Drinking in John’s Memory

(Alexandria finds Leon drinking a bottle of alcohol alone, with two glasses.)

Alexandria: Expecting company?

Leon: Ha, no. It’s stupid, but I just wanted to have a drink in John’s memory.

Alexandria: Ah, sorry. Should I leave you alone?

Leon: No, it’s fine. Would you like to sit with me? I… want someone to remember him, even if I die too.

Alexandria: Of course. You knew him for a while, didn’t you? When did the two of you meet?

Leon: It was years ago. I think I was 16? Somewhere around that age.

Leon: My brother and I were orphans, moving from one shitty situation to another. In an environment like that, you learn not to trust other people.

Leon: One day, in the neighborhood I was living in at the time, I saw this kid around my age. He was clean, well dressed, and freaking huge. He looked like he didn’t belong there.

Alexandria: Was that John?

Leon: It was. I was planning on avoiding him, but the instant he saw me, he came walking over.

Leon: He told me that someone had stolen a bag of his. He had chased the thief but lost him around here. He described the thief, and I instantly knew who it was.

Leon: They were part of a local gang, and it just so happened that they had taken something from me too. I was already thinking of ways I could steal it back without letting them know it was me, so I decided to use him.

Leon: I had him hammer on their door while I hid nearby. If anyone was home, then he would distract them long enough for me to break in and steal our stuff back.

Leon: Nobody was home, so I told him to keep a lookout and broke in. I was planning on stealing both of our stuff back and more. He would be blamed, and both of us would get our shit. It was a decent plan.

Leon: Unfortunately, they came back too soon. I thought that may happen, so I had an escape route planned. What I didn’t plan on was that, instead of ditching me when he saw the gang coming, John would try to stop them.

Leon: He shouted out, “They’re here, run!” and then proceeded to try to fight them all to buy me time to run.

Leon: It was so stupid. All he had to do was run away and everything would have been fine. Instead, he decided to be a hero! I had to jump out there and join him or he would have gotten beat to death.

Leon: We managed to win, but even then, he was acting like an idiot. He just kept on laughing with that big, stupid laugh of his. When I asked him what was so fucking funny, he just said, “That’s the first time someone’s really had my back!”

(Leon is beginning to tear up. He stops for a moment to take a drink before continuing.)

Leon: He had been betrayed and stabbed in the back by the people he trusted all his life. Despite that, he kept on being there for people and giving them his trust.

Leon: He kept on doing that so he could find someone who would always have his back, just like he would always have theirs.

Leon: When I closed myself off to the world and became cold, he kept on being open and warm. He knew how dark the world could be, but didn’t let it put out his light.

(Leon begins to cry.)

Leon: He was… stronger than I could ever be, and he was my best friend.

(Leon’s face becomes determined.)

Leon: He followed his conviction until the very end, and I’m proud to have known him. I’m going to follow my convictions to the end too, because if I don’t, I would be spitting on his memory.

(Leon finishes his glass and slams it down, upside down, right next to John’s full glass.)

Leon: I’m heading out, I still have preparations to make. I’ll… see you later.

( Leon leaves)

Alexandria: …

Alexandria: You know what? I don’t think he was talking to me, John. When I die, I hope I’ll get to see you again too.

(Alexandria walks away, leaving the bottle and the two glasses side by side.)