each other off, getting rid of the humans that obviously have hurt him in the past."

"That's crazy, Piccolo."

Yamcha turned and walked off. Piccolo's left eye was on his back, watching him. He turned it away, and stared into a crystal. He let his mind drift, and thought about everything that had recently happened.

"It makes no sense...it's obvious that these Meta-Humans caused Ursapha pain. So why would he allow more to arise. It just doesn't add up..."

The four remained silent to each other. They couldn't think of anything to say to anyone. Little did they know, that above, a Rhodja male was watching them with interest.

The small druid that welcomed the four Z fighters into the temple stood next to him.

"How much power do they possess, my friend?"

The small reptile showed his teeth, and laughed.

"They know nothing my lord. Master Ursapha's plan is going exactly as he intended."

A clenched fist smashed against the druid's head. He was sent sprawling on the floor, and found himself wrenched up by his robes. The Rhodjan smashed him against the wall, and stared into his small eyes.

"You fool! I didn't ask how much they knew! I want to know how powerful they are! My entire heritage depends on if these humans never rise again! My family would have wiped out the humans when their empire was weakening, if only they had locked away their true powers earlier! But, as we speak, the old enemies of the humans are massing. We will descend on them, and I will rule the universe, as is my birthright! But this could throw our plans off course! We can't afford any mistakes, do I make myself clear?"

"I, I'm sorry my lord. I didn't mean to offend you!"

Ornita, the Rhadja, let him fall to the ground, and looked back down into the room where his mentor and Godfather sat. Ornita stood nearly six foot tall, and had the build of a weight lifter. This was fitting, since he had spent the last 200 years of his life training so that the humans, that vile race that had nearly destroyed his people and their plans of domination, would one day bow before him. Bright lavender hair was neatly pulled back into a pony tail. His dark blue skin had a thin film of sweat on it.

"Go down and inquire as to the thoughts of the small human. I want to know how far he can be used to fight this other human."

Niigata ran out of the small chamber quickly, and ran to the small transporter, that would put himself into the room with Ursapha. He saw him walk slowly towards Krillin, and he frowned. He drummed his fingers and waited.

Meanwhile, King Kai stood with 18, Marron and Gohan. Marron was still crying in 18's arms. Gohan was talking silently to King Kai.

"King Kai, have you told my father about Tenshinhan's attacks?"

The young man was nearly in tears after he found out that he didn't bring his foe with him.

"I'm sorry, but I can't. My powers can't pierce Tien's mental block over the planet. Chaozu is under going a power up as we speak, so that we might break through. Right now, Tien is nearly dead, so his block is falling apart very fast. However, your father is healing right now, so I doubt I could rouse him. I need to conserve my strength, since breaking through it would leave me alone too tired to get a conversation across."

Gohan looked at the god with amazement on his face. He stood up straight and paced in a familiar rut. Souls continued to move past him, being judged.

"I can't believe this! We have to alert dad! I'll do it if I have to break every rule in heaven!"

"Gohan! Watch your language! Enma is very close, and he could take your body away from you if he wanted. Listen, I've thought about this alot. And I know how hard this is on everyone."

Gohan sighed and turned around. He nodded his head, and sat down in meditation. He stood up again, and walked out to Snake Way.

"Gohan?"

"I'm going to train. When I meet Tien again, he won't survive!"

Gohan clenched his fist, and exploded in white ki. He tore off through the air, heading towards the small planet at it's end. King Kai just lowered his head and put his arms behind his back. He again looked down to Earth, and watched as Trunks and Goten arived at the body of Tien.

Blood was everywhere. The ground was slick with it, and it kept spreading. Scorch marks from the explosion were everywhere.

"God, what is that smell!?"

Goten was gagging in mid-air, and Trunks lifted his shirt to cover his nose. They looked around, and could not find anyone.

"Hello!!! Anyone here?"

"Trunks, I don't think anyone survived. Looks like we didn't get here fast enough."

"Yeah. I don't feel Gohan's ki..."

Goten was nearly in tears when a hand shot out of the rubble. Blood ran down the hand as it clenched in mid-air. Both the young warriors were shocked as they saw the

fingers clench the air before slowly heading towards the ground.

Goten and Trunks flew down at the ground and gripped the arm. They pulled up a little harder than they wanted, and ended up pulling a bloody body out of the ground. They stared at the unrecognizable mound of flesh for a moment, not being able to tell who they had just pulled up.

"Se..."

A word barely escaped the man's, if that was what this person was, burned and bleeding lips.

"He's still alive! Mister, can you talk!?! " yelled Trunks, leaning in close. The stench of blood was almost overwhelming to the young man.

"Sensu..."

The two were shocked at that word. Only one of their friends could know about them.

"Gohan! Gohan!"

The words floated down to him as if through a mound of rocks. He slowly opened his left eye, the only one without serious injury. He found his right eye unresponsive. With a great urge of will, he forced his third eye open. He winced from the pain right away, and felt his weak grasp on life getting away from him.

In heaven, King Kai urged the two boys to end Tien's life now. He saw the two boys shocked faces, and saw them reach down and slowly lift the man up.

"No, don't do it!"

"Goten, did you hear something?"

Goten looked around, and shook his head. Tien's block wasn't weak enough yet.

"Let's get Tien out of here. I don't think he'll live too much longer..."

Each boy got Tien from under an arm, and lifted him up. They took off into the air softly but quickly. The rush of fresh air awoke Tien slightly. He thought about his injuries, and the loss of time it would take to be healed at Capsule Corp. Quickly, his mind began to think of a solution.

"I can't go back. As I heal, I'm sure I'll pass out from the drugs, and that bothersome catfish will spill my plans. I can't very well fight back if I'm not awake. No..."

I have to think of something else...my sensu..."

Tien coughed up a mouthful of blood and drool. The young men lowered him back to the ground, and looked into Tenshinhan's face.

"My sensu... near the fig..."

"GOTEN! Go look for his sensu! Hurry!"

The black haired youth took off, back to the battle sight. Goten's eyes darted back and forth, until a flash of silver caught his attention. He darted to it, and tossed the clothes around, not paying attention to the sword hilt, until he found the brown bag. He opened it up, and laughed when he saw it nearly full of the wonderous green beans. He took off into the air again, and quickly headed back to Trunks.

Meanwhile, Tien's grasp of consciousness and life were slipping away from him again. Goten came just as his eyes closed for the last time. Trunks took the bean and placed it in his mouth. He forced Tien to chew, and the swallowing was done on instinct.

"No!!! You fools! We were so close!"

Tien's three eyes shot open, and an evil grin spread across his blood covered face.

In Heaven, King Kai hit his knees. His antenna drooped down, nearly brushing the ground. Enma paid no attention, and continued to judge souls. In the world of the living, Hell was coming closer to being reality.

In the basement of Capsule Corp., Vegeta was slowly healing from his wounds. Twice he had again descended into his nightmare, and twice he had been defeated in the same way as the first time. In his mind, the memories of defeat were standing out like a sore thumb. No matter how violently he thrashed his head out against his restraints or how quickly he moved in the small orb, he remained asleep. Again, his mind clouded in darkness, and the same nightmare came to life.

"Not this again!"

The dark plain rose around Vegeta, and he could see shadows walking towards him. The air became heavy, and felt like a weight sitting on the Prince's shoulders.

"Why do these images torment me!?"

In the sky, lightning struck between clouds. Vegeta saw he was no longer in an empty plain, but a ruined city. He thought he could see corpses lying strown around, but the light faded too quickly, so he was left only to wonder.

"Is this realm of ungodly shadows the only place where I can visit?"

"You are here, because you bring yourself back. We are here, because you want us here..."

Vegeta turned, and could see the inky build of one of the demons right in front of his face. He brought a hand up to knock it away, but he felt his wrist gripped with an icyness unmatched by anything he had ever felt.

"Let go of me, you soulless demon!"

"Vegeta, it is you that holds yourself back."

Vegeta turned to face him, and was amazed to see a copy of himself. The copy was holding his wrist. Vegeta yanked it away, and began to walk backwards. Fear and wonder filled his eyes. A deep voice from behind, unfamiliar to this dead world and yet belonging here, called his name. Turning, he saw the large white cape and turban of Piccolo. The darkness made it almost grey, but it still stood out.

"Haven't you realized yet, Vegeta, that you can't defeat yourself? When you let go of your old self, little by little, you become stronger. Are you willing to give it all up?"

"What are you talking about, slug? I am a changed man since my days with Freeza!"

Piccolo faded away. Vegeta was surprised that he felt a sense of remorse once he was gone, but decided to move forward.

A stinging blow between his shoulders lurched him forward, leaving him on his knees. He got up, and turned around. The shadows were following him. He could feel them now. All around him.

"Why not blow them away, Vegeta?"

Looking up, he saw Krillin and Yamcha floating in the air.

"To hell with you, humans! I don't need your advice on how to survive!"

Krillin and Yamcha dropped to the ground on either side of him. They looked at him, and remained silent.

"Get away from me, fools".

"Come on Yamcha. He hasn't realized it yet."

"You're right."

The two took a step backwards, and were lost in the dark. In their place, two of the shades walked forward.

"Oh, I see! This is all a ploy to get me to lower my guard!"

Vegeta shot his hands out, and fired off two orbs of ki. They exploded on contact with the shades, and turned them into whispers. He stopped walking, and stood his ground. From in front of him, he saw two solid bodies coming towards him. His eyes barely lifted when he saw his son Trunks and Goten come into view.

"So, you've come as well to try and convince me to stop? I guess I will see everyone I know here, and they will all tell me that I should not be me. For what? So I can die here over and over? I think not."

"Papa, listen..."

"Silence! Leave me, shadow. I grow tired of this!"

The image of his son lowered his head. A tear fell to the ground. Before it hit, Trunks was gone. Goten looked over once, and sighed. He followed his friend. Vegeta was again alone.

"You will not help yourself, nor let others help you. There is much about you that has not changed."

Vegeta didn't need to look. He knew the voice of that as the leader of the shades.

"End this. I know what will happen, and I do not feel like squandering time here. Release me from this fiendish prison."

"I do not have the power to release you. You alone have it."

Vegeta took off into the air, blowing the ground at his feet into a hole. As he flew on, faster and faster, the words he just heard rung in his mind. He stopped, and let himself fall to the ground. His feet crunched something hollow. Looking down, he saw skulls. Some were human. Some were Namekian. Others were of races Vegeta barely remembered slaughtering.

"This still haunts you. As far as you have come from what you were, you have not reached beyond this. Why?"

Bulma stood behind him. Vegeta turned to look at her, and saw a bloody corpse. He screamed in surprise and pain, and turned away and began to fly off.

"It doesn't do any good, does it Vegeta? It's always here. Always lurking when you close your eyes. A pain you can't stop."

"Demon, I will rid myself of this place and you at the same time!"

Vegeta's body was quickly engulfed with golden fire as blue electricity ran around his body. He pointed his hands down, and began to scorch the graveyard beneath him with a ki barrage. Tears began to fall from his eyes as he took off, destroying everything in his sight. Before long, he found himself in the ruined city.

"To Hell with it all!"

He powered up his Final Flash, and let loose a beam almost as large as the city. He fired it and watched with satisfaction as he heard the destruction.

"Look around you, fool. Do you think you can destroy yourself?"

Vegeta was about to turn his attack on the following wraith, when the buildings caught his eyes. This was his city. His home. He stopped, and hit a knee. Sweat poured down his body, and his aura faded, along with his Super Saiyan powers.

"Let me free!"

Vegeta turned on his follower, and tore into him. Vegeta paid no attention to the icy wounds that were being opened on his body from the converging shadows. He fought on, running away from the city as he punched at anything that he could see.

As he hit his hands and knees, he felt an icy hand grip his heart. Vegeta tried to fight it, but his strength gave out quickly. He laid on the ground, gasping for life. His vision dimmed, and for the final time, he left the nightmare. They had won.

"Slow down, guys. I need to get some of this blood off me."

Tenshinhan lowered himself to a small lake and began to splash the water on his body. Soon the grime and blood was off him, and he looked like the same Tenshinhan. He joined Goten and Trunks in the air, and began to head back to Capsule Corp.

"Shit! Stay here. I'll be right back!"

Tien turned and fired off. He left the two boys far behind him in a flash. He landed near the battlefield and began to look for the rest of his items.

"Excellent. This game is almost over. How nice those two were to save my life. I guess I'll have to thank them."

Tien swang the blade quickly and laughed. He tucked it into his waist and flew back.

"Sorry, had to get dressed."

The three took off again. They had barely moved when Goten blurted out about Gohan. Trunks gave him a look, but Tien answered regardless.

"Gohan fought bravely. For a while, I thought he could have defeated that bastard. But, in the end, he had taken too much damage."

Goten's eyes began to water, and he wiped his face with his shirt.

"So, he didn't die?"

"No. He's still out here, somewhere."

"Then we need to strike now Goten!"

"Yeah! I'll get him back for what he did to my brother."

"Guys, guys. Calm down. I don't think both of you should fight him. One of you needs to go tell your fathers. The other can look for him with me." Here, Tien smiled. He began to manipulate the boys' minds.

"Trunks should stay." is what Trunks heard, however, Goten heard "Goten should stay."

"I guess I am the strongest of us three. No sense in you fighting him, Goten. You should go get help. Leave this to me."

"You're crazy, Trunks! I'm the one who's gonna stay!"

Tien began to excite their emotions as they argued. Soon, they were screaming at each other.

"You can't fight worth a damn, Goten! Everytime we fight together, you're the one who starts to bitch and moan!"

"That's because I have to pull your weight! I'm fighting for two people, of course I'm tired!"

"Bastard!"

Trunks decked Goten in the mouth. For a second, Goten just looked at the ground, as a rope of red left his mouth. He clenched his fists, and turned to face Trunks.

The two dashed forward and met in a smash of bone and flesh. Elbows were grinding into each other as their teeth clenched tighter.

Goten spun around, driving his knee into the ribs of his opponet. The air cracked from the two as they flared. Again they clashed. Above them, Tien laughed to himself.

"Now for my next move."

Flying down, he got between the two boys.

"Stop this fighting!"

"Out of the way!"

Trunks hit him in the jaw. Tien allowed his body to be sent flying away. He watched with delight as Trunks bashed Goten into the ground.

Dust and smoke flew up from the impact site. Goten's dark figure could barely be made out.

"Kame kame ha!"

The blue beam ripped out quickly to hit Trunks. Drawing his sword, he pushed himself to the ground, then dashed forward. Goten moved his beam down, and pounded it into Trunks' body.

Goten stopped firing, and flew forward, kicking Trunks' mouth. Blood flew from him as he spun. Before he came around from the blow, Trunks took off backwards, driving his elbow into Goten's groin. Goten hit the ground hard and gasped for breath. Trunks stomped his head down into the rock hard. He lifted his foot, and sent it down again.

Goten flipped forward, kicking Trunks in the face. The purple haired boy stumbled back, and heard a familiar sound from Goten. Opening his eyes, he saw he was a Super Saiyan. Trunks powered up with him, and again they clashed.

"Enough of this!" Tien thought to himself as Goten and Trunks knocked each other around. "Even I can grow tired of watching weak little bastards fight."

Tien again flew down to where the boys fought, but this time, he began to gather ki. In each hand, balls of blue ki were being formed. He waited for Trunks and Goten to fly away from each other before firing.

"Kame Hame Ha!"

Goten and Trunks turned to see two attacks coming at them. Both of them raised their arms to hold back the blast. They screamed in pain as their bodies were smashed backwards.

After a few hundred feet, the beam ended. Their arms smoked from the attack, and tears blurred their eyes. The mental hold on them was gone, and their minds cleared quickly.

"Trunks, what were we doing?"

"I don't know. But, we have company..."

Looking across the torn ground their feet had made, the two boys saw a tower of burning white energy. The killer was before them.

The two said nothing, but leaped at the beast. The air howled in their ears as they closed the gap.

The killer spun kicked Goten aside, then jumped up, past Trunks and stomped the back of his head. Tien landed behind the two, and turned. Both of the boys were getting back up, about to attack again.

"Do you think you two have the power to fight me!?"

As Tenshinhan yelled out his challenge, he powered up from his held power that kept the two fooled to his peak. The boys' golden aura of fire was blown backwards, and eventually off them as they gave into fear.

Tien ran at the two of them. They raised their arms up in defense, and each felt a crushing fist land on them. It spent them sprawling backwards on the ground. Both took off straight into the air, avoiding the next shot, a slicing ki blow.

"Goten! Can you see Tien?"

"No! He... agh!"

Tien plowed his knee into Goten's gut, knocking the breath out of him. Trunks saw the killer smash Goten down into the ground before he could react. Placing a hand out, Trunks unleashed a one handed energy dan as he gathered ki in his unused hand.

Tien kept his eyes on the ground where Goten had landed. He raised his hand, and let each blast land on his palm. They exploded, leaving nothing but smoke hanging in the

air. Trunks zanzokened to the other side of Tien and fired off the charged shot.

"Fool..."

Tien pointed his open palm at the blast, and fired off a shot barely the size of a grain of sand. It hit Trunks' beam, and caused it to collapse in on itself. Trunks hung in mid air, his mouth open.

"A tiny attack from me is much more powerful than that pathetic little blast. Your attack simply ran out of energy."

While this was going on, Goten pulled himself back out of the ground. He watched in the air as Trunks again charged Tien. Goten kneeled down and gathered ki in his cupped hands. With a burst of energy that blew the ground around him into small pebbles.

"You again?"

Tien knocked Trunks away from him with a hard punch. He turned to face Goten when Trunks flew from behind and wrapped his arms around Tenshinhan's eyes. This gave Goten the needed chance.

"Get off me! You little bastard!"

Goten flew right next to Tien and placed his cupped hands in front of Tien's abs.

"Kame kame ha!"

The beam nearly doubled Tien over as it shoved him backwards. Trunks flew off of him. He turned and fired of an energy dan as Goten continued to push him through the air.

"Goten, keep it up just a little longer!"

Goten nodded his head as Trunks took off after him. He saw the speck of white in the distance, slowing down. He must have started catching Goten's beam. He pushed his body a little harder, and drew his sword. He swung it down at Tenshinhan's head. A quick glint of blue flashed, and caught the blade.

"What!?"

Tien threw Goten's beam at Trunks with his left hand, then flew up, bringing back his right. Trunks narrowly dodged the blast, and saw the beam sword coming at him. He flung his arm down, catching it a few inches from his body.

"I'm coming!"

Goten plowed into Tien's mid-section. A small amount of blood was sent flying out of his mouth. It sent him back a few feet, giving Trunks an opening to attack.

Trunks pulled back his sword, then swung it down quickly. Tien saw it coming, and tried to move, but with Goten still pushing him, his movements weren't fast enough. Tien felt the blade bite into his left tricep. Blood slid down slowly.

"I'll make you pay for that boy!"

Tien elbowed Goten hard in the spine, sending him down into the ground hard. The dust cloud from the crash shot up to cover Tien and Trunks. Both of them dashed forward, their blades slicing through the air. They rung as they connected. The power coming off each other crackeled.

Trunks shot backwards, then flew straight up. Tien flew forward and sliced, slashing Trunks' ki trail. He pointed his left hand up, and began firing an energy dan. Trunks flew down again, after changing direction a few more times. Trying to stay a step ahead, he zanzokened underneath Tien and thrust his blade up.

"Too slow!"

Trunks looked behind him and saw a flash of white streak out into the small of his back. Tien dug his boot into Trunks' skin, trying to crack his spine. As Trunks screamed out in pain, he dropped his sword from his hand.

"Stop it!"

Tien looked forward, and saw Goten wielding the blade. He tried to parry the blow, but failed. He felt the blade press through his abdomen. Red blood fell from his body to the ground even as his sword fell apart. His aura slowly faded off him, as his body was racked with pain. As Goten began to see Tien's body, he let go of the sword and backed up, his mouth hanging open.

Tien reached forward and grabbed the handle. He pulled it from him slowly, wincing in pain the entire time. He flipped himself so he was floating right side up. His hand went down to his bag of sensu and began to draw one out. He looked up to see Trunks and Goten both staring at him.

"So, it was you all along. You were the one who killed everyone, the people of Rush, of Drata! Why didn't we see it before! You were so weak, how could you have survived when no one else could!?" screamed Goten as his fury burned around him.

"No, I was strong. Stronger than you could have imagined. But no one ever

looked to us, the humans. It was always the Saiyans to save the day. You forgot about me. That was your biggest mistake. And it's one you'll never live to regret."

Tien popped the sensu in his mouth and swallowed. The blood stopped flowing from his body, and his strength returned. Goten and Trunks flew at him quickly, punching like mad. Their fists sliced through the air. Each one landed squarely on one of Tenshinhan's palms.

However, they did not give up the fight. Trunks and Goten pushed forward, trying to catch Tenshinhan off guard. One went high as the other went low. Tien kicked and punched at them, but they inched by the attack and delivered their own. Where alone their strength wasn't enough to move Tien, together they sent him shooting backwards.

Taking advantage of the situation, the two flew side by side. Their combined auras burned the air as they landed blow after blow on Tien's face. The two of them pushed him back and downwards, to the ground. However, they pushed their luck too far. When they powered up for haymakers, Tien zanzokened behind them and flipped over, driving his knees into the tops of their heads.

Tien powered up a kame hame ha as he saw the two of them begining to slow their descent. He fired off the blue beam and watched the two of them dart to the sides.

"Ha... divide and!" Tien raced down at Goten at full speed, slamming his knee into his neck. He heard the bones pop and watched as blood flew out of his mouth. Turning, he fired off a kikoho, hitting Trunks square in the back. "...conquer!"

The two boys fell down to the ground. Tien hung in the air, laughing. Birds took off into the air from the sound. In Vegeta's healing tank, the sound rang hard in his head, stirring his mind. His mind slipped into a dream, though this time, he was not to be hurt and injured, but instead trying to reach himself, span the distance his mind could not cross.

Vegeta stood alone, naked, in an endless field of white. He looked across the field, and saw Goku walking towards him.

"Kakorotto, do you now torment me?"

"No, Vegeta. I'm here to help you. Listen to me, and never again will these dreams haunt you."

Vegeta said nothing. He stood still, and closed his eyes. "Speak, but make it quick."

"Open your eyes, then."

Vegeta opened them, and was amazed. He saw himself, decades younger, fighting Goku on Earth for the first time. He saw Goku covered in the flames of kaio-ken, still being defeated.

He then saw Goku and his friends push on, defeating him.

He saw his defeat at the hands of Zarbon, Freeza, 18, Cell, the Cell Jr., his humiliation seeing Gohan reach the level he had tried so hard to reach, his descent into despair, the endless training, the conversion to Majin, the death of the innocents, the fight with Goku again, his death at his own hands and on.

He felt a stinging blow, and turned, seeing Goku's clenched fist inches from him.

"You are nothing, Vegeta. You have fought for nothing almost all your life, and continue to do it now. Are you willing to realize this, and be remade? To break your bindings?"

Vegeta blinked in disbelief, and saw ranks of Saiyan warriors standing before him.

"Can you tell me their names? You are so proud to rule them, yet can you tell me ONE of their names?"

"No, I can not! They are meaningless to me."

"NO! You are meaningless to us." yelled a random Saiyan in the ranks.

"Trash! You don't deserve to be our Prince!"

One of the warriors in the front, a tall Saiyan with short, vertical hair walked forward and slapped Vegeta's face. The Prince was sent spinning backwards. When he turned back, he saw Goku alone.

"Status, privilege, dependence on what has been acquired. All unceremoniously ripped away. Neither character or strength are revealed until things are at their worst. But once surfaced, each stands in plain sight, never to be buried again. It is the two of us who will strip away the facade so easily confused with self. We will offer the pain needed to buy truth. And at least, you will own the privilege of looking inside yourself and discover what truly resides there."

Vegeta was amazed at Goku's words. He turned around and began to walk. As he blinked, he saw his defeats in front of his face again, this time much more closely.

"How does it make you feel, Vegeta? Angry?"

"Yes. To be beaten... humiliating!"

"Unhappiness does not arise from the way things are. But rather, from a difference in the way things are and the way we believe they should be. You thought you should have won, but you did not. Accept your weaknesses, and grow strong!"

"No! I will never accept defeat! Never will I follow my father's mistakes of bowing to anything! I will rely on myself!"

Again Vegeta felt his head get hit. He hit the ground hard, and pushed himself up, despite the pain. He saw his own self being defeated by Vegeta. He winced in pain as he was killed.

"Do you fight alone?"

"Yes!"

Vegeta was treated to the site of him facing off against 18 by himself. He saw the defeat that came so quickly. In a flash, it was him facing Buu alone, being ineffective. He saw his suicide, and watched as it did nothing.

"A man within himself has no one else to rely on. And when the self is exhausted? He must search for another to lift him up. Vegeta, there is a point at which even the strongest of us cannot continue. Where despair replaces conviction. And suddenly, all you have believed is shattered. Where you had seen in yourself invincibility, you now confront vulnerability. You have faltered, and the root of your weakness lies painfully exposed. With the weight of your failure on you, you must realise you have been overcome because you walk alone."

Slowly, Vegeta saw the ground turn into the familiar family room at home. He saw his wife and children playing, and felt a deep pang of love, sadness and guilt all at once. Goku stood beside him, his face as grave as it had been the whole time he was here.

"There is no brighter day than the one that shines light on the knowledge that true strength lies not in self, but in unity. That the others in this with you answer to the same cruel tormenter. And that together, you can be stronger than the hurt."

Vegeta watched as Goku, Gohan, Krillin and Yajerobi defeated him on Earth. He watched as Piccolo, Tien, Krillin, Yamcha, Gohan and Chaozu lined up to face Nappa and himself. He watched as a team, the weak overcame the strong. In his mind, heart and spirit, a light began to shine.

"So now, the rebuilding begins. This is the time their souls will take back all that was taken from them. Through faith in each other, they will find their strength and their will."

"Vegeta, there is only determination. There is only a single-minded desire. Not one among them is will to give up. Not one among them would exchange torment for freedom. They know the strength that is found when they are together."

Vegeta closed his eyes and felt the air around him change. He saw himself again in the Room of Spirit and Time. He watched as he withstood the fires and chills of the room. He trained there, forgetting his pain.

"Once a man has walked through fire and survived, little else can burn. Unite, and your strengths will be everyone elses, and your weaknesses will disappear. However, there is one last trial... a final test will take everything you have left."

Vegeta watched as the faceless killer attacked him. He fought on, dodging blows and trying to attack. He felt his body break under the assault and his spirit waver. He was beaten to the ground, and watched as the scenes from before ran by him. As if at the bottom of a canyon, Vegeta heard Goku's voice drop down to him.

"Because to find exactly what you are capable of, you must travel far enough to stand at the precipice of your own collapse. Glimpse yourself at maximum and see what it means to stand like steel in the face of insurmountable odds."

Vegeta felt new strength in his body, and he stood up again to face the killer. This time, he saw the ranks of Earth's warriors beside him. He knew none of them alone could defeat this vile creature. Yet, together, he felt their power in a way he never realized. Even from the weakest among them he felt great power rage. Together, they all launched themselves at him.

With an explosion on light, Vegeta again saw himself on the ground, beaten and broken. He looked up, and barely made out Goku's form. He saw his outstretched hand, reaching out to help and seek help at the same time. Blood ran down the fine creases of Goku's muscles, but still he stood.

"Do you accept that alone, you are not enough?"

As Vegeta reached up to take his hand in unity, he woke up with a start. He looked around madly, seeing he was surrounded by blue. He looked at the internal display and saw his body had healed to the point where he would be allowed to leave.

He hit the open button, and slowly walked out. He dried his still injured body, and dressed in another jumpsuit, pulling on white boots and gloves. He sat down heavily on one of the beds, resting.

"What was that I saw..."

Back at the fight, Tien was waiting for the two to come back up.

"I know you are down there. Come up and fight! Or, do I have to come drag your weak bodies off your piss soaked knees?"

Tien began firing stray shots at the ground around the two. They hid their powers, and hid under an overhanging mountain cliff.

"We don't have any other choice!"

"But he could find us!"

The two waited, saying nothing. After their small cave began to collapse on them, their minds were made up. Risking discovery, they began the fusion dance.

"Fu---"

"Oh no!" yelled Tien as he began firing madly at the ground above the two.

"Sion---"

The attack continued, making boulders begin to collapse into the cave. Right as the ceiling gave out, the two's fingers met.

"HA!"

A blinding flash of gold filled the room, blowing the mountain apart. Out of the dust and rubble rose Gotenks. Long golden hair fell down to his feet. With a confident smirk on his face, he began to power up.

The two voices of Goten and Trunks rung out clearly.

"Tenshinhan, I can no longer allow you to kill at your own whim. You will find quickly that I am not to be toyed with. Your power doesn't even come close to mine!"

With the last words, the collective rage of Goten and Trunks was let loose in a rage of power, nearly blowing Tien backwards.

"So, I finally have an opponet with the strength AND will to fight me as an equal. Let your rage burn brightly, Gotenks. It will be your last chance to fight!"

With those words said, the two flew at each other, their auras causing the air around them to explode and burn in intense flames.

This story was written by Justin Kelley. Any thoughts, send them to [JDKelley18@aol.com](mailto:JDKelley18@aol.com).

Next chapter: A Warrior's Greatest Challenge; Himself.

Special thanks to Steven "ZoraFishStix" Oppenheim for the idea for Vegeta to have his dream/nightmares again. I think it's the best part of this chapter.