
THE
WEAPON
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The Weapon

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An excerpt from the novel “Domina Inferni”

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The Weapon

1.

It had all happened in a blink. One moment, Kristy was the Queen of Hell, the Bride of Satan, her power and influence unparalleled. The next, she was a prisoner, chained and defeated, confined to the dungeons of Abaddon's coliseum, where the gladiators were kept. Her precious stones and ghoulish pendants, once symbols of her status, were stripped away, leaving her bare and vulnerable. Her wings, once a source of pride and freedom, were chained, rendering her flightless and trapped.

Kristy sat in the dank corner of a dark dungeon, made of brimstone, the very substance of hell itself. The room was scarcely lit by small, flickering torches, casting eerie shadows across the cold stone walls. It was a room she had once

used to hold her own prisoners, a place where she had wielded power and control. But now, she was on the other side, a captive herself, and the irony was not lost on her.

She should have felt empathy for her former captives, a sense of shared suffering, but all she felt was self-loathing. How could she have been so foolish? How could she have believed that Abaddon would join her in her rebellion against Lucifer? What was she to him? Nothing. A pawn in his game, a tool to be used and discarded.

How could you have thought that Abaddon would stand with you? You are nothing to him. God-damn-it Kristy, you have to be smarter than that!

Kristy's mind raced back to the moment when she had first conceived of her plan. She had been blinded by her own ambition, her desire for power and revenge. She had underestimated Abaddon, overestimated her own worth, and now she was paying the price.

The dungeon walls seemed to close in around

her, a physical manifestation of her own imprisonment. She was trapped, not just by the chains that bound her, but by the chains of her own mistakes. She had been a fool, and now she would suffer for it.

But even as she sat there, in the darkness, a spark of defiance burned within her. She was Kristy Cooper, once the Queen of Hell, and she would not go down without a fight. She would find a way to escape, to reclaim her power, and to make Abaddon pay for his betrayal. For now, though, she would bide her time, wait for her moment, and plot her revenge.

“Finally, our masters bestow upon us a gift,” a boorish voice boasted from a man standing in front of Kristy.

She picked her drooping head up from her arms and tried her hardest to wipe away the self-pity that was smeared all over her face. Men within these cavernous tombs could sniff out weakness and fear like flies sniffing out shit. There were two of them. They were powerful

men with large muscular features that appeared like they were chiseled from stone. One had long, greasy hair that hung over his eyes, shading the dark intent within them. The other was nearly bald. Like Kristy, they wore no clothes except for a few rags to cover their privates. The cells within the gladiatorial dungeons were so hot and humid that the shedding of clothes down to the bare essentials would be ideal anyway. Sweat glistened off the scar-ridden bodies of the men.

They stood in front of the only way in and out of the cell that Kristy was in.

“I’ll say,” the other man replied to his cohort with a grin. “Master Abaddon has given us quite a gift. I’ve never had demon pussy before. Have you?”

“Not at all, but I hear it’s the best kind of pussy to have. Suck the cum right out of your cock.” The men then shared a laugh.

Kristy got to her feet. She noticed the look within their eyes and did not like it one bit. She knew that look. She’s seen it before within the

eyes of Dez and his friends on that fateful night she met them, right up to the point when her throat was cut - predatory eyes, full of lust and bad intentions.

When she rose she felt the weight of the chains upon her wings holding her down. Was she able to take on these two even with the crutch of the chains upon her back? She doubted it. Even if the chains were not there she questioned whether she could best these two. They were souls of the human damned, not demons, but they must've been afforded some privilege, like Ted Bundy, to serve as gladiators in Hell rather than suffer. Perhaps they were skilled warriors in life, whose mastery with a sword followed them into the afterlife.

"If you want your dicks sucked then go suck each other off. I'm not interested in touching either one of you," Kristy said, her back to the wall, ready to pounce on the first one that got close.

"You don't have a choice here, woman," the

bald gladiator growled, his voice a menacing rumble as he circled to Kristy's left. His companion moved to her right, boxing her in, their movements calculated and predatory. “Down here, we make the rules. Either you get on your knees and take us in that pretty mouth of yours, or we'll force you. And trust me, you won't like that. We might have to mess up that beautiful face of yours, and that would be a real shame. You know who we are, don't you?”

“Do I care?” She said. Her eyes narrowed, her mind racing as she assessed the situation. She was surrounded, outnumbered, and at a disadvantage. The gladiators, with their muscular builds and cruel smiles, were clearly used to getting their way. But Kristy was not one to back down easily. She had faced worse and survived.

“You should. In life, we were fierce warriors. High-ranking Templar Knights, he and I were. Put a sword in either of our hands, and we were unstoppable.”

Kristy laughed, a sound devoid of warmth.

“Templar Knights? Tell me something, fierce warriors: what has all your hard work fighting for the spread of Christianity brought you? Here to Hell, huh? You two must be the most idiotic knights in history. You fought for a deity that abandoned you upon death.”

“He didn’t abandon us, bitch,” Nyles said, sharply. Kristy’s taunts were obviously getting to him. “He’s just not through with us. If we were truly damned, then we would be at the receiving end of unspeakable acts of tortured at this very minute. But we have been delivered onto the arena. Maybe when we have enough victories, then the Lord above will grant us entry into His kingdom.”

“Yeah,” said the other one.

“But, for now, your lovely body is the only Heaven I require. Open your mouth now, or I’ll rip off you jaw give myself to you anyway.”

“You force your sorry excuse for a cock into the lady’s mouth, Nyles, I’ll force my fist down your throat and pull out your guts,” a man

declared from behind the two would-be attackers.

The two men halted and turned to the one that was coming to Kristy's aide. "What gives, Caleb?" Nyles, the gladiator with the long mane draping down his face, said. "We just want to have a little fun with our new guest, that's all. What's it to you?"

Kristy began to ease up a bit. She could see that the two men were clearly intimated by the presence of Caleb Tate. She remained on guard though, unsure of Caleb's intentions.

"Do you know who she is, you fool? She is Lilith, the Queen of your domain, the bride of Lucifer himself. It wouldn't be wise to even lay a hand on her, unless you want us all to be killed because Lucifer will do just that."

"She is no longer the Queen of Hell. She is the Queen of shit n' piss. Are you even aware of her betrayal? She tried to plot against Lucifer. She tried to get the assistance of Abaddon, but it backfired on the traitorous bitch. Our master is

smarter than that and that is why she is down here with the rest of us grunts."

"And you are certain that Lucifer has found her guilty of this crime? What if he cares not of her rebellious intent and takes her back? He may spare Abaddon's life for being so bold to encage his bride, but you think that the same mercy will be shown for a useless soul like you?"

"He's not going to forgive the bitch, Caleb," the other gladiator protested. "Now fuck off. My cock is hard for this cunt and I ain't quitting till one of her holes satisfy it."

"Guess the diplomatic approach isn't working, huh?" Caleb said.

The two gladiators turned their attention back to Kristy, who braced for their attack. They managed to get a pace closer to her before they were restrained, both at the same time. Caleb had a grabbed each of them by the back of their necks and squeezed. The pressure on their necks was great enough to halt them in their tracks. Caleb held them still with ease. His strength, compared

to these two, was overwhelming. They clawed blindly at Caleb's grip, but it did little to make him ease it.

Caleb's eyes glowed red and a low, growling was heard from his throat. He was on the brink of changing into the wolf, but he was trying his hardest to hold it back. The transformation must be linked somehow to his emotional state, flaring up whenever he is in a state of rage.

"No, Caleb, don't," the gladiator named Nyles pleaded.

Caleb seemed like he was in no mood to be merciful. Instead of letting go of the powerful grips he had upon his fellow gladiator's necks he rammed their heads together causing each one to explode on impact like a pair of grapes being squashed. Their brain and skull fragments splattered all over Caleb's naked chest and bare hands. He let their headless corpses fall to the floor of the dungeon.

A bloody Caleb then had to take a moment to calm down. His eyes returned to normal, his

breathing slowed down, and he regained his composure. After a few moments he spoke. “Are you okay?”

Kristy nodded, keeping her eyes upon him. She still wasn’t sure of this man’s intentions. Why would an unforgiving warrior of such brutality give a damn about her sorry ass? “Why did you help me?”

“Why not? My colleagues weren’t being too hospitable to you.”

“Fine, but I don’t know you and you don’t know me, so what gives?”

“I know who you are. You are Lilith, the Queen of Hell. I’ve seen up near Abaddon when I was upon the sands of the coliseum, so you must know who I am.”

“Yes, your fight was quite the showing, I must say, very impressive. As for me, your friends were right. I am now nothing, no one. When Lucifer finds out about my betrayal he will not be pleased. His wrath will be more than what these two swine could do to me,” she said as she kicked

the headless bodies on the floor.

Caleb looked down at the bodies. “I didn’t like these two anyway.”

“Can you control it or does it only happen when you are angry?”

“Both, I suppose.”

“I’ve never seen anything like you. What are you?”

“I assure you, I am not the only one. There are others here in Hell like me, but thankfully for them, they managed to elude Abaddon or any other malefactor who chooses to put us on display like he does. There are others in the living realm too, where I once called home.”

This revelation came as a surprise to Kristy. She thought that such beasts existed within the living realm only on the silver screen and within the pages of pulp literature.

“How did such a thing come to pass? Were you born this way?”

“No, but some are. It’s a long tale and I rather not bore you with the particulars.”

“Please do. I have nothing but time now.”

“Very well. Where should I begin…”

2.

It was a desire for power that was my downfall. I yearned for it and it proved to be my ultimate undoing.

It was 1666 and I was a Dutch settler living in a farming village in New York, along the Hudson River. There were about three-hundred other settlers in my village. We had settled the land fifty years prior, having set up villages all along the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers. The nearest village of Dutch was about twenty miles south, quite a long journey to take when transportation was very limited.

Our closest neighbors were the Mohawk Indian Tribe. The Mohawks had established trade with my ancestors a generation ago and the trading relations between the Mohawk and Dutch helped us maintain peace.

I rarely had contact with the Mohawk, except for when a representative of their tribe was sent for trade purposes. Usually, we traded tools and fresh produce with the Mohawk in exchange for pelts and tobacco. Such meetings occurred once a month and were handled by the village leaders, which was not me. I was simply a young farmhand, about twenty-nine years of age at the time, who lived in a small shack constructed entirely from my own hands with my mother and father.

I spent my days working the fields, toiling under the relentless sun as I plowed the land and tended to the crops. My hands were calloused, my back aching from the unending labor, but it was a life I knew, a life I had always lived. My off time, what little of it there was, was spent in the town church, kneeling on the hard wooden pews, my voice joining the chorus of the faithful in hymns and prayers.

My parents were devout Christians, their faith a beacon that guided every aspect of their

lives. They raised me in the same light, instilling in me the teachings of the Bible and the importance of a life dedicated to God. But while they found solace and joy in their devotion, I struggled to feel the same. My faith was a shadow of theirs, a flickering candle in the face of their roaring inferno.

I did believe in God, in the existence of a higher power that had created the heavens and the earth. I believed in Jesus Christ, the son of God, who had walked among men, performing miracles and preaching love and forgiveness. But my admiration for them was not born of love, but of envy. I envied the power and influence they wielded, the ability to shape the lives of men and nations with a single word. I yearned for such power, to hold the strings of fate in my own hands and to watch the world dance to my tune.

Such thoughts were sinful, I knew. They were the very same thoughts that had led to Lucifer's rebellion, the pride and envy that had caused the fall of the morning star. But I could not deny their

existence, could not push them aside and pretend they were not there. Envy was my sin, a dark and twisted seed that had taken root in my heart and grown into a thirst for power that consumed me.

As I knelt in the church, my eyes closed and my hands clasped in prayer, I could not help but wonder what it would be like to hold such power. To be a god among men, to command the heavens and the earth, to shape the very fabric of reality to my will. It was a temptation, a siren's call that promised everything and delivered nothing but despair.

And so, I continued to toil in the fields, to worship in the church, and to hide my sinful thoughts behind a mask of piety. But deep down, I knew that one day, I would have to face the truth. I would have to confront the envy that ate at my soul and decide whether to embrace it or to cast it aside. For in the end, it was my choice, my path to walk, and my destiny to forge. And I would do so with my eyes wide open, ready to face whatever consequences might come.

It was during one of the monthly trade meetings of the Mohawk that I saw her.

She looked young, her presence a breath of fresh air amidst the dusty paths of my village. I estimated she was at least a decade my junior, a bloom of youth in a world of weathered faces. She had accompanied her father on a trading journey, a rare and exotic sight in our modest community. Her beauty was unparalleled, a vision that stole my breath and left me speechless.

Her body was slim and graceful, moving with an elegance that seemed to defy the earth beneath her feet. Her hair, a cascade of pure black, flowed down her back in a braid adorned with decorative feathers, each one a whisper of a story untold. Her skin was the color of caramel, warm and inviting, and her eyes—her eyes were a sight to behold. They were the brightest shade of blue, a hue so vibrant it seemed to capture the very essence of a clear, sunny sky. It was as if the heavens themselves had lent their color to her

iris, creating a gaze that was both hypnotic and haunting.

As her father conducted business, she stared at me with those mesmerizing eyes, her gaze unblinking and intense. I felt like a fool, my heart pounding in my chest as I stared back, unable to tear my eyes away. I did not want to appear as an eerie fellow, but her beauty held me captive, a prisoner to her allure. She left that day without a single word exchanged between us, but her image was seared into my memory, a phantom that haunted my dreams and waking thoughts.

I longed for her return, a yearning that grew with each passing day. My prayers were answered the following month when I saw her return with her father, her presence a balm to my restless soul. Again, glances were exchanged, stolen moments of connection that left me breathless. But I was a timid man, my courage a flickering candle in the face of her radiance. I was troubled by my own hesitation, for it was a trait unsuited to one seeking power.

Thankfully, she made the first approach. As her father's back was turned, she walked towards me, her steps graceful and purposeful. My nerves flared, a storm of anxiety and anticipation that left me speechless. I had nothing to say to a woman of such beauty, no words that could do justice to the emotions that raged within me. I did not even speak her language, so even if conversation were to roll off my tongue, it would be foreign to her ears, a barrier between us that seemed insurmountable.

“Hello, there,” she said to me in my native tongue. It shocked me that she knew it.

“Hello, Miss,” I responded. “I apologize for staring if that’s what’s bothering you. It was most ill-mannered of me.”

She smiled and shook her head. Her smile made her even more radiant than I already perceived her to be. “I’m not offended by that. I was glancing your way too. My name’s Tala. What’s yours?”

“Caleb. Caleb Tate. I assist with the farm

around here."

"Can I see your hands?" She asked me.

I found it an odd question, but presented my hands to her just the same. She came closer and began to inspect my hands with her own. Her touch was soft and delicate, her skin smooth.

"You must truly be a hard worker. Your hands are rough and worn. Your wife must be so proud to have such a hard worker for a husband."

"No wife," I said, regrettably, but surmised that her statement was simply one to gain knowledge of my marital status.

"That's unfortunate. What do you do on your down time when not working?"

"Rest. Pray."

"Rest and pray? What Gods do you pray to?"

"Only one. Jesus Christ, the son of God, who was sent to Earth to die for all our sins."

"Did he die, this Jesus Christ?"

"He did. He was crucified."

Tala shook her head. It appeared she had never heard the word 'crucified' before. Perhaps

there was no word in her language for it.

I did my best to explain. “Jesus was nailed to a cross made of wood, through his hands and feet, hoisted high in the air and left to die that way.”

Tala’s bright blue eyes widened with horror. “He was mortal, then?”

I nodded.

“Did he not fight back? Surely your God must’ve had some kind of power to overcome his assailants.”

“He did not fight back. Actually, he knew it was going to happen and he let it happen. He sacrificed himself on our behalf, for all our sins.”

A look fell over her face like she finally understood.

“And how ‘bout your religion?”

“My beliefs reflect a spiritual reverence for the natural world. We believe that good and evil are all around us, within nature, and can often be interpreted through our dreams. We don’t have a God like your Jesus Christ, but I would like to get

to know this man – or God, as you say – more."

Tala was cut-off when her father started calling out to her. His business with my people were finished and he was looking to return back to the tribe. I got a slight feeling that he might've disapproved of his daughter talking to someone like me – an outsider to the tribe.

"I want to see you again," I said to her, trying not to sound too desperate.

"And I would like to see you too. How 'bout tonight, when both our villages are asleep? When the moon is high in the sky? The moon will be three-quarters full. We can meet near the river, halfway between my village and yours."

"Yes. I would like that."

She fled back to her father, her steps swift and sure; a retreat as sudden as it was silent. I returned to my work, my hands moving with practiced efficiency, but my mind was elsewhere, lost in the memory of her hypnotic gaze and the promise of our secret rendezvous. The day seemed to drag on endlessly, each moment a

torture as I awaited the fall of night and the rise of the moon.

As darkness descended and my village fell into a deep slumber, I ventured out, my heart pounding with a mix of excitement and trepidation. I had not told my family of my plans, my silence born of fear and the knowledge that they would not approve. To them, and to many of my fellow villagers, the Indians were seen as an inferior brand of human, savages to be pitied or scorned. But I did not share their narrow-minded views. I saw the Indians as different, yes, but equal in the eyes of God, each soul as precious and divine as the next.

The moon hung high in the sky, a silver sentinel casting its gentle light upon the path before me. I moved with purpose, my steps guided by the memory of her smile and the promise of her touch. The village fell away behind me, a world of judgment and prejudice, replaced by the allure of the unknown and the thrill of forbidden love.

As I neared the edge of the forest, where the trees stood tall and proud, a sense of anticipation washed over me. I knew she would be there, waiting for me, her heart as eager as my own. The night air was cool and crisp, carrying with it the scent of pine and the faintest hint of her perfume, a siren's call that beckoned me closer.

And so, I stepped into the shadows, leaving behind the confines of my village and the expectations of my people. I was a man in pursuit of something greater, something that transcended the boundaries of culture and creed. I was a man in love, and I would stop at nothing to claim my heart's desire.

And God had certainly outdid himself when he created Tala. In my eyes, she was the epitome of female perfection. I had met her that night at a small clearing in the woods, next to the river. I might've had some trouble finding her had it not been the fire she had made prior to me arriving. I spotted the roaring flames rather quickly. She was sitting beside the fire, legs folded, simply

staring into the flames as if the fire held her seductive eyes in a trance.

"Tala?" I said, making myself known.

"Come, sit with me by the fire," she said to me, her eyes not leaving the sights of the fire.

I did as I was told. The fire was warm and felt just right for such a chilly night.

"I hope I didn't keep you long," I said, nervously. It appeared as if she had been there for some time.

"No," she said and that was all.

I was at a loss for what to say. What was there to say to such a woman? She was dark and mysterious and I was plain and predictable. Any small talk would've surely bored her. "So you want to learn more about Jesus, is that right?"

"No," she said, which threw me off.

It was only then did her eyes leave the gaze of the fire and fall upon me. I was so nervous that my first reaction was to avert my eyes, but I did not. I stared back at her. The reflection of the fire danced within her bright blue eyes.

“I want to know more about you,” she said.

“Well, I told you most of everything earlier. I’m ashamed to say that I’m not a very complex individual.”

“Tell me your desires,” she said… no, she demanded.

“Before I had laid eyes on you I had only one desire.”

“And that was?”

“Power. I yearned for power above all else.”

“And after you saw me?”

“After I saw you then I desired you. I have never laid eyes upon a woman with more beauty than you possess, Tala.”

“You are quite a charming man, Caleb Tate.” Tala moved closer to me, close enough that I could smell her sweet scent. She gently put her hand upon my chest. “Lay back,” she whispered.

She laid me down upon a bed of freshly laid wolf skins, their softness a stark contrast to the rough earth beneath. Her movements were confident, purposeful, and I found myself

surrendering to her will, a willing captive to her desires. As she straddled me, her weight a pleasant pressure, she began to unbutton my shirt, her fingers deft and sure.

Tala's garb was a study in contrast, a blend of primal and alluring. She wore bear skin that covered only her most intimate areas, leaving the rest of her body exposed to the night air and my hungry gaze. The firelight danced across her skin, casting shadows that accentuated every curve and valley, while highlighting the exposed peaks of her nipples, the flat plane of her stomach, and the proud angle of her jaw.

It felt wrong to gaze upon her naked flesh, a sinful indulgence that sent a thrill of guilt and excitement coursing through my veins. Lust was a sin in the eyes of God, a transgression that promised damnation and despair. But in that moment, I accepted my fate. Lust was a sin in the eyes of God, but I had accepted that fact that I was going to be a sinner this night.

As Tala leaned down, her breath hot against

my ear, I felt a shiver run down my spine, a prelude to the pleasures that awaited. Her body pressed against mine, skin to skin, a connection that was as primal as it was profound. I could feel the beat of her heart, the rise and fall of her breath, and I knew that in this moment, we were one, bound by a passion that transcended the boundaries of sin and salvation.

And so, I surrendered myself to her, to the night, and to the sins of the flesh. For in her arms, I found a freedom I had never known, a liberation from the shackles of morality and the chains of expectation. I was a man in the throes of passion, and I would face the consequences with my head held high and my heart aflame.

Since I was hesitant to touch her, she did it for me. She grabbed my hand and placed it on her breast. I had never felt one prior to that night. I began to breath heavy and I began to get erect.

“I can give you your desires, Caleb Tate,” Tala had said to me. “Tomorrow night, when the moon is full I can give you your desire for power.

Tonight, right now, I will give you your desire for me."

She then undressed completely and then stripped me of my attire as well. When she put me inside her I felt a wave of exhilaration crash over me. It had been my first time lying with a woman and it felt like Heaven. We made love that night by the fire, just the two of us alone in the night until the two of us couldn't stand it anymore and succumbed to sleep.

I had awakened in the morning. The fire was nothing more than a pile of smoking ashes. Dew covered the forest and shrubbery and a slight mist rested on the land. All this I had noticed before noticing that I was alone. I frantically looked all around to see if Tala was near, possibly urinating within the bushes, but she was nowhere to be found. I quickly dressed, hoping that someone would not come along and find me naked and alone in the woods. If it was one of my own people, then how could I explain myself?

When I returned to the village my parents

were inquiring to my whereabouts. They were unaware that I was gone all night, but assumed that I had woken up early and went somewhere. I told them that I had ventured to the river before they awoke to clean myself in the fresh stream of water.

I worked that day thinking about Tala. I longed to be back with her, to be back inside her by the fire as I was the previous night. If every night for the rest of my life could be like that night then I would be a happy man. I kept going back to what Tala said though: "Tomorrow night, when the moon is full I can give you your desire for power." I tried to make sense of it, but it was riddle that I was unable to solve. I supposed that I just had to meet her again that night to find out what she meant.

And I did just that.

The moon was full that night and brighter than I've seen it in a long time. Once again, I waited for sleep to take my village and then I had snuck out with haste. Once again, she was there

before me with a new fire burning.

She wasn't alone.

I halted in my tracks when I saw she was in company of another. It was one of her people, an elderly man, craped in decorative wolf skin that not only covered his torso, but covered his face as well. He was portly in the stomach and had a hunch to his back. I could see slightly that he had black tribal designs etched into his skin, covering most of his body like some sort of ritualistic war paint.

"Caleb Tate, please do join us by the fire so your second desire may be fulfilled," Tala called out to me, spotting me hiding within the shadows of the forest like a timid child.

I had no choice but to step out of the darkness. My eyes were fixed on the mysterious man, who had still yet to say a word. "Who is this?" I asked Tala.

"This is my Uncle. He is the Shaman to my tribe. If you still request your desire for power he can make it available to you."

“I do.”

“Good. Strip off your clothes.”

I was taken back by her request. “You want me to get in the nude in front of a stranger?”

“Was I not one last night?”

“That was different.”

“Lose your shame, Caleb Tate. If you truly desire power, then you must not be so bashful.” Her tone was blunt. She was questioning my manhood, for sure.

I began to undress. I was soon standing fully nude in front of the fire and that was when the Shaman approached me. He still did not speak. He began to inspect my body, for what I did not know. He then picked up a small bowl that was resting on the ground. In the bowl there was a stick and some viscous fluid. He retracted this stick, which had some of the fluid dripping from the end of it, and began to paint a series of inscriptions upon my naked flesh.

“That smells foul,” I said, shrugging my nose. “What is it?”

“Silence until he is finished,” Tala scolded. Was she mad at me?

I said no more. The Shaman put the bowl of foul-smelling paint back upon the ground and picked up some wolf skin. It was hard to tell, but I suspected that it was the same wolf skin that Tala and I had made love on the previous night. He draped the wolf skin over my shoulders. It was then that things began to take form. The Shaman turned his attention to the full moon and began chanting something in a tongue foreign to me. I began to realize that I was the subject of some sort of ritual – but, to what end?

The Shaman began to dance around me as his monotonous chance continued to roll off his tongue. I felt something at that moment, but I wasn’t sure of what it was. I certainly felt stronger, my head clearer, as if all weakness within my body was suddenly flushed away and was replaced with a reinvigorating feeling of strength and confidence.

The Shaman’s chants got louder and faster

and I began to spin out of control. I felt my senses become heightened. I began to connect with the nature around me; the trees, the wildlife, the water. I felt all of it pulsing through my veins. I could sense the animals within the woods, even though I could not see them. I knew they were there and I felt like I was one of them.

"Stop this," I called out, thinking that the Devil must have some sort of hand in this. This was certainly witchcraft and I was staring down the path to damnation by being subjected to it. My pleas for help to Tala fell on deaf ears though. My head was spinning so bad from the new, sudden flood of animalistic emotions that I was unable to see Tala. I could only hear her and it sounded to me like she was laughing. She was laughing at me and her taunts echoed through the forest and sounded like the jeers of Satan himself.

I soon passed out and collapsed upon the dirt. The last thing I heard before my consciousness slipped away completely was this: "When the

next full moon shines bright in the sky, then you shall have the power you fondly desire."

Like the night before, I had awoke to a smoldering fire, but it did not take long to realize that I was not alone. Tala and her Uncle were gone, but I was in the company of a lone wolf, that stalked me by a mere two paces. I froze, not knowing how to proceed. If the dangerous animal wanted to it could've pounced on me and ended me life at any moment.

It slowly strolled closer to me. The gray wolf put its nose close to me, sniffing me. Finally, the wolf just licked me in the face, turned and fled back into the forest. I let out a sigh of relief and got to my feet. I was still nude and covered with the ritualistic inscriptions. I felt dirty just to have such writing upon my skin. My body was supposed to be my temple, a gift from God, and I desecrated it by allowing that savage man to write these satanic messages upon it. I ran to the near-by river and submerged myself, baptizing myself in the water in an attempt to clean my

body – and my soul.

I longed to see Tala, but it wasn't out of devotion. I wanted answers. I wanted to know what happened that night – what she did to me. I did not see her though, nor did my village get a visit from her father for trade all month.

That month was the longest month of my life. As the full moon grew closer so did a sense of dread within me. I tried to make sense of the last thing Tala had said to me, but I could make nothing of it but frustration.

It wasn't long before the night arrived, a shroud of darkness that enveloped the land and whispered secrets to the wind. The full moon rose over the clouded thicket of the pale forest, its silvery light struggling to pierce the veil of clouds that obscured its path. The night was thick with anticipation, a sense of foreboding that hung heavy in the air like an unspoken promise. The moon, a timid child, hid behind the blanket of clouds, peeking out only occasionally, as if afraid to reveal itself to the world below. It was a scared

child, hiding from a monster in its room, a monster of darkness and dread that lurked in the shadows, waiting for its moment to strike.

And that monster was me.

The town slept while I writhed in pain. A burning sensation ignited within the core of my body and began to spread. I fell to the floor in agony. It felt as if there was something inside me trying to get out. My muscle's tightened and twitched and then grew to an abnormal size. Hair grew rapidly throughout my body everywhere, even on places where hair was not supposed to grow. My posture distorted and my limbs cracked. My teeth grew and my nails turned into claws. I was transforming into a beast and there was nothing I could do to stop it.

I then blacked out.

The rest of what happened unfolded before me in a chaotic symphony of sensory overload, a whirlwind of violence and adrenaline that left me breathless and disoriented. I saw flesh flying, torn and mangled, as if the very fabric of reality

had been shredded by an unseen force. Blood splattered across the ground, a crimson tapestry of destruction that stained the earth and painted the night with a gruesome hue. The air was filled with the cacophony of screams, a chorus of terror and agony that pierced my ears and sent shivers down my spine. People ran for their lives, their faces contorted with fear and desperation, as they fled from the horror that had befallen their peaceful village. The once-serene night had been transformed into a battlefield, a arena of chaos and carnage where the only law was survival.

Adrenaline surged through my veins, a fiery elixir that coursed through my body with the force of a thousand suns. It was as if every nerve ending was alight, every sense heightened to an almost unbearable degree. I could feel the pounding of my heart, the rush of blood in my ears, the raw, primal energy that pulsed within me, urging me to act, to fight, to conquer.

I ran purely on instinct, a creature of pure reflex and reaction, driven by the most basic and

primal of impulses. My judgment was clouded, a fog of red that obscured all reason and rationality, leaving only the raw, unadulterated urge to survive. My conscience was abolished, a casualty of the war that raged within me, a battle between the man I was and the beast I had become. And in that moment, as I moved through the chaos, a force of nature unchained and unbridled, I felt alive. I felt the thrill of power coursing through my veins, a heady intoxication that left me drunk with the taste of victory and the promise of more. I was a god among men, a titan of destruction, and I would leave my mark upon the world, a testament to my strength and my might. The night was a blur, a kaleidoscope of violence and blood, a dance of death and destruction that left me breathless and exhilarated. And as I stood amidst the carnage, my body slick with blood and my soul stained with sin, I knew that I would never be the same.

The next morning I awoke lying face down on the dirt of the town square of my village. The first

thing I would've expected to see would have been the prying eyes of my fellow villagers, but I noticed right away that I lay upon that dirt alone. I then noticed my harrowing state. I was nude and covered in blood. I frantically checked my body for signs of a wound, but found myself unscathed. The blood upon my body was not my own.

I stood upright. My body ached so bad that I could hardly stand. I scanned my whereabouts. My village was empty and quiet. As the morning mist began to subside I gasped at the sight before me. My village was a scene of brutal carnage. There were bodies of my fellow villager's torn limb from limb lying upon the ground like trash. Their appendages were scattered throughout the place. Blood had been splashed every which way as if their bodies were tossed around like rag dolls causing their blood to paint the village like rain from above. No person had been spared, including women and children. Even babes that were asleep within their cribs had fell victim to

whatever savagery had fallen upon my village.

Was it me? Had I done this to my own people?

"When the next full moon shines bright in the sky, then you shall have the power you fondly desire," Tala had told me.

It was time for her to answer my questions.

I stormed out of the blood-soaked grounds that were once so full of life towards Tala's village. I had never been there, nor did I have map to guide me in the right direction, but I trekked on anyway using my newfound senses. My sense of smell and hearing were heightened to uncanny levels and I used them to hunt down Tala. They served me well. It was not long before I stumbled out of the woods and onto a clearing where the Mohawk's had made their home.

I moved slowly and cautiously, so I wouldn't be seen. I had come to speak to Tala and her alone. Confronting anyone else would've just complicated things. I remained hidden, watching members of the Mohawk tribes move to and from

their Longhouses until I came across Tala.

She was there, approaching a roaring fire with a freshly slain rabbit within her grasp. She knelt down with the carcass in one hand and a blade in the other and began to skin the rabbit. After the skin was removed she placed the bloody knife down so she could skewer the dead rabbit and then roast it above the flames. I seized this opportunity. I moved swiftly and silently, coming out of my hiding within the bushes and up behind Tala. A grabbed the knife resting beside her and placed it up against her throat. She dropped the rabbit and held up her hands in surrender.

"What do you want?" She said. I suspected that she did not realize it was me who was holding a knife to her throat.

"Answers," I said. "What did you do to me?"

"I gave you what you so desired. You are now more powerful than you could ever imagine. More powerful than any mortal man. You are a skinwalker."

“Skinwalker?”

Her tribe began to notice and became alerted. They came rushing to Tala’s rescue, apprehensive at first, noticing the blade I held to her neck. I held Tala tightly, knowing that keeping her captive was the only way I would be able to get out of the village alive.

“Tell them that if they try anything or come any closer then I’ll cut your throat,” I whispered into her ear.

In her native tongue, she told her tribe to stand back. They obeyed. I continued with my questioning. “What is a skinwalker?”

“A skinwalker is a man that has that ability to transform into a beast when the moon shines bright, that beast typically being that of a wolf. You asked for power, Caleb Tate, and I give you the ultimate power that anyone can possess.”

“What you’ve done to me is more of a curse than a blessing. My people… my whole village… gone. Why? Why would you do that? This is not what I asked for and you know it. My people

were good people. Christian people. They've been nothing but hospitable to you and your people."

"Hospitable? How so? Your people came to my people's land and brought with you disease that wiped out half of my people. Your people forced my people away, off our land which we have held for generations." The sultry sound within her voice was no longer there. Her words cut with venom and rage, which had always been there, but was simply masked in order to trick me and I fell for it.

"You knew this would happen, didn't you? You cursed me and turned me into some kind of demon, knowing that I could potentially do harm to my people. Didn't you?"

"Yes, of course," she said proudly.

"How could you be so sure that you and your people would be safe? Had I been closer to your village when the moon was shining bright, then your people would've been the ones that were torn to pieces and lying in pools of their own blood."

Tala laughed. She laughed even though I still held the knife close to her throat. She was truly a mad young woman. “My Uncle placed a spell that protected the whole tribe from you. Your appetite for flesh could’ve only been satisfied by that of your own people and I’m glad that they’re all dead. Maybe this will be a lesson to any other light-skinned demon that chooses to invade our lands. You’re not welcome here.”

“You’re pretty haughty for a girl who has a knife to her throat.”

“You can’t kill me. My people would crush you before you have a chance to escape.”

“Escape to what? I have nothing else to live for and neither do you.”

I slit her throat. Her heart had been strong. The arterial spray of blood that gushed from her wound was immense like a waterfall from a tall cliff. Tala gasped for air, but could only make a grisly gurgling sound as she fell to her knees and then fell face-first upon the ground dead.

It didn’t take long for the Mohawk to strike. I

expected it, but still did see it coming. A Mohawk warrior had attacked me from behind. He knew what I was and he knew exactly how to end me. His spear entered my back and came out my chest. I did not see my attacker, but I could see the tip of his bloody spear protruding from my chest; a ten-inch blade fashioned from the finest of silver.

3.

"It was here in Hell that I learned how to truly fight and wield a sword. It wasn't long before I became champion of New Sodom."

"This curse, it didn't die along with your body?"

"No, the curse was attached to my soul, not my flesh, so when I descended down here the curse came with me. But, enough about me. What's your story? I'm quite aware that you have only been sitting by Lucifer's side for a short while. Since the dawn of man The Morning Star

has ruled alone. At what point did you come back into his life?"

Kristy told him it all. She told him about her early relationship with Lucifer; back when they both were angels in Heaven, before they were cast out by the Archangel Michael. She told him about how Lucifer and she conspired against Adam in the Garden of Eden and how she narrowly avoided being cast down into the fiery pits of Hell with Lucifer for such a bold deed. She told him about her many reincarnations: Queen 'Bloody' Mary I of England, Countess Elizabeth Bathory, Abigail Williams, Madame Delphine LaLaurie, Nazi sadist Irma Grese, and finally Kristy Cooper, the sixth reincarnation. She tantalized him about her tale of revenge and the pact she had made with Lucifer, promising to birth the Antichrist if she was granted her resurrection for her revenge, and how she succeeded. Of course, she made sure to refer to Kristy Cooper in the third person. She did not want anyone to know that she was more Kristy

Cooper than Lilith.

"And so the Anitchrist lives?" Caleb said, slightly aghast at the remarkable story he was just told.

"Yes. He waits until he's called upon to take the reigns as leader to Satan's army when the ruler of Hell is called upon to rule the living realm as well."

"Lucifer?"

"Like I said, whoever rules Hell when the sacrifice of Lucifer's daughter, Tamara, by the hands of my son, Belial, happens."

"If it's not Lucifer, then who is it? You?"

"Maybe."

"It's not looking good, Queen Lilith. You're going to have to have an army immense enough to crush the one that Lucifer currently has. Do you have one?"

"I think you already know the answer to that."

"But, more importantly than that, you are going to have to get out of here, which might

prove to be an even more impossible deed than acquiring an army that's bold enough to take on the strongest army in Hell… or stupid enough."

"If only I had my sword. If only I had Inferno. I could cut through every one of these swine like butter, even Abaddon."

"I've never known of any such weapon that could dispatch such an entity as Abaddon. Where does this sword come from?"

"Heaven. Constructed from the hands of God, so I'm told."

"You're shitting me? And how did you manage to get your hands on such a weapon?"

"It was a wedding gift from Lucifer. Apparently, he beholds trust in me that he would bestow upon me the only instrument capable of his destruction."

"The fool."

"Caleb Tate, what has happened to Nyles and Logan?" A voice gasped from behind Caleb.

It was Worm, the caretaker of the cells. He was a pathetic-looking creature, very skinny to

the point of looking sickly. His skin was white and heavily scarred. He had a solitary eye transfixed in the upper middle of his face and a hole below that acted as his mouth. Worm led a creature that constantly stayed two paces behind him and was an even more pathetic creature than he was. This thing resembled a man, except it roamed around on all fours like an ape. It had a metal mask on his head that worked similar to an Iron Maiden. Inside, it had multiple sharp spikes that dug into the flesh and skull of his head causing immense pain, but not offering death. The rest of his body was draped in tight leather. Worm was leading this pitiful being around by a leech that was attached to a choker with spikes on it.

Caleb was not worried by the presence of Worm. If it was any other gladiator that would have been so dauntless as to kill another gladiator outside the arena, then he would've certainly been dealt with in the harshest manner, but not Caleb Tate – not Hell's champion.

“These two were getting out of line, Worm. They got dealt with. Taking Putrid out for a walk?”

Worm was flustered. He always got that way when stressed. “Nevermind what I’m doing. Look at this mess. You didn’t you save it for the sands? I’m going to have to report this to Abaddon now.”

“You’re going to do nothing of the sort, understand,” Caleb told Worm with a sharp tongue.

Worm, probably the biggest coward throughout New Sodom, instantly did as he was told, fearing the wrath of Caleb.

“I’ll take care of the bodies. They should make good food for the Sand-Eels.”

Worm just stood there, flabbergasted, not knowing what to do. It wasn’t until Putrid began clawing at his thigh that he eased up. He turned his attention to his pet, who was trying to calm him down. Putrid always knew how to calm down his master. He knew just what it took. Although he could not speak, he had other ways

of relaying his affection. When he was sure that he had Worm's attention, he began to paw at him.

"Oh, Putrid. Not now," Worm said.

But Putrid kept at it until Worm crotch showed signs of liking it. Worm began to breathe heavy. "Oh, okay, you filthy beast, you. C'mon, I've got just what the doctor ordered for you." Worm was about to leave, but before he did, he turned his attention back to Caleb and said his peace before leaving. "You clean that up quick, mister."

Caleb rolled his eyes at Worm's feeble attempt at being tough.

"And as for you, my Queen," Worm said to Kristy. "You better rest up. You fight upon the sands tomorrow."