

# **miss irene presents**

**tale 6**



**Fantastic Tales  
of  
Female Led  
Fiction**



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## ***Tale 6***

“Succubus”

**Miss Irene Clearmont**

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“Everything in the world is about sex except sex. Sex is about power.”

**Oscar Wilde**

(1854-1900)

This was a mistress, this, perhaps, a friend.

With pale, indifferent eyes we sit and wait

For the dropt curtain and the closing gate:

This is the end of all the songs man sings...

**Ernest Dowson**

(1867-1900)



## Introduction

This novel springs from the short story that I published on the Internet several ago. I wrote 'The Lamia' to fulfil two internal needs. The first was an attempt to write a true female domination 'horror' story. The second motive was more prosaic. I had the following phrase in my head...

'The Scottish moors are bright with purple heather in the late autumn. Two months later the colour is gone and the cold grips the huddled hawthorn and heather.'

...and I desperately needed to use it before the memory faded!

I decided, almost as soon as I wrote 'The Lamia', that I had not carried the idea to its final conclusion and that Elspeth would become the subject of a longer and more intricate piece. There was so much more to tell! Accordingly, I have largely rewritten 'The Lamia' and polished much of its prose as well as sorting out some structural problems that did not fit the new tale I had decided to tell.

I realise that historical, mystical and female-domination fiction may not seem a comfortable fit in one tale, but I have had these ideas in my head ever since finishing 'The Lamia' and I cannot deny myself the satisfaction of completing the path that I set out on. The tale that has haunted my imagination for three years is now in your hands, now that it has finally released its grip on my imagination...

...it can beset yours!

You are about to embark on a trip that is intended to be like no other piece of female domination fiction yet published. Horror, sexual gratification, historical and modern thriller! A three part tale of sexual hunger and manipulation. All of that and more, is tangled with the roots and origins and lives of Elspeth, Russian Countess, Victorian Greek Heiress and Roman Slave to name but a few. She is not a woman who changes course for any man, she is not a woman who follows any path but her own... for Elspeth is Lamia.

We open with the Lamia, then discover the secrets of the Succubus and dread as the Incubus stalks its prey...

Enjoy...

Alan Chant

## **Part I - Lamia**

## Chapter 1

### ***Vitae Summa Brevis...***

The Scottish moors are bright with purple heather in the late autumn. Two months later the colour is gone and the cold grips the huddled hawthorns. The wind blows, cutting through to the bone over the lonely stretches of wasteland that seems to belong to no one. Occasional gusts carry snow that is too impatient to settle. It just wisps across the browning reeds and bare heather.

The outhouses of Sheep farms cling to the landscape in grey huddles of weathered stone. Some of them are just the shells of abandoned ruins whilst others still provide warmth and succour for the farmers that watch over this grim land. But sanctuary is few and far between. It is seldom that those cottages and bothies are fully inhabited now in this twenty first century.

Some-whiles, hill walkers from the lowlands and cities stride along the dogleg tracks and weaving roads, intent on their next halting place and wondering how it was that they left the well-trodden heights to wander in the featureless morass of reeds and heather. Then all is quiet again, a place of buried secrets, furtive concealment and self-sufficient society.

Under a heavy sky and whipped by knife-like wind, Brian stood by the grey stone monolith and wondered which direction to go in. Basically there were now just three possibilities that suggested themselves to him. What he had to do was to choose a direction and stick to it, put up his tent and wait for morning light or backtrack to find the road that he had left at the very least five miles behind.

None of the possibilities were in the least bit enticing and he cursed the moment

that he had decided to split from the rest of his party and take a short cut.

What had he been thinking?

Again he pulled the map from his pack and the compass; he tried to fix his position with some degree of certitude. But it was already getting dark. The clouds blanketed the light, and visibility was dropping to the point where the familiar peaks, hills and features of the bare landscape were merging into an umbra of uncertain shapes and dimensions. Grey and brown hills that merged with the low hanging clouds drifting across the leaden sky.

Brian had stood only ten minutes but already it was almost too dark to see more than a hundred yards. The cold seemed to eat into his bones and chill the inner core of his soul. He decided to seek out a dell - a shallow depression sheltered from the wind - and pitch his tent there. At least he would be out of the knives of the wind.

As he walked, stumbling over clumps of heather and his ankles got wet splashing through brown seepages and mud, he felt the first drops of the coming rainstorm.

The freezing drops aimed for his face.

Then he found himself on a track. Not a sheep path cut into the heather but the slightly overgrown double track of vehicle traffic.

Perhaps he was not as far from the main road as he thought?

Hoisting his pack higher, Brian tried to decide which direction was the best way out of his predicament, but his hands were too cold to root the compass out of his pack and the wind would have torn the map from his grasp any way.

So he had to allow the fates to choose...

Logic told him that he should walk with the rain at his back and, Fate being a faithless whore, he chose comfort over safety!

For a mile the track wandered, seeking out the contours as the rain became sheets of cold water that lashed Brian from behind and ran in rivulets down his back as it penetrated his waterproof coat and brought a cold wetness to chill his flesh.

Suddenly he saw faint light through the grey rain. A sliver of steady electric light that beckoned him on into an overgrown and disused farmyard. Several grey stone buildings stood roofless around an area overgrown with hawthorn and grass. Weeds betrayed the lack of use and moss lay in rounded blankets over the edges of the slate roof.

With a stumble Brian went to the door of the lit cottage and knocked with his knuckles on the weathered wood. It seemed to him that the wind must have carried away the sound but the door opened and light flooded into the yard.

The door opened slowly, guardedly to disallow the blade of the wind penetrating the haven of warmth and comfort that lay within. A face showed for a moment, a



woman, middle aged with grey hair pulled back into a bun, before the door opened fully to allow the dripping Brian to enter into the glow of the warmth.

The cottage had seemed almost like a ruin in the dark of the moors but indoors it showed a more modern face. Secure and comfy, inviting and snug, the room was lit by a small chandelier and warmed by a fire in the hearth.

"Thank you so very much, the weather is getting nasty," said Brian as he turned to look at the woman who had opened the door.

She was as tall as him, in her late fifties and might have had a generous figure but it was hidden under her tweed jacket and skirt. A small glint of gold, a coin on a thin chain around her neck relieved the plain outfit.

"Not a good night to be on the Heatherstone Moor," she smiled. "Foolish in fact, very foolish."

"I know," he replied. "I lost my way..."

"A rash, young man, not the first, I'll warrant," she said. "I am Elspeth, Elspeth French, or at least that is the name that you can call me by."

"I hesitate to impose on you but I wonder if you could offer me a place to doss down for the night. I'm not sure that my tent will hold out in this weather."

As if to emphasize the point the wind whistled around the cottage and rattled the shutters in its grip. Elspeth smiled at him and beckoned him to sit.

"The lonely woman succours the stricken, lost traveller as the storm gathers in the northern sky," she said as she helped him lower his pack to the ground and strip off his coat while he kicked off his boots. "The snow is coming; I can smell it on the wind, so it would be as well if you did not spend the night under canvas... Snow is always ushered in by rain and sleet here."

Brian nodded his agreement and wondered what this strange woman was doing alone living in one of the most remote parts of the moors.

"Never mind," she said. "I was just contemplating a bite of supper. Would you like to join me?"

Brian nodded and added a grateful smile as he carefully hung his coat where it would not drip on the thick rugs. Now he could feel the radiation of the fire warming him and a gentle steam rose from his thick woollen sweater.

"I really don't want to impose on you," he muttered, but the truth was that now that he was safe in this warm cottage he had suddenly realized just how hungry he was.

"Of course you don't," she said. "On the other hand you are here now and it would be churlish to have you watch me eat and offer nothing."

Elspeth disappeared into the kitchen while Brian looked around at the sitting room he was sitting in.

He noted that though there were a couple of paintings on the walls there was not a single photograph. No ornaments, knick-knacks, horse brasses or candlesticks adorned the walls or surfaces. The room was comfortable but devoid of personal touches. A writing desk brooded in the corner of the room and a closed laptop computer sat as the only item on its polished surface.

Brian relaxed a little and sat in front of the blazing fire. He could feel the heat warming his bones and felt a tiredness that came from within overwhelming him like a soft blanket. He could smell cooking and allowed himself to drift into a tired doze that barely allowed him to register the surroundings that were so comforting and homely.

The kitchen door opened with a creak and Elspeth entered with a large bowl of soup cradled in her hands. Steam wisped from the broth as she passed it to the awakening Brian with a small smile.

"I have been a little careless, young man! I have allowed you into my house and yet I do not even know your name?"

"Brian," he said. "Brian Macgreggor."

"A good solid Scot's name," she replied. "Go careful, it's hot. I think that this will warm you through," she said as she placed the bowl on his lap. As she did so she planted a little kiss on his forehead.

Surprised at the familiarity, but too tired and hungry to pay it much mind, Brian thanked her and started on the soup. It was a thick broth, salty and strong and was accompanied by thick wedges of crusty bread. Hot and lumpy with potatoes and leeks it was a meal all in itself.

"Thanks," he mumbled as he finished it off.

Elsbeth did not eat.

She sat intently watching him, silently from another armchair. When he finished she took the plate from him and planted another kiss on his forehead and, earlier surprise forgotten, the little gesture seemed no more than natural, almost like a mother's kiss on a child's forehead. Almost quaint.

"You must be so very tired," she said. "Do you want your bed?"

Brian nodded. He felt weary and spent. He followed Elsbeth into a small bedroom where she pulled back the covers on the old fashioned metal framed bed and said, "Sleep well, Brian. Dream your dreams..."

'I think that she fancies me,' thought Brian as she brushed his lips with hers. 'Elsbeth is not unattractive, in a sort of motherly way.'

Brian looked around. The bedroom was like the living room, unadorned with personal touches. Just a bed and some piece of furniture that was completely

covered by a throw over quilt. He dragged his damp clothes from his body and slipped between the cool sheets.

He lay in the close and warm darkness contemplating the woman who had invited him into her life without a qualm. The tweed was a little too middle-aged and she was not so much attractive as striking. Her figure promised much but she was not trim or slender in the way of Brian's girlfriend. No, Elspeth was more solid and firm.

'Unyielding and plentiful,' he thought as he drifted into the regions of tired reverie.

As he did so and his thoughts touched on Elspeth, he felt a stirring. An awakening in his loins. An erection that gathered strength and pushed the sheets into a taut tent. Brian could feel the strongest erection he had known to that point. His prick was like cast iron as his hands investigated the rod of his cock with startled hands. His heart was beating strongly and a pulse made itself felt in his head as he wondered at his loss of control.

His right hand massaged the stiff organ and pulled slightly at it. As his hand slid down his shaft he thought of Elspeth and wondered how he had become fixed on her so strongly. How had this happened? She had seemed almost more of a mother than a potential lover and yet there was no denying that what he felt was an almost overwhelming desire to fuck her.

His former mood of drowsiness had been shaken off and he decided to rid himself of his overpowering feelings with a slow wank as one hand held the covers from the sensitive tip the other ran along the shaft, building up the tension. His mind turned to his girlfriend, it wandered over the landscape of his sexual need and then suddenly swung and focused on the woman who sat in

front of the crackling fire in the next room. He imagined her raising her dress to show the tops of stockings. The smooth rounded thighs, the bush of her sex and then the parting of those lips as she invited him inward, entering to fuck her...

His hand swept the length of his prick in slow strokes as his eyes stared into the dark but his inner eye saw nothing but Elspeth. A mature woman who would so need his cock, a woman who had been alone for who knew how long?

As he approached the peak of his climax he heard a sound and warm yellow light streamed in from the living room to frame Elspeth standing in the doorway. It seemed she approved of him, the smile told him so.

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"I know that you want me," she murmured as she closed the door behind her.

Her hands reached down and he watched fascinated as her hands lifted the hem of her skirt to reveal the tops of her stockings and the well-rounded thighs that formed a curve of flesh that would receive him into her body. It was all just as he had imagined.

There was a brief moment of confusion in Brian's mind as his wrist stilled but his prick just strained in his hand tenting the sheets over his naked form making his need all too obvious.

"I think that you are just what I need tonight and it looks like I am what you

need..." she whispered as she reached down and lifted the sheets. "Rampant. A fucking gorgeous cock. I must have you..."

He lay in shock as she admired his naked body. A muscular midriff, smooth taut skin and solid muscle. One of her hands grasped his cock, the other moved to pull the coverlet clear to allow her to admire her catch. He moved as if to cover himself and then relaxed to the bed as if appreciating that modesty was wasted.

Elsbeth climbed onto the bed and sat astride his body. "You know that you need it," she said as her hand raised the hem of her skirt over her stocking tops and allowed him to see the lips of her hungry slit for a brief moment. Unlike his fantasy, just a small triangle of wiry hair pointed at the opening, almost a signal pointing to her need.

Her sex hung over his cock as she waited for a moment. Brian was in so deep, but not deep enough for Elspeth. His hand guided the tip of his prick to touch her soft flesh. It was almost an involuntary action but Elspeth took it as the signal to begin. With a small movement she pushed the lips of her pussy to rest on the tip of him.

She could feel her power and exhilaration waxing as he fell under her enchantment.

Elsbeth sank her body to meet his; the lips of her sex pushed his hand down the shaft of his cock and pushed his straining erection into her body. Brian felt himself being sucked in. He tried to reach for her breasts as he moaned with his desire, but her strong hands pushed his hands to the mattress.

Now she had taken him all, the flaring lips of her sex grasped around the root of his cock. Every inch of his massive erection was rooted in her belly, her knees

moved to settle and trap his hands as she allowed her full weight to rest on her new lover.

Brian moaned. He could feel the tight clasp and suction as she moved and quivered. Her hands played with his nipples for a moment, strumming them and then drifting to his mouth. He wanted to speak, wanted to moan, wanted to express his passion but her fingers closed his lips whilst her hips started to move. Slightly side to side. Imperceptibly up and down. Her body found a rhythm that made Elspeth shudder. A shiver of anticipation of so many emotions. Greed and need laced with the pleasure of having him struggling between her thighs, where he belonged, where he had no chance of escaping his fate.

She built up the rhythmic movement slowly. Her new lover felt that he should not come, instinct told him that it was so wrong to climax, wrong for him. He was a rod, a dildo for her to pleasure herself on. He could feel a rushing in his ears that presaged orgasm but the peak did not arrive yet. The heights remained at a distance, allowing Elspeth to extract the pleasure he gave in full measure.

Now she was plunging on his prick. Flexing her thighs to expose and then engulf that shaft of meat. Every motion pulled him and pushed him into her like a piston. She cried in pleasure as one of her hands found her pussy. She helped herself to his body while she reamed her own. She bent and bit him, she kissed his mouth when he tried to speak and she gripped him with her thighs. A hold that was an indication of her immense strength.

Her other hand frantically guided him and twisted his straining prick but still he could not come. Yet still he was rigid, an impaling tool that she was using mercilessly. But the orgasm for which he yearned still escaped him until she gave her permission.



“Come now, Brian,” she whispered as she placed all of her weight down on him, stretching him to the limit. “Come for me, show me your need.”

He came.

He ejaculated into her as if it was the first time after long months of chastity. Her word of command came and then that thrilling rush as he spurted deep into Elspeth. It gushed through him and he felt himself being almost sucked into her as though something precious was being extracted from his mind as he climaxed.

She slumped over him after a shuddering final orgasm. His nipples were marked with the imprints of her teeth. Long scratches scored his pale flesh and her lipstick was smeared over his face.

But despite the almost-violence and the unrestrained passion he still felt a craving to touch and hold her and keep her seated on his prick. A need not to be parted, a need to give more to this woman than he had ever experienced before with any other lover.

He had climaxed, shot deep into her, but something had been missing, something that he felt that he still had to give. Not the physical release, a spiritual climax had failed. Elspeth moaned and slid a little on him as though testing whether or not she could go again.

"You have to come for me again lover," she moaned as she slowly got into motion, sliding on his pole with a smooth motion. "It is required; you have not given me all that I want..."

Brian still felt as solid as a rock. His prick was as stiff as glass as she pleased herself on him.

"I need to come once more," he gasped. "Please, please make me come again!"

Elsbeth smiled slyly and slid off his prick. With a twist she turned to face his feet, still astride his quivering body. Her ankles pinned his shoulders whilst her shoes framed his face. The hem of her skirt fell to cover her thighs as she slowly pulled off the condom and massaged his erection with the palms of her hands.

Now he finally felt as though he was moving towards another orgasm. Brian groaned and bucked slightly as one of her hands gripped his balls as the other slowly wanked him with firm controlling strokes.

Deep within he could feel that first urgent movement that told of coming climax. Her hand had found that slow speed, deep strokes, that promised an immediate orgasm but Brian required slow. The pleasure was too overwhelming and he was in the grip of an expert.

"Am I going too fast for you darling?" whispered Elsbeth knowing full well that he was completely in her power whilst the playing lasted. His breathing, his moans and the way that he tried to delay, the way that he signalled that he was hers. There was no way that she was going to ever let him escape, she would bind him by cords of lust.

"God no, yes! Slow down, please, please," he said as he writhed under her.  
"Fuck me!"

Slow, slow, quick-quick then slow.

Her grip on him beat an irregular rhythm that placed Brian in her complete power.

She shuffled back, sliding the dark tent of her skirt over his face. Now he was in darkness, the tops of her bare thighs enveloped him and forced his face into the deep cleft of her pussy and ass. He drank at her swimming pussy while the hands forced him almost unwillingly towards a second climax. He felt her lips close over the tight tip of his cock and her tongue probed the eye of his prick, it was too much to take and his mind filled with an all-consuming need to pleasure her.

He licked, he probed, he ran the tip of his tongue over the clenched bud of her ass, and his lips closed on hers and then it was finished. That imminent pressure in his balls gathered and released. His prick pumped a second time and Elspeth sucked him dry with fervent lips.

The squeal of his coming sounded from under her skirt as she pulled his cock back tightly. The fingers of her other hand pressed against the base of his cock and closed all possibility of him spilling his cum. He felt a strange surge as he ejaculated into his bladder; Elspeth was in command and sat up to force his face deep into the matrix of her sex and ass.

As he relaxed after the climax he found that he was smothered in the moist perfumed world of Elspeth's thighs. It was delicious, never before had he been allowed into that intimate area of a woman and allowed to soak in the warmth, the scent and the soft flesh that mingled with his own emissions. It felt right, it felt good and overwhelmingly he felt an affection for the woman that he had

fucked but never seen other than fully clothed. There had been something almost especially intimate about the experience of his nakedness contrasting to her fully clothed body.

Elsbeth had not finished with him...

His prick was still rampant, a tower that promised Elsbeth more joy as she turned again to settle on the erection with a slither of her hips and then leaned down to kiss him, the taste of him still on her parted lips.

“I need it all,” she said as she slid onto him again. “I need you give me everything. Come for me again, little boy.”

Once again he was inside her, pressing against her clitoris with the root of his cock as she took her leisurely pleasure of his body.

## Chapter2

### *A mistress and perhaps a friend*

The night passed. Some of it in pleasure and some of it in sleep. Outside on the grey moors the wind whistled through the heather and the bare hawthorn trees and then found its way to the lonely cottage in the inner depths of Heatherstone Moor. Briefly it rattled the shutters and cut through the ruined sheds before the storm front finally struck.

Sheets of freezing water, untold gallons and tons of water splashed onto the moors from the open heavens. The water collected in pools of slimy mud and bristling reeds. It did not flow but soaked into the peat and mud making the moor a morass of slime.

Brian had got as far as putting on his still damp boots and donning his waterproof clothing but the view from the door was a clear signal that he would be floundering in the mire in minutes if he tried to escape from the moors.

He pulled out his mobile phone and waved it around to find a signal but it would not even start.

"Can I charge my phone here?" he asked Elspeth.

"Of course my dear boy," she said as she pointed at the point where her laptop was plugged in. As he went to look at the power-point a few drips of brown water trickled from the casing of his phone and down his wrist.

"Shit," he swore as he shook the phone. "It's not the battery! The phone is full of water, how did that happen?"

She smiled.

"There is no signal here anyway," said Elspeth. "I don't even bother with a mobile phone when I am here; I come here for the tranquillity as it is. The last thing that I need is a mobile phone disturbing my work."

"Well at any rate," said Brian, "I cannot leave now so I'll just have to sit the storm out. I notice that you have a laptop, can I go on the Internet and send an E Mail to my girlfriend, she'll be wondering where I have got to?"

Elspeth started to laugh. She clapped her hands and lied, "I'm so sorry. The electricity for this place is from batteries, the gas is canisters, the water is filtered from the moor, the toilet is chemical and there are no telephone lines, Internet, television, wireless links, CB radios or any other stuff like that."

"And you live here? In the middle ages?"

Elspeth smiled again.

"I am a thoroughly modern madam, young man. I spend my winters here, finding inspiration on the moors and writing for fun and to make a living. It is here that I let imagination invade my research. Isolation helps me to concentrate

and it is only for three months a year whilst the winter grips this deserted moor."

"Now shut the door and stop letting the cold north wind into my home. You are either going to struggle across the moors and die face down in a pool of brown water or you will stay a day or so and hope that no snow blows in from the north."

Reluctantly Brian closed the door and pulled off his boots. "Please understand, Elspeth I am not ungrateful, I had a great time last night and you have fed and watered me. I just have to get off the moors. By now they will be searching for me and they will all be worried."

"But, there is no helping it!" she replied as she threw another log on the fire. "If you cannot escape my moor then why beat yourself up about it. We shall see..."

Brian spread the map on the table and got Elspeth to show him the location of her cottage. There was no mark for the buildings but the track that Brian had found was marked as the faintest dotted line.

"Here, this is the site of this cottage, Bruin Tarn is just here, follow it for fifteen miles and you come to the main road," she said, almost reluctantly.

"How did I get so far from the trail? I am a day's hike from the nearest road, even more from a village. What the hell made you live in this god-forsaken cottage?" he said.



A rather angry look came over her face. "Just as well that I did or you might be half-submerged in a pool of filth or floating in the tarn with grey-blue skin. Right now your corpse would be cooling and going rigid. I am not to blame for you're being lost! Do not take it out on me or I will throw you out like the ungrateful whelp that you are and you can wander around until you freeze to death."

At this diatribe Brian pulled a contrite face and apologized. "Of course you are not to blame; it is just that I am frustrated."

Elsbeth's face softened a little. She still looked sternly at her young lodger but she was determined to sort out his temper tantrum before life could move on. "If you ever speak to me like that again I shall throw you out of my house. You are a guest and don't forget it. Now apologise properly and I will forget your loss of self-control. I expect respect and just a little obedience..."

"I apologize. I am sorry that I upset you, Elspeth. You are not to blame for my stupidity. Please do not throw me onto the moors."

"There, you see," said Elspeth with a slightly schoolmarm look, "A proper apology makes both of us feel better. I accept your apology on the condition that you are only polite in future. If we are to spend a little time together then we must get on with each other!"

With this rather old fashioned statement she turned and left for the small kitchen leaving Brian to wonder at Elspeth.

*'She is like a mother, a school teacher and a lover all wrapped into one package,' he thought to himself. 'She is certainly passionate in bed. Tweed, sex, lacy stockings but fully dressed. I wonder if last night was a one off? Maybe there will be more?'*

For a moment he watched her leave the room. There seemed to be a new spring in her step and in the flickering light of the room her hair did not seem quite as grey as the day before.

He went to the window and stared out at the view. The rain had faded and was now a gentle sleet that made the world outside just a little smaller. It was midday but the scene was almost like early evening. Just a few minutes later and the sleet began to fall as snow and the wind gradually changed compass to blow northerly. The flakes swirled across the bare farmyard outside. It piled a little on the frames of the windows and then gathered as he watched.

Half an hour of agonized waiting and then the fall of snow became stronger and began to lay on the frozen cold landscape of the moors and the ruined farm buildings. It swirled from the grey heavens like a dense blanket of grey goose feathers settling on the moors to muffle them of texture. It covered the farmhouse buildings in soft layers where it was dry and melted in the water that gathered amongst the reeds. It swirled and eddied in the north wind and then settled. It smothered his hopes of leaving the cottage.

## Chapter 3

## *Wine and roses*

"More soup?" she asked as he finished the last of his plate and sat back.

It was early evening and it had snowed for hours now. The snow was still falling but in the dark it fell silently, unwatched. It drifted in the wind, seemingly several feet of snow had fallen but it was deceptive. It had just piled up in the dell.

"No thanks," he replied. "It sure is filling."

"Well it certainly ends up with me being filled!!" she said with a little laugh. "That's not all that fills me, dear... Last night has given me a taste for making you pay the rent of your stay in ways that amuse me!"

"I'm not sure that I'm up to it," he muttered.

He had slept until nearly midday and woken tired. A fatigue that seeped from his bones, a weariness that filled him with an inability to even consider venturing out into the storm that filled the world of the dark Scottish moors. Now at last he was a little recovered and his new lover was proposing more of the same!

Deep inside, below the level of rational thought he knew that he should not...

Elsbeth carried the dishes out and chuckled to herself. If last year was anything to go by the snow would isolate the cottage for two or three months at least. With a small peek over her shoulder to make sure that she was not being watched she regarded him. The stoop of his shoulders and the way that he sat revealed his fatigue. She turned to the dishes and rinsed them carefully as she considered the good fortune that had led him to her door. Someone down there had smiled at her and sent Brian for her delectation!

He would work for every supper; learn to serve as he faded away.

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Brian went to bed.

He felt so very drowsy and he was consumed by worry. It had been a day since he had arrived in the cottage and no one knew that he was here. They would be combing the moors for him. After a day or two they would call off the search and he would be listed as 'missing'.

Once again he felt the stirrings of an erection.

'How was this happening?' he thought to himself. He was consumed by worry and experiencing the tallest erection since the tower of Babel. It seemed that his cock could not get enough of Elspeth!

Soon it was pressing against the covers in pent up inactivity as he contemplated

its meaning. His thoughts turned to Elspeth as he moved his hands to relieve himself. Once again he saw the apparition at the end of the bed. Elspeth had arrived to take advantage of him; she was ready to use him again for her need and amusement.

Fully clothed, she joined him on the bed. Elspeth lay alongside her young victim and stroked his body with her hand.

"Are you ready for more pleasure? Are you ready to be consumed?" she asked as her hand cupped his balls and her lips closed on his.

Brian could feel her lips softly cover his and then press to part his lips as her tongue entered his mouth. The rough weave of her clothes on his smooth naked body excited him as he felt her skirt ride up and the lace of her stocking tops rasp across his prick.

He tried to speak. He wanted to express his passion and his fears but Elspeth silenced him with her lips. When he tried to find her breasts with his hands she caught his wrists one by one and pressed his arms under his body, trapping them and allowing her free access to his body.

"You are mine now, Brian," she whispered in his ear. "Mine do play with as I choose!"

Never had Brian been so overwhelmed by a woman in bed. He had read all the contemporary advice in magazines. 'Foreplay and a slow build up to sex are so vital to build the female partner's excitement...', but Elspeth was like a sexual black-hole. All of his advances, all of his technique, all of his modern caring

stimulation were sucked into the gravity well of her need and lust.

Her hands probed him and guided him as she placed him on the edge of the event horizon of her sex. For a moment there was a still moment when he realized that she was about to suck him into herself, and then her hips flexed and she slid smoothly down the length of his cock until the root of his erection struck the tender flesh of her clitoris and he was swallowed whole.

All the while she ravaged his mouth with her probing tongue and pushed him into the bed. Then the fury of her need was fully loosened and the fucking began. It was Elspeth fucking Brian. He took no part in the act; he was but a silent witness to his own violation. He lay, trapped under her weight, supine and static as she took what she demanded from his body. She sucked him in and spat him out as she reamed the length of his prick and then engulfing it again, stretching and pushing. Elspeth scratched him mercilessly with her nails and allowed the tips of the heels of her shoes to score his thighs as she pushed him to the point of climax.

At last she released his mouth as she sat up to push him that final inch into her flesh. Her hand clawed at him as her knees moved to pin his arms completely.

"I want to have all your coming washing my cunt," she said as she found the rhythm that suited her. "Come for me little boy, come on, come on..."

"Fuck me!" he cried as Elspeth piled on the pleasure and the agony and he could not help his fixation.

Her claws scratched him from neck to waist as she let her passion have full

reign. He felt her nails gouge his flesh but her control of his body overwhelmed him and all his focus was the grip that her flesh had on his shuddering prick. He looked up at her breasts, enclosed in starched cotton but swinging with her body as she fucked him. Her eyes were closed and her mouth slightly open but her face was drawn with the heat of her coming orgasm.

Soon, at her command, he felt that clutching that signalled the inevitability of his own ejaculation. He bucked against her and for a moment it seemed that he was too strong for her to ride him. But Elspeth stayed in the saddle and allowed her weight to hold him to the bed.

"Come now!" she ordered. "I am ready for it."

Brian could not do otherwise. He came at her command and in his head he felt as though she had pulled the trigger that allowed orgasm. He came with her permission! He could feel her hand as she brought herself to a peak and then a shuddering as her thighs clenched his body with an iron grip.

Brian climaxed and the juice of his body pumped into her hot cunt to run from her like water but Elspeth had not finished with him yet. She was in the throes of her own compulsion and it had not yet run its course.

Now he could feel the stinging lines that she had placed in his flesh. The ache of his spent loins and the tiredness that assailed him. But Elspeth was still riding her mount over field and dale. That intrusion into her loins was all that she wanted from him as she used him to come again and again.

"Please..." he cried.



Brian was not sure. Was he crying out for her to stop? Was he at the beginning of another round? What was he begging for?

How could he possibly know that Elspeth was holding herself back? With difficulty she brought herself back from the limits of her frenzy and allowed herself to no more than merely climax as Brian gave his all for her pleasure.

She struggled to make her prey last, eke him out for the winter, take him drip by drip.

But it did not make any difference. He had to give when she demanded and she exacted ever more from his tortured body. He gave and she rode him to another peak, another shuddering climax that she relished from her position as the rider of the broken bronco.

'Was he a willing partner? Was she raping him?' Brian wondered as he drifted into slumber.

Sex for Elspeth was beyond consensual and forced.

It was her intense need against his will.

## Chapter 4

## ***We sit and wait***

Words, but not of comfort.

Brian woke from his deep sleep to find himself alone in the dark room. Shutters had been pulled over the small window of his room. He sat on the bed and felt the sheets stick to his chest where the wounds of last night's sex had left trails of blood and semen to dry during the night.

He moved to leave the bed.

His naked feet touched the slate floor, Brian recoiled at the cold of floor and the cool air but had to leave the bed that had been his rack. The frame where the heretic is dismembered under torsion of twisted rope.

He could smell the tempting aroma of cooking and struggled to dress. His clothes felt stiff and cold, his boots were hard and uncomfortable but he battled them on and opened the door into the main room of the cottage. A warm fire filled the room with the smell of peat. There was no crackling and popping just a fierce steady heat. At the desk was his nemesis, the woman who took what she wanted.

She turned to him and smiled. "Fucking is obviously enervating you and, dare I say it, exhausting you? I thought that you would last so much longer."

Brian seemed lost for a reply so she continued, "If you are hungry there is something in the pan, if not then there is a little job that you could do for me before breakfast."

"What time is it?" he asked as he peered through the panes of the window.

"About four in the afternoon," she replied.

He could see the swirl of movement outside. White on white the giant flakes settled over every feature outside. No colour, just shades of white. Brian felt a gathering gloom. It was more than snowing, it was total white-out and impossible to leave the cottage for civilization.

"Snow and more snow," he mumbled in a depressed groan.

"Absolutely," she said, watching his shoulders drop. "It usually snows for several days here before letting up at all. Perhaps you could chop some wood for me out the back. It will give you something to do and allow you to gauge conditions outside. Just looking through the windows does not give a very good impression of the amount of snowfall."

Brian looked at her, all prim and warmly dressed in the glow of the computer screen and wondered at the contrast between day and night, sex and school teacher. Last night she had once again compelled him to service her ass and pussy with his lips and tongue until at last she had sucked the last drop of come from his tender cock.

"If you go round the back of the cottage you will find the wood under the lean-to. Break up a couple of logs for firewood and bring them in with about this much," she signalled with her hands, "peat for the fire as well."

Opening the door against the piled up snow was not easy. Struggling through the thigh deep drift around the walls of the cottage was a chore. The snow was not so very cold. It melted and soaked through his clothes so that he was dripping with melt and sweat by the time that he found the pile of wooden logs and the axe.

The work was hard. The axe was heavy. Brian was drained of energy. The logs were dry under the lean-to roof but they were fresh and did not split like seasoned wood. It took an hour of hard work to break them up and bring the wood into the cottage. Now, after all that work he felt a little better, a little less enervated.

As he went back outside for the peat he noticed a small door at the back of the cottage and peeked in to see a small generator and a stack of car batteries. A battered green Land Rover lay under a tarpaulin. The sight of these modern adjuncts to the 'medieval' cottage made him curious and he wandered around the rest of the tightly grouped farm buildings to see what else there was.

One of the ruins was another cottage, long since abandoned. The walls stood but the roof was now a mass of slates that had been stacked into the corner of the room. Everything was covered with snow but it was plain that the cottage had been a ruin for many years. The other main building that lay in ruins was some sort of barn or sheep pen. The walls were rough-built with no mortar and had tumbled to ruin many years before.

These buildings encompassed the farm yard that he had seen when he arrived.

The third side was a low ruined wall with a number of large stones standing at lonely intervals in regimented order. Brian looked out, past the buildings and realized that the falling snow blocked all view of the moor, the stark vista of ponds and fen. As for the distant hills, there was nothing at all to be seen. Just white, grey and the tracks that Brian had left that were even now, filling with snow.

Brian trudged back to the cottage and entered to find Elspeth busy laying the table for a meal. Spoons and bowls were placed and bread had been broken and placed on the board in the centre of the table.

"Eating is one of my main activities here," she said as she turned to him. "Writing, masturbation, sleep and thinking amount for pretty much all of the rest. Actually, now I can add fucking you to the list! It is the first time that I have had company here in a few years and I must say that it is somewhat inspirational."

Brian just nodded as an answer. He was depressed. He was trapped, exhausted and tired. He peeled off his clothes and hung them over the chairs whilst Elspeth went to the kitchen to fetch the meal that she had prepared.

"In a couple of weeks you will be OK to get out of here," she called out to him as she filled the plates in the kitchen. "There is no point in being miserable, though I do appreciate that you are not a gabbler of nonsense and gossip. I prefer quiet men! As long as you do as I require you can stay here."

The noise in the kitchen carried on as Elspeth prepared the vegetables and herbs that would go to make the soup. Meanwhile Brian looked at the screen of her laptop. The screen was filled with writing in the word processor that Elspeth had been using.

He glanced over the text but none of it made much sense to him. There was some Latin. 'Probably medieval church Latin,' he thought as tried to remember his two years of optional Latin at high school. Then there was a list of what he took to be names, but they meant nothing to him. Underneath it all were notes in English that just made no sense. Like they were a recipe or a set of instructions.

He heard her finish up and moved hastily away from the screen to look out of the window to cover his interest in her work or study. It seemed more like research, but how was that possible away from libraries and the Internet?

The soup steamed in the deep bowls that she set on the table.

"Do you only eat soup then?" he asked as she sat at the table.

"I eat mostly dried food," she said as they tucked in. "Water is one thing that there is plenty of up here on the moors."

They ate in silence for a while before Brian essayed a question.

"What are you writing?" he asked.

"Historical analysis, at the moment. It is a passion of mine. Ancient history and modern."

Elspeth looked at him piercingly for an instant before continuing to eat. It was a few moments before she elaborated. "At the moment it is an analysis of occult ritual in the early Christian period. 'From Essene to Cathar' is the working title. Ritual is sometimes necessary to smooth the path of authority and need."

Brian just nodded. It sort of fitted what he had seen on the screen. He had studied history and Latin but the degree that he was working on in Glasgow was chemical engineering after all. It had been a very long time since he had had to study times past.



## Chapter 5

### *The curtain drops*

That night was another test of Brian's stamina in bed. He almost tried to refuse, he nearly tried to brush her off with an excuse but she found the erection that he was trying to conceal and used it for her own satisfaction. Brian gave in to her blandishments, he could do no other. Elspeth sucked at his willpower and his semen with a terrible urgency that gave him no option but to give in and give her his body to use.

Once again he was trapped inside the cathedral of her skirt, finding his way in the dark by touch before she slowly sat on him. She controlled his breathing, made him serve so intimately and seemed to take delight in forcing him to lap up the emissions that flowed from her after his own ejaculations.

He was no longer certain that he could even refuse her advances. They were not couched in words they were couched in the sliding of her cunt over his straining prick. They were in the busy hands that gouged his naked flesh and reopened the wounds that bled rivulets of crimson. The closeness of the soft flesh that was becoming his prison. Pervasive, invasive and sapping at his willpower, she was breaking him to the bit night by night.

Then there were the lips that invaded his, before sucking at his cock to make it come a second time, a third time. This time the sex was even more violent. Three times he came. Three times she mandated an orgasm and three times she took his body and made it bend to her lascivious and dominant will and then compelled him to drink from the flower of her cunt before the next round could begin. It was almost as though Elspeth was frantic for pure sex, not her climax, but his.

She had to have his orgasm for her own.

Elspeth had to suck him dry every night.

He learned to pleasure the lips and fleshy matrix of her cunt with tongue and lips. She forced him into the darkness under her skirt and made him service her as she pumped him for the third time. Her closed fist pulled him to breaking point before he finally splashed his last emission over her pursed lips and face. By force and speed she had pushed him to orgasm after orgasm.

But he did not see her lap at his juice because he was drowning in the flood of her liquid pleasure and the draining of his previous climax that gushed from her over his face and down his throat! Finally she left him. Drained, exhausted and smeared with the blood and ejaculate of the last three hours and he slipped into a terrible world of fear and black dreams that allowed him no respite. The real relief that came with sleep escaped him; Elspeth was invading his nightmares, his thoughts and his sleeping hours, he was being visited by a succubus even in his sleep.

He saw, in his nightmare, the darkness descend and swallow him. Rivers of her lubrication and his emissions flooded down his throat, choking and drowning him as Elspeth brutally forced him to climax after climax. Her hips opened and sucked him in, her nails bit into his thighs and ripped the flesh from his like tissue paper. And, all the while that the nightmare filled his mind he heard the sound of her voice enjoining him to ever greater effort for her pleasure.

In the next room, whilst her unwilling guest tossed in black torment, Elspeth sat at her desk playing with the silver blade that she was about to use to prick a single drop of her blood. Her legs opened to reveal that ravenous slit as the skirt pulled back. For a moment she sat eyeing the blade as if unsure about a decision.

Then she started the ritual.

Ritual was not mandatory, it was not obligatory, but it calmed the mind and redirected her greedy thoughts to the ley-lines of her reason that were becoming inflamed with the scent of her bliss. A few words muttered. That was all it took. A slight prick with the knife and the drop of blood fell onto the lips of her sex that were still glistening with Brian's blood, his semen and the oil of her own excitement.

A warmth spread across her flesh and that flesh began to change. It rippled with its own life before the oily sheen of reptile scales spread over the soft white flesh of her thighs and then faded to leave her skin smoother and firmer.

Sometimes during the act, occasionally when she decided to release the power, the feeling of cool delectation of tapping her latest victim's life and vigour was a delight in every case. Elspeth felt a pulse of vigour spread through her body, it was the first of many. This time just a slight swell compared to her the tide of youth that would engulf her she revelled in, the feeling of health and youth that blushed and then faded to leave Elspeth panting with lust and triumph. This was such a slow, but delightful way to drain a man of his vitality! The sex first and the ritual after... so much slower and somehow more satisfying to see her victim drain before her eyes.

Drop by drop. Climax by climax, his vitality seeped into her and was realized by the ritual. At any time she could master him, suck him of everything and it was a struggle that she had nightly to resist and watch him descend to become nothing more than a vessel emptied for her pleasure.

Elsbeth's hand moved lightly over the skin of her face.

Were the crow's feet that spidered from her eyes lessened?

Was her soft, older, skin firmer?

Were her lips firmer?

Elsbeth smiled.

No creases pleated her skin.

## Chapter 6

### *The gate closes*

Brian struggled out of his bed with the slow movements of a man who has slept, but without any respite. His head span until he had sat on the edge of the bed for a minute whilst he regained his composure. Exhausted from his sleep he could not remember his dreams but their shadows haunted his aching mind. His body felt wracked with aching pain as he wearily stood and headed for the door.

The intimate taste of Elspeth was in his mouth. He had been serving her all last night and he could still taste the both of them on his lips.

The room he entered was lit by the slow burning embers of the fire. He saw Elspeth curled naked and asleep on the sofa. The blanket that had covered her ripe form lay in a heap on the cold floor.

To Brian she seemed exquisite, rich with sexual promise, mature but smooth and rounded. For a moment he stood and regarded her with admiration, this was the woman who was fucking his brains out, this was the woman who was making him suffer and giving such exquisite agony as she rode his prick. The woman who was creating nightmares in his sleeping imagination, the woman who was beginning to own him. Then he shook his head and tried to imagine the girlfriend that he had left behind. Exquisite she had been, but nothing like the real woman who drained him every night! This goddess that even filled his dreams left him just a fragile cup for her to fill the next night.

A dark dream of pure unadulterated and servile sex.

He tore his eyes from his nemesis and looked around the room for inspiration. The clock showed four and the shutters were closed but he could hear the wind bellow and whistle around the cottage. With no let-up in the weather he was trapped and he could not find the energy to escape. Flight was no longer an option, he was spellbound and sapped in every way.

Her laptop sat open on the table, a single green flicker showed that it was sleeping and ready for use at the touch of a key. He stroked the touch pad, bringing the display to life and stared at the login screen. Just one name showed its icon of a snake's head, 'Helena'.

'Helena?' he thought. 'I thought she was Elspeth?'

Now he was in, there was no password to guess, just a screen full of documents ready to be opened. The document files had strange names like 'Abyzou' and 'Empusa'.

Carefully he sat on the edge of the chair and scrutinized the screen. The background was a fantasy picture of a winged female angel and all the documents were sorted into two groups. Those on the right had what appeared to be female names but apart from 'Eisheth' all of them were new to him.

The left hand side was full of files with names that seemed to be Latin. 'Ars Goetia', 'Trithemius' and 'Karezza'. What were these files? 'Ars Satanica', the lore of demons...

Brian tried to decide which file to open first when he heard a slight sound from Elspeth. Like the hissing of her breath over her lips, possibly it presaged her



waking. There was not much time. He gazed at the names of the files and clicked on one at random.

It opened to reveal a mass of diagrams and shapes that he could not understand. Names were scrawled over the patterns but they were Latin or some other archaic language. Idly he scrolled down to find blocks of text that were also indecipherable to him. Notes had been added to the diagrams in a rounded cursive hand that Brian took to be Elspeth's.

Brian closed the file and clicked on another to open it. This time it was what seemed to be personal diary. The date at the top of the page was the seventeenth of January and the year was nineteen hundred and three. Puzzled and curious he started to read.

He was about half way down the page when he felt a hand close on each shoulder. Brian had been so engrossed in reading that he had not noticed Elspeth come up behind him.

"I see that you are not above reading my diary," said Elspeth in a disappointed tone. "Don't you know that a diary is that most sacred of personal records?"

Brian started out of his reverie to feel her hands briefly, softly, close around his throat and then course down his chest before Elspeth's fingers closed over his nipples and tweaked them.

"I'm sorry, Elspeth, he gasped, "I was just so curious."

“Curiosity? You know what it killed?”

Her fingers tweaked him for a moment and then slid away to rest lightly on his shoulders again.

He turned to face her. Her skin was smooth. A few lines scored the corners of her eyes and her hair was in disarray from her repose. But she was naked! The first time that he had seen her unclothed in the full light. He could not stop his eyes wandering over her flesh and marvelled that her large breasts stood so proud despite their size. The tiny coin still hung on its chain between those rounded breasts.

“When you have finished admiring me we can fuck. If you like?”

Brian nodded dumbly and allowed Elspeth to pull him to the sofa. He felt a strength in her hands and arms that brooked no disobedience as she pushed him lightly to fall into a sitting position and sat on his lap facing him with those breasts. The grip of her hands felt like iron manacles on his arms, the straddle of her thighs on his felt like a hoop of steel that pinned his body to the sofa.

“If you don’t want me then just say so!” she taunted. “It is cock that I need and yours is not looking so willing right now.”

“I am so tired,” he mumbled, tired and spent.”

“You are a little young to be so exhausted after just a little sex,” laughed Elspeth. “Let me see...”

Her hand reached down and grasped his balls and she leaned to kiss him. As her touch connected with his flesh he felt the familiar hardening overwhelm him and rise to point like a compass at her breasts.

“That’s better, now you can come for me again and again...”

## Chapter 7

## *The end of all songs*

He woke to find Elspeth sitting at his side on the sofa. A blanket had been pulled over him and the fire had been piled high with the logs that he had chopped so that the roaring flames filled the room with their noise and the room smelt of smoke and burning pine.

Elspeth put a hand on his forehead and nodded.

“You seem to be well; I mean that I cannot feel any fever.”

Brian looked into her face and could see only kind concern there, but he felt a sort of repulsion that he could not explain. It was an untidy feeling that left him in a conflict between obsession and fear.

“I dream of terrible things,” he said. “A sucking blackness and hateful swirls of grey that I am swimming through like a swimmer caught in a nightmare vortex. I am forever falling into you, endlessly swallowed by your pussy.”

“You are upset at not being able to escape,” she said in a soothing voice. “It’s normal, so just let the fear wash over you, don’t let it consume you...”

Now Brian was fully awake. He saw Elspeth leaning over him and tried to sit up but a firm hand held him, pinning his shoulder to the sofa.

“You should not move, I will bring you something,” she said.

Her body turned for a moment but her hand remained on him, holding him down.

“Since you are so tired I shall spoon-feed you myself,” she said as she turned back with a bowl in the other hand.

Elsbeth took the spoon and offered it to Brian. He pursed his lips and the soup filled his mouth with the rich taste of lentils and salty bacon. Spoonful after spoonful of the soup was fed to him as though a mother was feeding a baby. Finally, Elsbeth had scraped the last and served it to her patient and put the bowl to one side.

“You wonder why I am here all alone in the Scottish highlands. You wonder who I am and why I am so prepared to fuck a stranger? You would like to know if you dare refuse me and whether you should head out into the storm to escape me.”

Elsbeth smiled and slowly pulled the cover from Brian. She was dressed in her tweed again and he was naked. The effect was to enfeeble him, to leave him powerless against her advances as one of her hands closed on his thigh with a grip that Brian felt was like a vice. A light touch that would bring his prick ready for her use.

Brian tried a light hearted answer to her question. “You are a writer who is

looking for solitude. You have discovered that you are lonely here. I would never refuse you but I must get back and report my survival, they will be looking for me on the moors...”

“Very good. Very good answer! But you are wrong on all counts! No one at all is searching on the moors for you. They have long since given up on you after all these long weeks of fucking, but I have not! We are going to fuck again and again because you can feel your prick rising and your powerlessness turns both of us on. I just so love draining you, Brian. As you service my unlimited lust I may feel the need to reveal some answers.”

As she spoke her face came towards his. He saw a tongue flick over her white teeth and then her lips closed over his. One of her hands strayed to his rising cock and gripped it firmly. Her other hand closed around his throat, softly.

Brian felt the implied threat but he was powerless in her grip. His lips forced apart as her tongue made its way into his mouth, her grip that slid down to close on his balls. He lay, placid and yielding as Elspeth climbed onto his body.

This time she was not going to fuck him; she had determined to sip from his cup and allow him to enjoy a slight taste of hers.

“Please,” wailed Brian. “Please, don’t Elspeth!.”

“How can a woman tak a man?” she laughed. “I just want you to do as you are told and I will not hurt you. Just let the nightmare wash over you, do not resist it.”

Hitching her skirt up she planted her knees on his arms and shoulders trapping him under her as she prepared to take her satisfaction. Brian saw her loom over him, those strong thighs and the rounded, smooth cheeks of her ass as Elspeth took what he would not give willingly.

As she shuffled forward, to allow access, she bent forward to swallow him whole in one easy motion.

Brian felt her lips on the tip for a moment, and then he was deep in her mouth, her lips touching the root of his cock whilst a hand massaged his balls with a sure grip. It was like fucking her, a wet, smooth hold as she slid her lips up and down his prick with a deliberate intensity. All the while he arched his back as though it would relieve the pressure of her hand. But she ignored his discomfort and took her own time.

Then she moved and Brian was once again engulfed by her behind. The flow of her excitement smeared his face with slick juice as she finally settled to force his face into her hungry flesh.

“You are mine, Brian and I want you to serve me, to comfort me through this storm at the end of all songs. The songs of passion and lust! Pray that you please me, because the alternatives are frightful for you!” said Elspeth as she buried him and savoured the pleasure of the weakened man probing her ass with his lips and tongue.

As the rhythm of her thighs synchronized with her taking him with her throat he found that he could breathe for just a moment as she slid back to expose her ass to his tongue.



Elspeth did not wait for subtle service. She slid back and forth, using his face, tongue and chin as the pestle for her mortar. Regardless of Brian's actions she took what she needed.

The furrow was ploughing the blade.

The sheath had mastered the sword.

Then he climaxed. His body arched with a spasm, forcing him into her sex with the whole strength of his body. Elspeth gulped at every drop that spewed from him, swallowing and licking like a wild animal as she used her hand to crush every last drip from his raw prick.

Then at last she allowed herself to come. She orgasmed, not from his puny attentions but because he was so helpless beneath her, unable to resist her, too weak to do anything but offer the capitulation that was so much part of the ritual.

It was over, Elspeth's oral dominance. But she stayed on top shifting a little to allow his gasping mouth to breathe through her hungry slit. He could not see her towering above him but Brian knew that she smiled.

Finally he was terrified.

All was still but it was just a pause. A moment for Elspeth to re-gather forces and pull together energies for the long night ahead.

He heard her voice. She spoke calmly and clearly as he listened with a horror born of terror. “Who am I? I became Elisabeth Van Hahn. They all think that I might have been born in eighteen thirty one in what is now the Ukraine, but was then the Russian Empire. It is not the real truth. Truth what is truth? It is what I have seen and lived, truth is my witness! I saw Rome rise and become fatally infected at the final Punic war. Then I saw Rome die in oily flames a multitude of times as it fell again and again to beasts from the cold north. Why am I here? I seek solitude because I am hunted, but my enemies seek in the crowded places because they know that I need the company of men to fill my lusts and hungers. Why do I drink you dry? I fuck you because you are my life. Your essence fills me with new energy as it leaves you stricken and weak.”

For a moment she paused as if she was gathering her thoughts. As she did so Brian felt a warmth; a hot flush, course her thighs and then, suddenly, the heat was gone. Sucked into the flesh of the Lamia who was draining him of the very essence of his being.

“Call me a vampire,” she said and then chuckled as though that were a joke. “But I am not, because I do not seek or feed on blood. I drain other essences from men! Those that they often give so willingly but at last yield to me in any case. As I grow strong you grow weak. I could tear you limb from shuddering limb but I prefer to suck the life from you in an orgy of lust. It is my little pleasure!”

Her nails scratched him and drew pearls of red into the firelight as Elspeth made Brian climax at the moment that she desired.

“When you are just a trembling husk I will dispose of you on the moor as I have disposed of so many others who have given me more than they were willing to give over the years. You will have given me, new life. Elisabeth Van Hahn,

Countess Elspeth Papadapolos, Helena of Carthage and so many others that I can scarce count them all. I will teach you to degrade yourself for my idle pleasure and then I will rob you of your youth, your drive and your memories of wine and roses. You have given me yourself to allow me to pass a few more months before I have to hunt again. I who am about to live, salute you!”

The iron-hard muscles in the thighs that enclosed his world of darkness relaxed to sink her gaping sex onto his gasping mouth. In the muffled distance he heard her last words, “If you service me well than I may just not make you spill your seed. Yet! The length of your days on this earth depends on you pleasing my ravenous cunt!”

His lips opened and he kissed the small creased nubbin of her ass.

It was all he could do to delay the inevitable.

Serve Elspeth and hope to endure.

## **Part II - Succubus**

## Prologue

## *New York 1985*

The librarian brought the book to Harold and placed it carefully on the desk.

“You’ll have to sign the docket for this book, Mr. Hillsbrough,” she said as she presented the withdrawal card and checked his membership card for the number of his membership. “Looks like you’re the first one in over a decade to request this one. Old woodcuts?”

“What else?” he replied. “Old woodcuts...”

Harold signed with a flourish and offered a small smile.

The librarian smiled back and went back to her reception desk behind the security doors that made this one of the most secure private libraries in the world.

First, as was his habit, he checked the docket to see who else had looked at this book and noticed that it had been last looked at in the fifties. Over twenty years ago! He noted the library docket number in his diary and then continued his investigation. He surveyed the outer ends of the book and saw that though the cover was probably a century-old leather style, it was scarcely worn at all. It was the pages that were worn and tattered at the edges, probably hand cut and sewn with poor printing quality.

He flicked the pages to get a feel for the book and decided that Geneva in the seventeenth century was about right. Maybe earlier. The woodcut esoteric diagrams told him that much. Master bookmaker and printer Joanne Calvaggio or perhaps one of that school.

There was no dust on it; all the volumes in the New York Keller Art Library were now stored in sealed cabinets and drawers, so that was not unusual. He squinted at the Gothic characters and noted the French that had been used and decided that perhaps his guess at the age of the volume had been perhaps just a little late.

Now that the preliminaries were complete Harold had to decide if the book was a copy of *Ars Esoterica Satanica*, a forgery purporting to be that book, or one of the original five hundred or so inaccurate copies that had been printed after the private edition volumes had been passed to a small number close associates by the author. After a perusal of the paper and the print he decided that the book was probably the latter rather than the former, and complete. He compared the parts of the manuscript that he had in his notes, quotes and extracts from other authors and decided that they all corresponded to within a few per cent.

It was one of the earlier editions, seemingly a good one! The author himself had made this book, possibly the only one left complete. This was the perfect opportunity to use his newly acquired Minox camera and make a copy...

He glanced around and saw that there was only one other attendee in the library at the moment, her head buried in study so he decided now was a good time to photograph the book. This, of course, was against the rules of the library, a strictly forbidden activity. Of course it was always possible to copy a book by hand, but that would take weeks and the diagrams were so very critical, so he laid the book out on the first page and used his camera to photograph each page, one after another. Of course there might well be concealed text, milk and lemon juice were a common method, but to find that required heat on the paper or

perhaps more subtle methods and that was too risky to attempt in the open library.

That would come later...

It took two days to copy the book. He made his notes in between photographing pages to conceal his intent and worked steadily, almost at random so that the other users of the library, and of course the librarians, would not notice what he was up to. Page by page he made his illicit copy until he came to page one hundred and seven.

On that page some careless reader had spilled some wine, possibly a hundred years ago or more. The stain, now slightly brown, had revealed some handwritten notes in a slight tinge of grey. If the light had been better he would not have noticed, but it indicated that someone had marked the pages in the process of research and wanted to keep his or her notes secret as they worked.

Finally the work was done and he was in the busy street in Queens where the library brooded in Neo-Victorian solidity. The thought that he would have to somehow 'borrow' that book crossed his mind, but the risk was too great. Reputation and his credentials would be at risk. On the other hand he could put in a request... But that would show where he had been and his credentials for the library, though carefully forged, would not withstand thorough checking.

He would have to think about it. There had to be a way!

Anyway his ticket for Edinburgh was dated tomorrow and he could not afford to miss that Pan Am flight.



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Harold Hillsbrough merged into the flow of pedestrians and headed for his cheap hotel. What he had already was beyond compare. Somehow a single original copy of *Ars Esoterica Satanica* had ended up in a private research library for books about art. Was it the last complete copy extant? Maybe, it had been in a place where no one else would ever think to look! Harold was probably the last serious reader in three hundred years; now with a copy of the entire book, not just the short extracts that were in general circulation.

The reader from the nineteen fifties was probably just a curious researcher who had flicked through the book without understanding its import. That was the most likely explanation.

Soon he would be picking the text apart, subjecting it to analysis and systematically sorting the wheat from the chaff with the 'Basic' computer program that he had developed himself.

Then he would be into the next level of research. The search for a secret that was a thousand years old when the book had been written. The secret that had been so well protected over the ages that only hints survived in all of the extant volumes that had led him here, to the streets of modern New York.

Harold was convinced that a book this rare must hold a secret of the ages...

## Chapter 1

## *London 2012*

He was exhausted and lay on the thick coverlet unable to move with sheer fatigue. Stricken and seemingly half asleep his breathing slowed from its panting agitated speed to a slow rhythm as he recovered his strength from the trial of the last hour. It had been pleasure, of a sort, a massive effort and a test of his inner reserves of strength.

His partner, on the other hand, was both refreshed and renewed by her lovemaking. She stood by the window, careless of the fact that she was exposed to the world and watched the busy afternoon traffic and movement on the streets far below. Her heels kicked off, she stood in stockings and corset while a small trickle of his essence made its way from her pouting sex and streamed its way to soak into the tops of her stockings.

Her finger between her lips she sucked at the small pinprick that oozed a single drop of blood and absentmindedly looked back at the man who lay drained on the bed. Just three days ago he had been Michael Berkins, a computer specialist who had been looking for a casual pick up in the Red Lion in Soho. Now he was a half drained husk who was giving up his strength for her gratification, a vessel of strength that she was draining with a practiced hand. She smiled at the erection that still persisted and the way that he moaned and twitched in his sleep. Troubled dreams of exhaustion filled his slumber, allowing him no rest as the light of life that had filled his mind was turned to shadow.

She turned back to the scene far below and was consumed by a familiar feeling of potential and power. Those small people, far below were so ordinary, so limited and so taken with their petty lives while she stood here looking down at them like some goddess escaped from a nether inferno. They believed in their

lives, they believed in the modern creed of secular science and all the while she knew that this world of bright frantic hurry was just a sham, a dream that covered dark secrets and longings of creatures that lusted for their worship and fear.

Boring grey cobwebs spun over a false reality.

One hand slipped to her oozing sex and came to her pursed lips. She tasted him on her fingers and licked the drops of semen with relish as her other hand cupped a large firm breast that no longer sagged. The skin was smooth, alabaster with the slight veins that pulsed with her fresh life. The breasts of a twenty year old, large but smooth and pert, a delight to hold and tease.

She turned back to her lover and joined him on the bed. Soon he would be ready for the final bout of sex. He would suck her cunt, he would lay down his prick at the altar of her sex and then be finally swallowed with a finality that would suck everything from those delicious balls. It would make her complete, as he thrashed in his final orgasm. That unwilling gift would give her another few months of delicious youth as his shrivelled soul winged its way to who knew what netherworld of pain.

Ripe and smooth as a plucked peach she slid alongside him and grasped that massive erection. Her lips closed over the plum tip of him and her tongue worked from the ridges on the tip to the small entrance that would soon gush healing balm. Once again she would feel her skin stretch and tighten, her nipples push to rigidity, her sex become virginal and her hair would lose every last grey tinge.

The very thought brought her to climax, a small shudder that heralded so much more.

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Elsbeth sat at the computer and flicked through the pages of the search results with a flick and click of the mouse. It was not as if she expected the screen to be filled with results, in fact she had thought it was unlikely that she would find anything at all. For years she had searched for a single rare item. A book so rare that it was probably the only complete example, a book that she had owned and lost!. Now the search was repeated just every few months, a few hours of browsing the Internet that brought mention, but no trace of the book itself.

A passing phase of hope that was always dashed when no scent of the book ever appeared.

A hundred years of seeking had brought no concrete trail to follow. Of course in those days she had trailed to libraries, second hand book shops and the sellers of esoterica in Paris and London where the dust hung in the air in motes that described the sunshine that filtered in from the busy streets. Now there was a bright screen and lists of misguided articles that only hinted at the presence of the prize that she sought.

She stopped.

Frozen in almost disbelief as she read the long article about a private library that was being sold. Every book, every work, every single picture was being sold separately as the collection was dissolved and the precious collection was redistributed to the highest bidders.

It stared at her, that result and she knew that her long search was nearing an end.

Her hand stretched to the screen and touched the words in unconscious reflex before she clicked to open a new page.

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Lot 2356: 'Ars Esoterica Satanica'.

*A fine copy of this rare book, rebound in Victorian splendour, Buckram and fine leather, re-sewn, all pages complete and original from the Geneva edition that comprised the private version. Irregular cocked and deckle edged hand-cut pages, foxed but all print legible and complete.*

Reserve price : \$20,000,-

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She let out a small sigh and looked for more detail, but apart from the date of the auction and a mass of legalese there was no more to be had. The auction date was just a week away in Sotheby's in New York.

She looked back over her shoulder at the man who sat reading on her bed. He was naked and idly flicking through a magazine, he looked fatigued but his next comment belied that exhaustion.

"Finished, Elspeth?" he asked with a smile. "Fancy coming back for another fuck?"

She stood and closed the laptop with the flick of a hand.

"No! I have work to do!"

He laughed and held up the handcuffs to show her. They dangled from one finger in invitation.

"We can give these a try, I promise that I'll make it memorable."

"Get dressed and count yourself lucky!" she said as she slipped on her shoes and reached for her clothes. "I want you out of here in five minutes!"

He looked startled and then a look of superiority crossed his features.

"If I leave then I won't come back," he laughed. "You won't find a better fuck!"

"Leave!"

"Cow," he muttered under his breath.

"What?"

He looked at the anger that he had provoked and laughed again.

"If you think a good fuck for a worn out bitch is easy to come by, then think again," he said as he slowly got from the bed, making a show of his spare muscular frame.

Elsbeth paused and looked down at him with a haughty stare.

"OK, then. You win," she said.

Her voice sounded resigned, but inside she was boiling with anger. How dare this cocksure mindless young prick insult her?

"Put the cuffs on and I'll show you how worn out I am!"

"That's better," he said as he clicked one wrist into the cuffs and then passed them round a bed post before fixing the other. "If you know what's good for you you'll give me a blow job and be happy that I like older women! If you're a good little slut, I'll fuck you until you beg for mercy!"



Elspeth bent to the small dressing table and picked up the nail scissors lying there. With her back to him she pricked her finger until a small drop of blood welled from the skin. For the first time in so many years she was going to plunder a man utterly in a single fuck! Her hand went to her slit and left the blood of her ritual mix with the wetness that was waiting.

"Come on now, bitch, you know that you want it!"

He looked proudly at the massive cock that reared from his thighs. It was that rigid prick that drew the women to him, his stamina, his endurance, his strength.

Elspeth mounted the bed, kicked off her stilettos and took him in hand.

"Blow first," he said as she kneeled over his thighs.

"Fuck you," she cried as her pussy hovered over his cock.

He tried to move, wriggle from under her and twist away from her cunt. She bent forward and gripped his throat with her hand as she lowered her face to his. He struggled, but his arms were trapped by the cuffs and her grip was like iron.

"Don't call me 'bitch'," she whispered with a hint of menace.

Something in her voice, some deadly quality filled him with dread and his struggles became frantic. Her grip on his throat was sure and unbending. A hand

clawed his skin from shoulder to belly, scratching with terrible force, parting the skin and leaving a trail of bloody tears welling from his bronzed flesh.

Then she lowered onto him, swallowed him into her pussy and he could not help but push back, deeper into the voracious maw that was enveloping him.

"That's better," she murmured, "just lie still and be fucked like the good little boy you are."

The pain from the scratches on his chest, the rasping of his breath, the agony of the cuffs that bit his wrists and the hand that raised to her lips so that she could lick his blood from her nails. It all fused into a mass of pain and joy that was focussed in his prick. He felt the first welling of climax.

Too soon!

She seemed to be sucking the strength from him, as though he was circling a maelstrom in a small skiff. Staring into the deep hole that he was descending into with inevitable horror. He sensed her wild laugh more than he heard it as he thrashed to escape what he somehow understood was his final curtain.

All his strength, all his fading pride was finally rent in a gush of come. A climax that streamed from him in a surge of uncontrollable spasmed ecstasy. His eyes closed, her hand relaxed, his breath came in gasps and he missed a transformation that spread from her loins to her face like a flush of sun.

Skin seemed for a moment to take a greenish tinge, a scaly integument that faded to leave fresh taut flesh. Her breasts swelled and tightened, the fine lines that spidered from her eyes smoothed and the muscles in her body took new definition.

As he faded, she bloomed, until at last he gave his all with a gasp and his body slackened. A last small thrust, a last drop of his essence into her ravenous cunt as a rattle took his last breath.

Elsbeth lifted herself from her lifeless lover and smiled grimly. Too short for really deep pleasure. Incomplete, because she had not milked every drop from his body, the hand that now entered her pussy would give her the orgasm she needed, but the ritual was complete and he was drained.

"I'll have to do it this way more often," she murmured to herself as she looked at his stricken body. "I'm getting to gentle, I should be greedy for every drop..."

She climaxed with a rush as his prick lost its firmness and slipped from her.

## Chapter 2

## *London and New York 2012*

The forensic investigator pulled on his gloves and bent over the body that lay amongst the crumpled silk. His hands felt the skin and muscles and then investigated the bruises that were just starting to become livid on the neck. The score of deep scratches rent the perfect skin from neck to belly.

"Well, he wasn't strangled," he said. "What I mean is that, even though his neck was gripped tightly I don't believe that hypoxia is to blame for his death. Though there are signs of violent sexual activity... I believe that this was consensual."

"Thank you for the obvious," broke in the woman standing by the bed. "I had noticed that, actually!"

"Though there are signs of violent sexual activity," he repeated with a slight irritation in his voice, "I am inclined to give a first verdict of some sort of myocardial infarction brought on by arduous activity."

"In plain words, he had a heart attack whilst fucking," laughed the woman. "What a way to go..."

"Unusual for a fit young man, really," said the man in the loose white suit. "I would put the time of death at about ten hours ago. Look at the way that the blood on his chest is already setting, the onset of classic post-mortem rigor mortis measured against the room temperature, as well as the fact that he climaxed and then died at the point of orgasm. Liver temperature will narrow the

window..." he said as he began his incision. "The hyoid is unbroken, he was not strangled."

Inspector Janice Dresden looked down at the body and tried to imagine the scene. An athletic young man in a hotel room who had found a partner who fucked him to death. His merciless partner gripped his throat after cuffing him to the bed. Then she mounted him and extracted so much rapture from him that he thrashed, struggled, and then died. Then the woman left in a hurry, leaving some clothes and nondescript items in the room. The open case, the clothes scattered around and the make-up on the small dresser.

For a minute she walked around the scene and then bent over the choice of perfume and makeup that lay on the dresser.

"I reckon that she was an older woman," she muttered. "Look at the colours and choices of lipstick and face powder. Then there are these scissors..."

She paused and inspected them without touching as she noticed the drop of blood that had dried on the points.

"What else is there?"

The question was directed at her sergeant who was reading a large book that had been lying on the bedside table but it was the forensic investigator that replied: "This grey pubic hair was not his," he muttered as he bagged the strand of hair.

"Well, this makes for curious reading," said her Sergeant as he offered her the book in his outstretched hand. "It is 'The Secret Teachings of All Ages', a right heap of mumbo jumbo and esoteric drivel."

She took the book in her gloved hand; a dense few pounds of high quality paper that was filled with close type and old fashioned diagrams. Despite the fact that it had an old fashioned feel, the book was modern and bound as a soft back.

"Look through it and give me some idea of what it is all about," she said as she handed the book back. "Meanwhile, check the reception of the hotel, get any security video recordings, find out his movements and then meet me in three hours at the station for the preliminary forensic reports!"

"This does not look like murder," said the Sergeant. "Violent yes, sexual yes and certainly suspicious, but actual intentional murder is rather unlikely."

"Well it would certainly be the first time that I have seen a use of this murder weapon," she said with a sarcastic smile as her finger pointed to her groin. "On the other hand we will treat it as suspicious, we have to find the woman and inform the relatives. Let's get going..."

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The auction room was still. Crowded and with all the small noises and coughs that accompany a large group of people, but anticipation of the next lot was intense.

"Lot 2355," said the auctioneer as the uniformed man held up a framed woodcut. "Hans Holbein, 'The Dance Of Death' printed in 1538 in Mainz, Germany. This is a particularly fine example of a woodcut of which only fifty or so copies survive and all of those in private collections and national galleries. The reserve price is five thousand and bids are in five hundreds. What am I bid?"

Small signs amongst the audience prompted the auctioneer to announce the current price, "Five-five, six, six-five, seven."

The bidding slowed and the Holbein was sold for seven thousand to slight applause.

"The next lot is 2356, a copy of 'Ars Satanica'. This book is complete and is a well-known, but little extant copy of a black magic manual and grimoire. Provenance unknown, rebound in the eighteen eighties, but the library has it listed as Geneva fifteen thirty six. Condition is fine taking into consideration the age of the book. The reserve price, one thousand, bids in units of two hundred please."

For a moment there was no sign from the audience, no bidder, then a woman in the back row held up her catalogue and the bidding commenced. As is often the case, bidders took their time to show their hand and the progression was slow. By the time the price had reached five thousand it was clear that there were only two people who were seriously interested in the grimoire.

A prim young woman at the back, the one that had started the bidding, and another older woman who just upped every bid as soon as it was given. Finally the price reached ten thousand dollars and went in leaps of a thousand dollars. The pause between bids became longer as the older woman consulted with her telephone until finally she dropped out at twenty thousand dollars.



"Sold to the lady in row twenty five in the red dress, for twenty thousand and five hundred dollars, plus New York State taxes," announced the auctioneer. "Showing tag number six, sixty six."

Elsbeth stood and nodded to the older woman with the telephone as if in commiseration. Inside she was totally elated as she made her way to the side room where payments and delivery were arranged. She had seen the book and knew it from a hundred years ago, before it had been lost to her. Now it was hers again, a link to the past, a trace of her passing that needed to be covered; a repository of secret knowledge and of course her notes. But it was also a trap that might waken the trail of those who were seeking her, if there were such.

Of course, it had been chancy, surfacing into the light of day to contact a link to her past! On the other hand, the risks were too great that someone else would buy and reprint the book and expose it to the light of scholars and the general public. Better that it rest in her care, a safe box in a bank, a secure repository.

She signed the cheque with a flourish and opened the case that she had brought.

"You wish to take it immediately?" asked the clerk.

"Of course!"

"I'm sorry, but the cheque has to clear..."

A look of irritation crossed Elspeth's face and her hand took the cheque and tore it into pieces.

"I'll pay with American Express then," she said as she tried not to let her urgency surface.

This auction house was a nexus of her and the book. The one place where they could be connected and be found together. The one place where her identity might be divined and exposed.

"That's fine, I'll need proof of identity" said the clerk as she took the card.

Elsbeth passed a passport over and waited with a cross look on her face. The procedure had caught her unawares, but there was no way that she wished to return here.

Five minutes later she was walking with a long stride down the steps of the auction house and onto the busy street. Merging with the crowd; becoming just a small part of thousands who were on their daily business. Behind her came a young man who paused for a moment on the height of the steps to assess Elspeth's direction and then joined the stream to follow her to her hotel.

He lost her in the subway station just a few minutes later. She seemed to step onto a train amidst a crowd of shoppers and then he saw her on the platform as the train left the station.

He spoke a curse that had not been heard for a thousand years and slammed his fist against the window as he watched her stepping on the escalator to leave the station. Jason was more than angry, he was livid. His one chance and he had let

her slip through his fingers!

## Chapter 3

### *London 1830*

"Mistress Chairmaine d' Armagne," announced the butler in a clear voice. "With her companion The Countess Elspeth Papadapolos."

The young man who was greeting all his guests bowed slightly and kissed their hands.

"It is most generous of you to come to my little soirée this evening at such very short notice," he said. "Please mingle and enjoy the aperitif and the conversation. I shall be able to give you my full attention when all of the guests have been greeted."

It was clear that his words were meant for the Countess rather than the French Mademoiselle as his eyes did not stray from her décolletage. Even though she was perhaps thirty five and therefore past the full bloom of her beauty she was both attractive and obviously unmarried. At last, he released her hand with a final brush of his lips and the two women made their way into the small groups of chatting guests.

"I think that he is totally stricken by you," said Chairmaine with a small smile. "Did you notice the way that his eyes could not lift from all that skin that you show to such advantage?"

"We shall see," laughed Elspeth. "He was just a little obvious in his attractions."

"Mayhaps you are aiming a little high," said Chairmaine petulantly. "After all Edward Highbrough is the son of Lord Newcastle and a wealthy man to boot. I think that you might be a little too old for him."

"I do not think that I am past the age of being able to find a companion! He does seem somewhat suitable, but I am inclined to imagine that my aim is moving up."

"In all the short time that I have known you, you have kept so quiet about your family and your homeland."

Elspeth smiled. This was another one of those probes that a curious Chairmaine just could not resist making. They had met at a dinner held by Lord Aberdeen and become fast friends. Or rather, Chairmaine had imagined that that was the case. The younger woman was drawn to the more mature one. Actually the feeling was not mutual! Elspeth saw Chairmaine as a step into polite society whereas Chairmaine felt an attraction to this extraordinarily well educated Greek woman who seemed to be seeking a match in the upper strati of the new aristocracy in which money and industry were beginning to become respectable, or at least acceptable after the turmoil of the Napoleonic wars.

"I suppose that I am still somewhat sensitive about the fact that Greek aristocracy must seem novo-riche to the rest of Europe. Let us just say that my family fought the Ottomans to rise to titled wealth," replied Elspeth to the enquiry. "The Filiki Eteria has spawned a new ruling class in my homeland and I am an emissary of its proud defiance of the degenerate Turkish Emir in Constantinople."

A waiter passed and offered glasses of red and sparkling white wine to the guests. Elspeth picked a glass of the red wine and sipped it speculatively as she looked around the room.

"Who is that gorgeous young man there?" she asked her companion.

"That is the younger son of the one of the Princes of Saxe Coburg," said Chairmaine with a sniff. "German Counts, Princes and generals now fill the aristocratic drawing rooms of Europe. They still claim that it was their armies that defeated Napoleon, even a decade after it was the British that sent him into exile on Saint Helena! They are so gauche and unlearned about polite society. My, but you do like them young!"

"Mistress Chairmaine you really must not get so emotional about it all, the Germans really are so cultured, have you ever been to Dresden? It is a city of books and culture that is a nonpareil, a veritable city of the sun," said Elspeth pointedly ignoring the comment that mentioned her age.

At that moment Edward joined the two young woman and made a small bow.

"Ladies, please excuse me for interrupting, but I could not help overhearing your conversation and I must concur with the Countess. Dresden is not only a city of unparalleled architecture; it is also one of the most literate cities in the entire civilised world. But, I must ask you both, are you enjoying my little soiree?"

Chairmaine turned to their host and returned his bow.

"It is just perfect, so sophisticated..."

Edward waved his hand over his face as if he were overheating and blushed.

"I cannot thank you enough for the compliment," he replied to Chairmaine, "and the Countess?"

Elsbeth smiled and fluttered her fan a little.

"Most precious!"

Edward looked suitably relieved.

"Two such beautiful ladies cannot stand alone here! Perhaps I can introduce you to someone that you find intriguing? Look around and tell me whom..."

Elsbeth scanned the room and her eyes fixed on two men in a dark cavalry uniform.

"Who are those two men there?"

"Ah! Allow me help you break into their talk of wars and battles."



He led them to the two young men and introduced them.

"Countess Elspeth and Mistress Chairmaine. May I introduce you to Count Blavatsky and his good friend Igor Dagovachov?"

Having fulfilled his role as host, Edward passed a final comment: "We eat in just a few minutes, seating arrangements are unplanned."

The count and his friend spoke English with a heavy Russian accent so Charmaine switched to French.

"Are you in London for some military venture?" she asked.

The Count, a tall man with a rugged face, answered fluently: "We are here as part of the Russian Imperial delegation to the glorious British navy, Madame. It seems that we have so much to learn!"

For five minutes they stood and passed small talk before a small bell rang and the guests gathered for the meal that had been laid out in the drawing room. Despite the fact that places had not been assigned at the long table, the guests managed to sort themselves according to social standing and took their places, Elspeth maneuverer herself and sat between the Count's friend Igor at the corner of the table.

"You are a fascinating woman," he sallied, in flawless French.

"I try to be," she replied.

His gaze was drawn to her décolletage without attempting to hide his interest and she felt his hand come to rest on her knee.

"Sir," she said. "You are most forward."

"In the face of such beauty, how cannot I be? Forward is the direction I most often choose."

The hand slid up her thigh and came to rest on the silk of her dress just above her stocking top. Elspeth did not seem at all upset so he risked another small flattery.

"As you are Greek, I can only compare you to the classical Helen of Troy in beauty reborn. Perhaps we should get to know each other better?"

His hand crept a fraction higher as he spoke and she was saved by the arrival of the pheasant and leek soup that required the right hand to grasp the spoon.

"Perhaps," she said with a smile. "There may be opportunity..."

Conversation at the lower end of the table waxed and waned and Helen found out about the man whose wandering hands made their presence felt between

every course and glass of wine. Igor radiated a forceful presence and monopolised his new found female interest, forcing Chairmaine and the Russian Count to spend the whole meal exchanging dull pleasantries.

Finally the soiree left the table and retreated to a collection of drawing rooms where they could while the time in cards and mixed company. Elspeth found that Igor became more and more effusive as the wine was passed and his social scruples fell away at the same rate as his ability to speak French.

"I am sure that we can find some quiet corner, away from this crowd," he said as he stood just a little too close to her to be polite.

The close proximity to such male strength and raw energy had its effect and Elspeth started to feel a rising red tide of lust that was difficult for her to control. That was often the way it was with her. Well made plans could not resist her inner hunger, especially after a few months of abstention. As she slowed and age began to raise its head she had to assuage her hunger and the hollow need that so had to be sated.

His hand took hers and she felt its strength and his energy. The tight pants of his uniform hinted at his interest and the urgency in his voice told her that he was more than ready, he was positively eager.

Ready to be tapped...

'Perhaps just a small dip into that masculinity?' she thought as she pondered the pros and cons of the opportunity. 'Just a small sip at the cup...'

If she appeared, suddenly so much younger in this company, it might be noticed.

Perhaps she could just taste him and then Charmaine might not notice any change in the morning? If she appeared suddenly as a young woman, her carefully built up cover would be lost and she would have to disappear and start again to find a rich husband who had no scruples about marrying down into shady Southern European aristocracy. She needed a man with money and power, a man who had estates where a few missing men would not be noticed. A place of refuge and a chance to build a real identity to put an end to this constant hiding.

Elsbeth needed a place where she could continue her research on how to contain the incubus of her inner struggle to drain the life force of men once she reached a seemingly older age. A means of lasting longer between those events, a way of containing the inner fire that drove her to dispatch her every partner.

A means of caging the demon and leashing it to her control.

The meal had finished and the guests stood and rearranged themselves into new constellations of polite chat and the exchange of pleasantries.

Igor pressed against Elspeth and she felt him through the thick cloth of her dress. She could feel his prick under her hand, stiff and urgent in its need and her own tide of craving was rising to a point where she could not think of anything but sucking him in and emptying him out.

"You are very forward," she panted as she tried to disentangle herself.

He looked over his shoulder and realised that they were alone in the small drawing room. Conversation and polite laughter wafted in through the door and his hand rose to cover her breasts.

"I do not notice you rejecting me or complaining..." he panted as his hand turned the handle of the door that they were leaning against.

"No, no! I think that..." said Elspeth, but at that point the door behind her back opened and they almost fell into the darkness.

The room behind was a servant stairway and was dimly lit by single candles at each floor of the tall house. Igor closed the door behind them and assayed a kiss on her lips. For a moment she tried to resist the urge and her hand sought the handle of the exit through which they had just come, but a rising level of red need filled her mind.

He took her hand and pulled her downwards. She hesitated and then allowed herself to be drawn down the stairs, towards the cellars and storage rooms that lay in the bowels of the house. They reached the bottom of the stairs and he kissed her again. His hands followed her contours and sought the wedge between her thighs as they entered into a room piled with laundry and discarded sheets.

He tried to fling her onto the mountain of linen but she twisted and put her weight to unbalance him so that they tumbled down, with her on top of his body.

"Baise moi," he panted in impolite French as his hands sought the hem of her long dress.

Elspeth at last surrendered to her frantic urge. In the darkness she could feel his heat, his sexuality, his aura of energy that beckoned for her to tap him dry. Her hands caught his wrists and pulled them above his head with a force that was beyond his strength to hold back. Then she stood over him. Her boots by his thighs, her dress covering him from chest to knees as she panted looking with feral lust at his prone body.

There followed a frantic moment of undressing as his hand fumbled under her dress and unbuttoned the flap on the front of his tight trousers. She stood over him and looked down with a light in her eyes that he misunderstood as simple lust.

"All of it! Now! I want you naked. You must be naked as the day you were born," she panted as he wriggled out of his clothes and ripped the buttons of his shirt.

Under the silk of her dress his prick stood tall as he hurriedly stripped at her command. As he turned and twisted she undid the brooch at her shoulder and pricked her thumb. Blood dripping from her hand she grasped her knickers and rent them with a single motion. A drop of blood smeared on the slick opening of her slit and mingled with the juice that dripped in anticipation of violation.

Then she lowered herself.

In the dark of shadow his prick found her sex. It poised at the entrance for a

moment as if begging permission and then he raised his hips to push into her with a single motion. Her reaction was to sit on him firmly; to push him into the inner depths of her body. Elspeth's hands ran up his body from waist to neck. She felt his strength, the muscles and the sweat of his excitement. Her nails scored downward as he heaved under her, he bucked and pushed as she leaned forward, her breasts almost spilling from the low cut dress.

A crimson lust filled her head as she fucked him and scored deep lines on his naked flesh. Her hands closed on his neck and tightened their grip. His hands grasped her wrists and tried to pull them from his throat but he was in the grip of a demoness that he had uncorked. A fiend that had more than enough strength to make his breath rasp in his throat as he was sucked into her world of agony and fear.

Elspeth felt him weaken and began her final triumphant fuck. Now that he was under her control she slowed a little to draw all of him in one violent, climactic fountain. His hands moved from her wrists and reached for her face as she put all her weight on his prick. A final push that forced the skin of his belly against the streaming mound of her cunt.

She could feel the river flowing from her slit, it was the moment of sheer glory. The climbing of the peak. He pumped into her, his strength shooting into her depths. Like a red wave in her mind the need overcame all rational thought as she clenched and gripped his cock with her cunt and milked him of every dew drop of power and vigour that his body could give.

Elspeth cried out in ecstasy and triumph. She felt him climax, not as a physical surge into her, but as a wellspring of strength unleashed into her body. Every drop, every spurt, every liquid gush gave her strength and diminished his reserves as she tore his chest to ribbons with her nails and twisted to push yet further onto the source of her strength. She had to have it all, every erg of energy that he possessed.

A last small moan issued from his lips as he stilled.

Elsbeth felt the familiar change spread through her. Like fiery warmth, a gift of renewal, it rippled through her from the depths of her cunt to the pink tips of her breasts. It was his unwilling gift, her lust was assuaged.

She stood, still shaking from the moment of power and looked down at the blood that welled from her stricken prey. In her moment of wild climax she had shredded him with her nails, ripping that firm flesh, exposing the muscle of his chest. His face was gouged as if a puma had sharpened its claws on his skull.

Elsbeth looked down and saw not just the ruin of the man who she had sucked the life from. She saw the ruin of her plans, the result of her uncontrollable strength and lust for his essence. There was no way to escape the result of her passion! There were no powerful friends to help her cover this murder; no possible way to rescue her carefully laid plans for the future.

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In a small room in Charmaine's house, in the slight light of the moon that spread its soft light, Elsbeth gathered her possessions and stripped off her bloodied dress. She tossed clothes into a single bag and checked the gold coins that would pay her passage from England to the Continent.

She pulled on a simple black riding dress and picked up a small folder of documents. With a last hurried glance around she tossed the bag onto the



adjoining roof of the ground floor kitchen and climbed over the sill to follow it.

In the darkness of the quiet street she hurried away from the place where they would expect to find her and walked into the night. A stables, a ferry from Dover and she would be far from the scene of her crime before it ever occurred to the authorities that she would flee so fast and sure for the haven of anonymity of France.

By her abandoned bed, under the bloody dress that spread its pale silk stained with the blood of her victim lay a book. Forgotten in the rush to escape, abandoned by its owner, the fruits of her research lay waiting to be discovered by her shocked English girlfriend.

## Chapter 4

## *New York 2012*

Elspeth checked out of the hotel carrying just the one slim bag that she had brought from the auction house. It was important to sever any connection to her purchase of the book at auction and she tossed a small bag containing her temporary identity into the bin at the entrance of the hotel.

She hailed a cab and directed the driver to the airport.

The cab slid into the chaos of the New York traffic as Elspeth settled down to investigate the item that had cost so much risk and effort to obtain.

The book was in a soft bag that protected it from casual accident. She pulled the drawstrings open and slid the leather bound volume into her hands. The cover was strange to her touch. The product of some Victorian restorer who had deemed the original to be unsuitable or too worn to be valuable. Still, the touch of the soft leather was reassuring to her fingertips as she explored it and finally decided that it was not out of place. Unfamiliar, but well crafted.

Elspeth opened the 'Ars Satanica' at the frontispiece in the poor light of the taxi and heaved a small sigh of satisfaction. There was the familiar woodcut and the florid introduction, just as she had remembered it. The design that could have been a small Holbein, but was inferior in detail. She read the words written underneath, the strange mixture of learned Latin and French that filled all the pages of this tome.

'Of the provenance and destruction of demons of satanic nature,' it began in dog German-Latin. 'Their sins and vigour's, rituals and powers made clear. The ways that they might be called to a sorcerer and then banished to the infernos from whence they come. The costs and losses that are incurred by their summoning and the powers that they infer to the commanders of their infernal services.'

She turned the page and rediscovered the lists of spells and rituals that the book contained. Diagrams and esoteric diagrams. The Gothic printing, unclear and badly set by the printer, made reading a slow and patient business. The strange mixture of archaic languages that gave it a demonic charm. The pages were foxed and marked with slight brown stains of age that had increased since the last time that she had had the book in her hands, though the paper felt fresh under her fingertips.

Then there were her notes. Drawn in milk on the surface of the paper all those years ago, soon she would be in a place of quiet where she could reveal them and refresh her memory to renew the work that she had begun three hundred years before.

Elsbeth needed to change.

She had to control those blind urges, the need to fall into a frenzy of lust, the uncontrollable desires that swept all rational thought from her Brian when she fed on the strength of her victims. Often, she chose the means and timing of her lust, but more often she lost self-control. As months passed in continence and she aged years in mere months of earthly time, a need grew to become irrepressible lust until at last she destroyed and fed on her prey without thought and control.

It was not the extended life that she wished to impede, it was not the need to

draw strength from a man's soul and body, it was her absolute need to impose control and become the mistress of her own fate in those moments of craving that she desired.

Soon she would be back in her small isolated cottage in Scotland. A remote place on the moors that suited her perilous mental state. A place where she could rest and research in absolute quiet. A place where she could recover her train of thought from all those years ago and find the ritual that would place herself, the demon from the nether dark, under her own control.

Elsbeth would become the summoning sorceress, the one with the power, as she summoned herself and then laid a geas upon herself, a spell that would place Elsbeth the demon under her own control. Like a jinn who used up his own wishes.

She looked up and surveyed the traffic for a moment before turning back to her thoughts.

A recursive spell, a casting that was a new idea in the annals of esoterica. A summoning in which she became the mistress with a slave and that slave was herself!

She smiled at her use of modern computer programming terms to describe a medieval concept. How much she had learned in the last hundred years. Programming a machine was so similar to raising sorcery! Modern and ancient, sorcery and deconstructionist logic would be combined to create a new category of demoness. One bound by the rules of post enlightenment logic in a world of computers that were almost sentient and secular beliefs that denied the esoteric roots of philosophy.

She sighed contentedly at the fact that she had finally found a logical course of action and then continued to read. Elspeth turned to the page where she had spilled wine over her hidden notes all those years ago in Dresden.

There it was; that almost brown stain that revealed a word or two of her thoughts lifetimes ago. She bent over the page to make out the hand written words that were a ghost of her past thoughts and her brow furrowed in puzzlement.

Her fingers explored the texture of the paper and she held the book to catch the light from the cab window.

This was all wrong!

The words were in her flowing script, the Gothic letters on the paper were correct, but it was not just that rough print that was layered onto the paper. The stain and the script were printed too! Possibly...

She felt the beginnings of a deep doubt as she turned the book in her hands. Frantically she checked page after page to find that all of the text that she remembered so well was faithfully reproduced, but that, without a doubt, on very close inspection, the pages were lithographic reproductions and not the original text. Even the brown stains of age were added to the pages in printed form, the book was a forgery!

Forgery in that it was not her original book! The printed words were valuable beyond compare, but all those hidden notes were lost, all the unseen content had not been reproduced. The book had been worth the money, the effort and the risk, but much of the purpose of her trip had been foiled.

A small gasp made the cabdriver make a comment.

"Are you alright, lady?" he asked.

"Fine, fine," she answered vaguely, "I just realised something."

"Well, don't worry about catching your flight; I know a quick cut through the backstreets."

"It's not that. I just realised that something that I thought; was not true."

"I get that with my wife. She tells me that I don't bring in enough money with this taxi job, but I realised a year ago that time with her is worth more than any extra money from working longer hours!"

"Time is important, it's all I've got."

"Count yourself lucky, lady," he said with a chuckle. "It's what most people need more of. Time."

Elsbeth closed the book and slipped it into her case. Somehow, at some time, the pages of her book had been taken and copied. Faithfully! Every stain and mark, every foxed edge and smear and then the pages had been replaced. That meant that the original rested somewhere in a collection. No one would attempt a forgery so complex and complete if they intended not to tend for the original.

A sudden thought took her and she reopened the book on the inside back cover. The place where libraries mark their volumes as they are loaned. There was a slip of paper, a printed form, pasted into the book. A list of dates and numbers that showed when and to whom the book had been loaned. The last entry was in nineteen eighty six. Next to the date, a six digit number that was the borrower's identifying signature. The clue to allow the last reader to be found.

If the membership list still existed.

If an entry from thirty years ago could be traced.

If!



## Chapter 5

## *Scotland and London 2012*

"Inspector Dresden, Janice," said the man behind the desk. "I need those reports on the hotel death and the expenses sheet for the forensic team as soon as you have officially closed the investigation."

"Sir, the investigation, in my opinion, should not be closed for the moment."

He looked up at her from his desk and picked up the file that she had passed him the day before.

"And, in your opinion, why should the case not be closed?"

"Because of a feeling that I have that this is in fact murder, or at least intentional at the moment of death. So manslaughter is on the cards."

"A man dies in a hotel room. He bears the marks of sexual violence and it seems from the forensic report that he was partially restrained. However, we are sure that it was a woman who did this, possibly an older woman as you report. I cannot imagine that the victim could fail to throw a woman with whom he was having sex, off himself and come to die in a position other than lying on his back when his heart attack occurred despite the fact that his arms were affixed to the bedpost. The forensic post-mortem also says here," he pointed to the form, "that cause of death is certainly a heart attack, almost certainly brought on by the sex and not either drugs or hypoxia."

"That's all true, sir. But we do not have the woman and we are not very far along with finding her. She is the only material witness that counts in this case. Secondly we are talking about a man who was in the peak of health. He worked out at the gym; he could lift eighty kilos for three hundred presses. He was as strong as a horse and his heart was in perfect condition. It seems as though he was a man who delighted in having sexual relationships with older woman, rich older women. I have spoken to a doctor about heart attacks brought on by sexual activity and she tells me that nearly all deaths are before orgasm, in the stress leading up to climax. Never has she heard of a case in which the attack happened after orgasm in the period of respite that follows soon afterwards. That means, with all respect, that his death is at least suspicious and needs further investigation."

"Do you believe that only the woman and the victim were in the room at the time of his death? That she had help?"

"That is one of my lines of enquiry , sir. Another is that there have been three similar cases in the last year. One in Edinburgh, one in Newcastle and the most recent in St Albans. I have ordered the case files through channels and expect them to arrive this afternoon. The film from the hotel security is being checked as we speak so there may be answers there as well. Also, given the spread of these incidents, I have put in an Interpol enquiry to cover France, Germany and the Low Countries. DNA will take two weeks, Sir."

The Police Commander sighed. This was the last thing he needed. Some sort of crazed female serial sex killer who was on his patch. The papers would have a field day and there would be such pressure from the Home Office that it would be impossible to complete his vital review of the bureaucracy in the force. Then there were the huge costs of a countrywide investigation!

"Sir, I know and understand the sort of problems a case like this can bring. That's why I asked for the case files informally and have not mentioned the links to any other officers on the case. Just give me a couple of days and I will report back to you in private before you make a decision."

"Well, that's some relief. Well done! Discretion is the watchword. OK then, follow it up and report back to me on Monday. Don't forget the expenses though; I want them on Monday too!"

This was a case that needed to be buried...

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The book beckoned. Despite the fact that it was a copy, it was the only connection with all the work that she had done over a period of fifty years as she sought the solution to command her lust for life and channel it into a controllable need.

Fifty years work, notes on the ritual and passing thoughts that had seemed passageways to opportunity. Most off all the half completed diagram of her own summoning was lost. All of that was absent even though the raw material of her research was in her hands. It mattered not that the book was a copy; it was the additions that she had made that were the key.

With a sigh she flicked the cover closed and stared at the object of her frustration. Of course it would be somewhat easier now to repeat her research, but it was still a high wall to climb. There was, of course, a shortcut she could take. Trace the last person who had used the book in nineteen eighty five and

then reclaim the original pages.

As she mused and turned the idea in her head another advantage of that thought settled in her mind. There were just two copies of 'Ars Satanica' left. The copy that she had in her hand and the original pages that the thief had stolen. Recovering the original added to her safety, it placed all of the copies of the original in her hands. That had to be enough motive in itself.

'Perhaps that is reason enough to recover it,' she thought as she watched the snow flutter to the ground outside her small cottage.

For the next few months she would be secreted in her hideaway. In that time she could prepare and restart her research, in case her search came to nothing. Then she could venture into the world again with real purpose.

*'No point in rushing into all of this,' she thought as she sat down at the desk and flipped the cover of her laptop open. 'A bit of quiet contemplation will be good for me!'*

In the back of her head was the knowledge that three months without feeding her youth would see her emerge from her cocoon with a feverish lust to renew herself. That her hunger would possibly betray her; but that had always been the risk and maybe that time was soon to pass. Perhaps soon she would be able to slip into an endless life that was no longer punctuated by rage-filled need?

The mobile Internet reception here was already hopelessly slow; with the storm that was building outside it was barely possible. So she took a pen and paper and started to work on the 'Ars Satanica' with a listless energy.

There was a hollow knock on the door.

With a sigh she stood and opened it. There stood a young man, dressed in walking gear, a huge back pack hanging from his hands. The background to this apparition was a savage wind that blew in the encroaching darkness that now covered all the detail of the small farmhouse and its outbuildings.

Elsbeth waved her hand to welcome her unexpected guest and said: "Not a good night to be on the Heatherstone Moor. Foolish in fact, very foolish."

"I know," he replied. "I lost my way..."

"Not the first, I'll warrant," she replied as he entered. "I am Elspeth, Elspeth French, or at least that is the name that you can call me by!"

"Hello, I am Brian. I hesitate to impose on you but I wonder if you could offer me a place to doss down for the night. I'm not sure that my tent will hold out in this weather."

A gust of wind shook the shutters and made the door rattle.

"The lonely woman succours the stricken, lost traveller as the storm gathers in the northern sky," she said as she helped him lower his pack to the ground and strip off his coat.

Brian nodded his agreement and wondered what this woman was doing alone living in one of the most remote parts of the moors.

‘Sometimes I think that I live a charmed life!’ thought Elspeth as she weighed up her guest. He was ideal...

She smiled at her guest and watched him strip of his wet coverings.

‘Delicious,’ was the word that passed through her mind as she realised that maybe the stay was not going to be so boring after all!

## Chapter 6



## *New York and Edinburgh 1986*

Harold allowed the doors to close behind him and then smiled at the pretty librarian who sat behind the glass screen. He passed his card through the small opening in the window and waited while she tapped his number into the computer. Of course security was tight; the books and pictures stored in the library were worth a fortune.

‘All the same,’ he thought, ‘this is really just a little overdone. Like getting into a bank vault, really.’

“That’s fine, Mr Hillsbrough,” said the young woman as she passed the card back to him after checking his bona-fides.

The inner door slid open and Harold was finally back in his personal Aladdin’s Cave. It was a visit that he had been preparing for a year now. Like most honest people who contemplate a serious theft or murder, he had obsessed over every detail. The amateur’s fixation on not being caught, of attending to every eventuality.

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First of all, a full year ago, when he had arrived back in Edinburgh, he had inspected his pictures of the ‘Ars Esoterica Satanica’. The very title, that translated from Latin as ‘Procedures of Arcane SaTanitm’ was not really appropriate, he decided. It had little to do with the normal satanic rituals that

were mostly just inversions of Christian ceremonial. This book, on the other hand, was more of a manual of ritual that concerned demons than devils.

A fine distinction! Devils were the enemies of the holy Catholic Church; demons were the old gods and spirits in the Christian world made anew in the mould of medieval credulity.

So... collections of items that were needed, and ingredients of recipes of magic that were often obscure or were euphemistic cover for materials that were plainly almost unobtainable or perhaps considered beyond repulsive. Even more important from the summoner's point of view were the shapes and diagrams that described the powers and characters of the demons to be summoned and how to create new ones by a process of esoteric mathematics and geometry.

His interest was piqued by the catalogue of demons that could be called, their properties and powers. It listed them as though it was just a casual laundry list, but obviously the writer had believed that they were real. Still, they were a fascinating list, creatures of nightmare that inhabited the shells of the men and women that they had suborned.

Harold flicked through the pages on his projector and noticed the small details that might not be apparent to a casual observer. The setting of the type went through three phases, as if three different typesetters had been involved. They all used different spacers between the words and the typefaces themselves appeared to change.

He came to the page with the wine spill and noted the difficult-to-read hand written script that was in the margin. Where the stain finished, so did the writing. The writing was Latin, in a flowing hand 'Vidi rem ter'. That could mean, 'I saw it thrice' depending on the context. He frowned at the way that the next word

started in a flowing loop of that precise hand, but who knew what that word was?

‘That’s the problem with a copy,’ he thought. ‘If I had the original I could raise the hidden notes and find what had been seen three times.’

That was where the plan had begun!

The project was to make a perfect copy of the book from the photographs that he had illicitly taken and then swap them into the covers of the book. To steal the grimoire. His original intent, to study the book and write his own commentary, was forgotten as he worked on the perfect copy. Paper, binding, ink and age had all to be matched exactly. A difficult task that required patience and learning new skills. He had to learn how to transfer his slides onto metal plates and apply layer after layer of colour to build up the texture and shades on the pages.

A year later he entered the New York Keller Art Library with a block of wood under his clothes that matched the size of the inside pages of the book. He would test their security and then exchange the pages in a move that he had practiced on old books for a month.

Harold’s heart was beating fast as he sat and ordered another book. A collection of Martin Schongauer’s prints. For two hours he sat and sweated, the honest man who has not yet made his planned move into illegality. Finally he returned the book and left with a comment that he would be back tomorrow.

‘What the fuck am I doing?’ he thought to himself. ‘For the sake of some notes by a deluded medieval scholar I am risking my position in the University,

hazarding jail in America and risking everything that I have...’

But, the next day he was back.

This time with the pages of his copy under his coat. After a night of worry he put his plan into effect with seemingly casual efficiency. A razor cut the leaves from the original, whilst the new pages filled the covers as if they had always been a part of the book. The original pages slipped into a plastic bag and he was out of the library within an hour, most of which had been spent looking at the pages that he had made himself.

Until the plane landed in Edinburgh, Harold felt as though he had been holding his breath all the way. He passed through immigration and stepped onto the pavement outside the grey buildings.

With a sigh of relief he stepped into the taxi and finally relaxed.

Somehow the theft had become an end in itself, the research, the writing of his book, the analysis of the text. All had taken a back seat to making the perfect facsimile and then creating a plan of action to steal the original.

Now, in his office, the thick brick of paper in his hand he was almost at a loss as what to do with it! He flicked through the pages and tried to imagine all of the people who had scanned these words, but imagination was not his strong suit and all he could think of was monkish figures reading the misguided words of a SaTanitt and demon summoned as they imagined that they would gain power over others by reading the spells within.

Of course there were the notes that needed illuminating. The text that needed translating, his book that needed to be written. Classes to be taught, lectures to be given, papers to mark and peer review. Then there was the translation service that was offered at a pound a word. After all there were not that many experts in ancient Swiss German and Medieval Dog Latin!

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He sat back and sighed.

He looked up at the motes of dust that drifted in the bright sunlight that streamed in at the window and then turned back to the pages that he had forced to reveal their secret notes. The one that he was looking at now was so bizarre that his roughly translated copy seemed almost laughable.

‘The first is of the placenta of non-born child. It binds the spirit, seals the will and volition of the caller’s over that of the spirit that has been drawn like a moth to the call. Quicksilver and iron bind the power to within the circle of power. This is shown by Abraham ben Samuel Abulafia to be the case. The second is the invocation of control that is Kabbalah, it unlocks the seals of Solomon. This is attested by Albertus Magnus of the Bavarian Illuminati. The third is yet to be found, but Nicolas Flamel is to be the source, his transliteration of The Testament of Solomon must be mine deep well of knowledge...’

A chill raised the hair on the back of Harold’s head. This had been believed, this had been acted upon. Someone had used this manuscript to try to summon demons! It all seemed so foolish in the bright light of the sun, but he could imagine the studio of the sorcerer as he enacted his invocation to the scream of a

victim that had been taken from the muddy streets of Paris.

He shuddered with empathy and stood to look out of the window at the modern academic life that passed his window. Students and lecturers who learned their modern science and all believed it as much as the writer of those notes.

There was of course a problem. He could see that clearly now...

One that had possessed his thoughts since he had started to uncover the hidden text. How could he use this? How could he reference it in his book or a paper when the source would reveal his theft? How petty his imagined book looked now, a history of ritual magic and bogus alchemists that would expose the medieval mind-set to ridicule. Now that the reality stared him in the face he realised that his book had been nothing but a boost for his ego, a farrago of literary shit.

He placed the pages, still stripped of a cover in the wooden box and locked it before slipping the box into its nest behind his collection of Livy on the bookshelf.

## Chapter 7

## ***Carthago 146 BC and Panormus 138 BC***

Helena woke with a start; a sudden noise had woken her, making her jump from the mat on the floor. They were coming, those Romans! In her dreams and in reality. They were attempting another assault on the long land walls. Sooner or later they would break into the city and then the fires and terror would begin. Stones constantly fell from the sky, crashing onto the few remaining roofs, splashing their tiles in a mass of razor splinters at every impact. Shouts of alarm came from that direction as sleeping soldiers ran to the walls to reinforce the men who had night duty.

These sounds filled the air for a few minutes, muffled by the distance, and then died away again. Fading to the occasional calls of the moving guards who called in Carthaginian to reassure themselves that no Romans had managed to infiltrate their defences.

To open the gates of Carthage from within...

Helen's mattress was one of a whole row that had been laid along the long wall of the temple of Tanit, just by the Byrsa hill. Each was occupied by a single girl and watched over by a priestess who slept across the doorway of the room in her laziness. The priestess had sworn to protect the girls from male interference and knowledge of their fate in the Tophet of Tanit.

A duty that she mostly shirked...



Soon several more of the young maidens would be tossed into the flames as the priests of Carthage did their part to hold the Roman wolf at bay. The screech of bronze as the door to the brazen bull was pulled open, the chants that concealed the screams of fear from the attending children and then that terrible sound as the rose decked girls were consigned to the flames of Tanit, a Goddess of blood and pain. Each sacrifice would bring help from the Goddess a little closer until at last she threw a plague from her deep fastness and slew the Roman army that was encamped just a mile from the city wall.

Helen walked carefully in the darkness through the maze of straw filled bags and made her way to where the sleeping Priestess guarded the opening into the temple precincts, like a dog stretched in twitching slumber, Daeis was the worst of all those woman who guarded the sacrificial lambs. Stealing their food, hitching her skirts for every passing merchant with a bone in his cock and beating them savagely for disturbing her afternoon sleep.

The small girl, barely eight years of age, stepped over the recumbent woman with great care. An exaggerated step over her legs, Helen crossed the threshold into the outside world.

“Daeis, Daeis, Daeis!” shouted one of the other small girls who had watched Helena try to escape the dormitory. “Miss Daeis, Helena is running away. She said that the Goddess did not need her, she said that she hates you!”

Daeis woke slowly.

Her eye pinned the small girl, who was on the wrong side of her, to the ground. As she did so she picked up the wicked switch that she had sent one of the older girls to cut for her that day.

“Helena, come to me now to be punished!”

Like a rat in the gaze of a cobra, Helena took a small step towards Daeis and then hesitated for a moment. Suddenly she was gripped by more than fear of this priestess that supposedly stood in for her mother. She turned and ran, fleet footed, her toes barely touched the stone cobbled precinct as she flew from her tormentor.

The girls all laughed to see the overweight and lazy Daeis pick up her skirts and lope after Helena. A lumbering cow in pursuit of a deft mink!

But, the gate was closed and Helena had reached the end of her flight. There was no escape from the blundering bovine that penned its prey in the corner of the gateway and at last held her victim by her hair.

Puffing with the strain of the sudden exercise, Daeis dragged her prey behind her by the hair as she shouted wild and ill-advised threats: “You will burn, in terror and pain. I will have you sent as next to the brazen Bull you horrid little minx. The ceremony of the birth of Tanit is coming and I will get you chosen for the knife and fire for your punishment!”

With a heave she almost threw Helena into the dormitory as she shouted: “And the rest of you little wastrels can get back to sleep. You’ll all be burning in Tanit’s flames so soon!”

Helen found that another girl had taken her bed. She curled up on the floor,

without tears. There was no way that she was going to let that fat cow do anything to her; she would escape to the Romans first!

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Dressed in red.

The world was dressed in red.

The red of blood, the ochre of menses, the crimson of fear and the scarlet of the bloody setting sun. The sun was setting over the dusty lands of the west. It took the colour of a dust storm that was gathering in the distance and then it slid to a burgundy haze that swelled and shimmered as it touched the horizon.

The promise of the slatternly priestess had come true and Helen stood as the other female priestesses and the neutered priests of Tanit fulfilled their ritual. There was the thin wail of the infant in the arms of the chief priestess that somehow pierced the fog of all that noise. Wood cased in leather clashed on the bronze headed drums and a beat was struck up as the door to the statue of the giant bull was opened. Helena felt its heat on her cheek; she saw the white haze inside, the pull of evil hunger that filled the belly of the bull.

As the drum beat got louder and the cymbals and the tinkle of sistrums became insistent, Helena thought that she heard another noise. The beat of a drum in her head and the distant cries of soldiers.

The chief priestess prepared the knife; she held the infant screaming in one hand while she raised the pure copper knife in the other. A tumble of words in Phoenician and then a single cry, a phrase of power.

The knife slashed and there was sudden silence in the courtyard. The babe cried no more, the single jingling notes of sistrums that marked time and uproar of shouts and clashes in the distance. Blood cascaded onto Helena, it ran from wrist to elbow and soaked into her red robe like rain into the desert.

Screams echoed in the courtyard as the door was flung open and several Carthaginian Guardsmen took position to defend the holy temple of Tanit. Priestesses screamed and the castrated priests ran in confusion as if they could find a way to escape the Romans who had been lusting after their blood in three years of violent siege.

Only Helena and the chief priestess were still, as the first clash of arms took place in the crowded doorway. The priestess held the dying babe over Helena and allowed the last of the blood to drip. Then she tossed the baby into the flames of the furnace and uttered words that had not been uttered for a thousand years.

Not since Sargon the Great had swept Babylon by fire had those words been used. Now they echoed around the stone, splitting the tiles and making dust rain to the ground. She bent towards the unmoving Helena and stabbed her shoulder with the knife before he uttered a cry that may have been invocation, or might have been pure anguish. A last laugh and the maddened priestess ran the two steps to throw herself into the furnace!

Only Helena saw the priestess close the door from the inside. Only Helena saw her smile as the heat suddenly bloomed and filled the brazen bull. Only Helena

saw her lick her lips in lust as the door closed.

The door to a Semitic nether-hell on earth.

Daeis lay in the blood soaked dust.

A single Roman pilum pierced her sack-like body. It nailed her by chance to the ground in the exact spot where she always slept at the exit to the dormitory. Behind her were the scattered remains of the children who had yet to be sacrificed. Slaughtered in the mindless fury of exultant Roman soldiers.

Blood splashed the walls as the sun finally set below the horizon. The ritual was complete.

Helen stood unharmed.

Her shoulder ached where the knife had bitten her, but the wound was becoming but a thin scar that was fading like the ruddy daylight on the day that Carthage was put to the sack. In the midst of the chaos and drifting smoke, screams and clashes of steel she was an island of pure calm. Liquid fire up to the brim, like a small beaker under the surge of a waterfall, her cup flowed over and filled her with strange thoughts and struggles that merged with her soul.

The Lamia invaded her every atom; merged and slid into every part of her consciousness, became substance and reality as she stood, forlorn and alone in a swirl of violence, domination, and murder. That part of Tanit the Goddess that

inflicted everlasting lust infiltrated her being and clouded her in its protective grasp.

Helena became Lamia, Lamia became Helena.

The two were one, but not yet ripe.

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Panormus was no Roman town, but its citizens were none the less Romans! It lay nestled in the cup of hills and wine dark sea with its Greek Temples and Carthaginian fortifications. But Romans guarded it, possessed it and infiltrated its narrow streets. High walls were topped by triangular revetments and carved figures of ancient gods and heroes, a reminder of its recent Punic past.

Helena picked up the amphora and hoisted it onto her shoulder with a practiced swing before setting off for the small villa that her master owned just outside the high walls of the ancient town.

For well over ten years since she had become part of the spoils of Carthage she had been a slave of Marcus Hostilius Secundus, retired centurion, proud citizen of Rome. A man who had made his fortune in war as Primus Pilus of the first Consul's Legion in the last Punic War. A man who had rescued her from the flames of the falling city as the legionaries ran amok and killed every man, woman, child and animal within the walls. A soldier who had put aside the sword to retire amongst the placid olive groves of a provincial Sicilian town.

As a child Helena had carried the candles and lamps, washed clothes and cleaned the pots in the kitchen. Now as an adult she was a firm part of the household, a quiet young woman who had become the personal maid of the ex-centurion's mother. The life was not easy, but, on the other hand it was not hard. Marcus was a considerate master, a man who expected service, but allowed his slaves to live personal lives in the security of his ownership.

The jar was heavy and full of precious oil, but Helena carried it with assurance back to the small villa and passed it to the major domo to be warmed in the sun before use. Her working day was done. Perhaps Marcus' mother might request a reading before sleeping or some other small task needed doing, but for now her time was her own.

She left the small town that nestled by the bay and headed south. Helena climbed up the slope and into the straight rows of olive trees. She sat in her usual place, on the bole of a giant gnarled tree. The view over the town enchanted her, filling her with placid joy as well as sadness. She felt a mood of melancholy take her in its arms and a single tear coursed its way down her cheek.

Distant sounds wafted up through the warm air as she sat and reflected on her lonely life. Soon she would have to find a husband, approved of course by her master, and settle down to a life of service and marriage. Her children would grow and become citizens of this small town and she would grow old.

That was all there was.

A small twinge of some thought passed her mind and unsettled her. It took her back to the vision of the priestess who had sacrificed herself in the white heat of that brazen bull of Tanit all those years ago.

The fleeting thought passed and she pulled the small bronze mirror from the folds of her tunic. For a minute she played with the mirror and shone the reflected light of the sun as a spot on the grey bark of the tree before staring into it, at her face, as if trying to divine her thoughts from the expressions that passed her features.

A grey hair!

No, there were more!

Her hand went to the hair that flowed over her ears and pulled them into view. Tinges of grey nestled amongst the black of those silky strands, the hair of a forty year old woman on the head of a twenty year old. Putting the precious mirror back in a fold of her tunic she pulled the locks into her close vision and inspected them. As she did so she noticed her hand. The skin was dry and slightly wrinkled. She pinched the skin and watched it slowly settle back.

Her hand lowered, a strange feeling of intense emotion filled her. It pushed the melancholy to one side, brushing it away with an iron hand, replacing it with a need that she could not contain. A need that had no form, but was a purpose for which she had no word.

In the distance she saw the road that wound its way from the town. Handcarts full of the season's olives were laboriously being dragged through the gates and all along its length. An occasional horseman made his plodding way and a few shabby stalls outside the entrance to Panormus did fair trade in cups of watered down wine.



The hours passed and the sun slowly edged its way until it was just poised over the mountains that surrounded the town. Helena sat, as if in a trance and tried to focus on that emotion that had filled her with such a strange mixture of rage and calm.

From the slowing traffic that moved below her vantage point a single man strode from the road with purpose in his step. As he climbed towards her she recognised his step, the way that he walked, his bearing as well as the faded tunic that covered his frame.

Livius, the wine steward. A man who had made no secret of his interest in Helena in the last year despite the fact that he was married and had a slut mistress by the harbour! Everyone in Marcus' household knew where Helena spent the hours when she did not have to work, but they let her have her peace.

As he closed the distance she sighed and stood. Perhaps there was urgent need of her, perhaps she had to read the Illiad to her mistress, Marcus' mother? Had she had overstayed her solitude? A quick glance at the sun told her that she had not.

"What is it?" she asked Livius. "It is not sundown yet."

Livius climbed the final few strides to her and smiled.

"I just wondered what it was about this vantage point that so absorbs you," he said in a jovial voice.

"The privacy," she answered with a small downturn of her mouth. "That and the view."

It was not a good idea to anger the steward with an ironic comment; after all he was the man who decided many of her allotted tasks.

"A pretty young sylph like you should not be all alone," he said as he stood before her. "You should be in the household amazing us all with your beauty."

"Distasteful to me as the gates of hell, is he who, hiding one thing in his heart, utters another." said Helena with a small smile as she quoted Homer.

"Am I that obvious? So transparent that you can quote the poets to reveal my needs?"

"Homer is the poet not just one of many," she answered.

Helena stepped back, but Livius followed her movement. His hands stretched towards her and she stepped back again. In doing so she tripped and fell to the ground backwards.

"Just a taste of you, nothing more," he said as he stood over her. "Just a sip of that delicious nectar..."

She could see his need tenting his tunic with lust as she tried to push herself into a sitting position, but he climbed on to her and parted his tunic to show her what she could await if he had his way. His prick stood large, springing from the bush of his groin with urgent need.

"I am not your slave," said Helena as she twisted and tried to escape him.

"No, but I am your master," he cried.

His hands pulled at the cloth of her robe and pulled it over her thighs to reveal the object of his lust. Neat lips surrounded by a haze of black bush, subtlety tinged with grey. In his urgency he did not stop to consider the strange circumstance that the slit of a young woman's lips should be pillowed by a mature woman's pubic hair.

"No, Livius, do not do this," she cried as he bore down on her.

His prick loitered at the entrance to her with intent and then plunged into her cunt with a stroke of his hips. He felt her virgin wall tear and she screamed in pain. His hands caught her wrists and held them to the ground, cutting her fingertips on the broken olive twigs that lay strewn about them.

As she screamed and fought, he mastered her and took his pleasure. His eyes took in her large breasts and his hands were tempted to hold them. This was better than he had imagined, plundering her beauty for his gratification. Better by far! How he had waited for this moment to take this pretty virgin for a ride on the end of his cock. His right hand came up and gripped her breast with a painful hold as he felt himself approach his climax.

Helena's freed hand plunged to where they were joined and tried to push him off. Drops of blood from her cut fingers smeared the hair of his sex and mingled with the slick oil of her cunt as she cried out under his assault.

She fell into the grip of an emotion that was like fire. It burned her and gave her strength as he plunged in and out of her sex; pushing to the hilt and then sliding out, almost to the point of exit. Her left arm pushed against him and forced his weight up as her right found its way round his back and circled his body with a grip like iron.

He gasped in anticipation of orgasm as she bent him backward, pushing up with her left and holding him with her right. Bending him as he pumped his seed into her; pushing him with a strength that was beyond her frame.

Livius gasped in agony and struggled to get free, tried to withdraw from her body. His hands squeezed her breast with savage force and pummelled her face with strong blows as he was bent back, further and further. Curved to the point of rupture.

Then, a noise like a wet branch breaking.

He cried in agony as his back broke, the bones slipping asunder, the muscles tearing. His grip loosened and he flopped like a broken doll onto the hard ground, flailing like a fish that has been tossed from the nets onto the deck of a ship .

Helena felt a rush of strength.

It filled her head with singing and ecstasy as she rolled him off and watched his dying moments. Like a rush of cleansing water, the renewal bathed her in unseen light and swept from her shimmering skin though her body as she too climaxed. Beyond pleasure and joy it was as if she was reborn in orgasm as her rapist thrashed on the ground.

She looked down at the dying Livius and she watched engrossed in the inelegant thrashings of his death throes.

Her robe fell to the ground and she stood over him like the goddess Diana over her hunted prey. Panting with passing lust and crowned in achievement.

Between her thighs the bush of her sex was pure oily black, the skin of her hands tight and fresh in the first bloom of youth, spidery lines at the creases of her eyes smoothed and the grey faded from her long tresses.

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A small glint of gold flashed, as a coin fell from a fold in the stricken man's tunic. It rolled a hand span in the dust and finally settled. Helena bent to look what luck and fortune had decided for her future. The face of the goddess looked up at her, the goddess Tanit, stamped on the small Carthaginian Shekel that had found her in Roman Panormus.

The message was clear in her mind in her moment of ecstasy.

That was her fate. To be a destroyer of men!

The Lamia had arrived!

## Chapter 8

## *Edinburgh 2000*

A middle aged man walked the length of the suburban street.

Pools of light like fell from the lamps like orange pollen. He paused to stop under a lamp and lit a cigarette. The street was utterly quiet. At three in the morning all of the inhabitants were ensconced in their beds, secure in their homes, secure in their middle class neighbourhood.

Jason Smith was seemingly waiting for nothing as he smoked! Waiting to see if a car would pass, a light would go on or a single late returning reveller would pass his position outside the house that he planned to rob. Nothing arrived. Finally the cigarette was just a flattened stub on the pavement and he was satisfied that all was quiet.

He passed over the low wall and crossed the ornamental flowers to find the best route to the back of the house. He checked the rickety gate and slipped a knife through the gap to lift the latch. The side of the house, a narrow passageway was totally dark so he waited a minute to allow his eyes to adjust to the lack of light.

Stepping over the abandoned rake that lay on the ground he made his way into the back garden.

One by one he checked each window until he was forced to admit that the best opportunity lay in the skylight to the kitchen that was open just a few inches. He found a small wooden seat and placed it under the window before climbing up to



lean into the skylight and unlatch the main opening.

The house was quiet as Jason stood in his bare feet in the kitchen. What he was looking for would be in some sort of office, or perhaps stored in the loft. Some sort of container or perhaps on a bookshelf.

Certainly it was valuable...

For a moment he pondered and then slipped into the front room.

One wall was taken up by bookshelves. Paperbacks, hardbacks and ornaments. Starting at the top he scanned the books and paid attention to each one carefully. Every now and again he reached up and pulled a book down to investigate it. He leafed through quickly and then carefully replaced each book as he checked to see if the contents corresponded with the item that he was looking for. Half an hour later, Jason was satisfied that the book he sought was not concealed the others. One thing, however, made him smile with satisfaction.

So many of these books indicated that their owner was the right man. Latin, Greek, historical books mingled with those that had occult content. Pale copies of the originals, occasionally translated, some facsimile and one or two of the more common books on the subject in the original. But, these were already in Jason's copious library and had little real value to the thief.

His attention passed to the corner of the room where a computer sat on a desk. The books piled haphazardly nearby were obviously not of interest, but the desk was a possible repository for a copy of the 'Ars Satanica'.

One by one he tried the drawers and doors of the desk and found just collected notes and writing materials. Floppy disks and hand written notes. Nothing of interest. Just one drawer was locked so he slipped a paper knife along the top edge of the opening and found himself frustrated by an old fashioned bolt.

It would take a few seconds to force it, but the noise would awaken the inhabitants of the house.

Finally he decided to risk the noise. This was the last place that he could search profitably this night, so he took a screwdriver from his jacket and started to break away the wood around the lock. It splintered fairly quietly as he worked steadily.

Suddenly the light went on and he turned to see a young woman standing with a kitchen knife in her hand.

"I'm going to call the police," she said in a calm voice, "and you would be well advised to leave before I scream for help!"

Jason straightened, the screwdriver in his hand.

*'Can I silence her quickly enough?' he wondered or would he have to escape as she suggested?*

He took a step in her direction and then stopped when she raised the knife.

Her nightie showed the lines of her ripe body clearly, the pink of her nipples showing through the silk and the dark wedge between her thighs shadowed the pink silk.

"Are you letting me go?" he asked in a quiet voice.

"Better than trying to hold you until the police arrive," she said. "They are on their way..."

"I'd better go then."

He turned to the drawer and gave a savage tug on its handle. It slid open to reveal passports and documents that had been put in a secure place.

"What do you want?"

"You!"

He stepped close to the woman and dared her to use the knife. For a moment it wavered and he was pressed close to her. He could feel her breasts pressing into him and she could feel the massive hardness at his groin.

For a moment she thought that she saw a shimmer of pure lust, overwhelming

need, in his eyes and then the police siren could be heard in the distance.

His hand took her throat and squeezed.

"Where is the book, the Ars Satanica that your father copied?" he asked as he pulled her towards him.

Too late she tried to use the knife, but his other hand closed on her wrist and twisted until she dropped it to the carpet.

"What book?" she whispered.

"The one that your father copied in New York."

"Copied?" she said. "I do not know what you are talking about."

"Your father is the only man who studied the book, he must have made a copy!"

His hand let her go and she fell to the floor as if he had tossed her there. Crumpled and panting with fear she looked up at him.

"I'll find it, I'll be back sooner or later and we will discuss this further."

He bent down to her and ripped her nightie from her with a single pull. For a moment he considered taking her; the fog of lust in his mind was a rising tide that threatened to bend him to its will. Her breasts heaved temptingly, her legs were open making his need all the more urgent as human and demonic lust coloured his thoughts. He could smell her sex, that cunt that needed his cock to complete it.

Then suddenly he was gone.

Running from to the kitchen, bursting the back door with a single rush and leaping over the low fence at the bottom of the garden that separated the house from its suburban neighbours.

The police siren stopped and two policemen rushed around the back of the house, just in time to see a slight movement in the dark just a garden down the row. Another uniformed officer beat on the door shouting almost incomprehensible threats.

She gathered her torn nightie around her and opened the front door.

"Next time you'll have to drive a little faster," she said.

"We could not have driven any faster, madam!"

## Chapter 9

## *Glasgow 2012*

It was a favourite pastime.

Pastime and casual repast!

Posing as a woman who needed to dominate and crush men sexually! Lace and leather, latex and fetish, all red lipstick, nail polish and make up. An ideal cover for the Lamia-Elspeth that desired the ultimate submission from her lovers. For her it was not an act in a play, it was authentic and real. A chance to charge herself in sexual frenzy with men from whom she tore just a little of their souls each time they paid her for her attention.

A feeding frenzy where the meal gave itself to her lips willingly!

Rarely did it end in the ultimate sacrifice being rendered, the risk of discovery was just too high, but occasionally she lost that fine edge between mind and ego and a man gave his all. Her sheer strength was enough to overwhelm most men, but the chains and fetters ensured complete control.

He was here for a fourth visit. A man obsessed with the need to serve, a man who was fettered to a rough bench as she stalked him to his obvious desire. His prick stood like a small column. Petite and pulsing like a wagging finger it was scored by the marks of her nails where she had casually gripped it to almost-completion.

Elspeth stood over him; legs open to reveal her gaping sex just above his masked face. Eyes open, he stared at the swollen opening between her thighs and watched as a single drop of sweet liquid gathered and hung suspended from the revealed clitoris.

Would it drip?

It gathered and then dripped to splash on his lips as the mistress that he paid for stood over him contemplating herself in the mirrors that filled her dungeon. He tasted the almost perfumed moment and licked his lips with relish. There was no doubt that Mistress was quite different from the other women who he had served in the past. Most of them had been pale shadows of the dominatrix that he needed to fulfil his fantasies. Women who made him serve in a routine of pretended domination, women who did what he wanted. Women who uttered the words but did not mean them as the utter truths from their soul. This mistress was so very different! She did what she wanted, she left him exhausted, in a state of lassitude after a fuck that drained him almost beyond his need.

She was self-absorbed and needy, a true Mistress who took what she wanted and climaxed with a frenzy that he had never experienced in any other partner.

She stepped back and looked down into his eyes. There was no need for her to speak, her eyes told their own story. He was less than nothing; he was just a fuck that was used to gratify her. The way that she caned him with no concern for the weals that she left. She had no interest in the scratches and bruises that told the tale of her pleasure.

Now he could see her breasts. They hung, huge and well-shaped and framed her



face as she looked down on him with disdain.

"You are not allowed to fuck other women between visits," she said with a grim smile.

"I would never break that promise..."

"Do you think that I do not know when you have given yourself to another?"

He felt a shiver run through him and thought of the other woman who he had paid for a week ago.

"I am yours!"

Mistress laughed and slapped his face with a strength that made him afraid.

"I shall make sure that you are," she laughed. "When I milk your essence no other is allowed to take what is mine. For your lies you will pay double for my pleasure. No wanking, no fucking and no spilling yourself for other women, that is the rule when you belong to me."

Elspeth felt the tension in her rise, the need to take everything and allow no other to share in her rightful dues. This was something that was changing in her character. Over the centuries her victims had been, at first, those who died in a shameful sexual rage that had everything to do with the sapping of their vitality

in a whirlwind of craving and need. Now the sheer elation of feeling her youth restored was no longer the sole driving force, it was the power, the supremacy and the ascendancy that turned her on.

“Yes mistress,” he said and then bit his lip as the inevitable slap shook his skull.

“What you call me in your head is your own sweet business,” said Elspeth. “If you call me that to my face again I will never let you out of my little dungeon... do you understand?”

“I understand, but what am I to call you?”

“I have no name that you are permitted to use, your sex is mine and mine only!”

Never had he ever been under such intense control. Every word held meaning that shaded to places that he did not comprehend. Every nuance of speech pulled him further in her spell. A mistress with no name, a woman who despised him, all the while giving him everything that he desired.

It was if a spell had been cast, an invocation of possession.

His body was stretched over the bench, hips in the air exposing his balls and cock, ankles stretched wide by fetters. Lines of vivid purple marked where Elspeth had thrashed him, a slight smear of blood where she had slapped him and her nails had caught his flesh. Despite all that discomfort and pain he was as rigid as he had ever been. Three and a half inches of masculinity that was no thicker than a middle finger.

That miniature cock strained and hoped to be engulfed.

She put a hand on his throat and gently pressed until the breath whistled through his mouth. There was something so sweet about this man's submissive need to be cruelly used by her and all the while she tapped him in ways that he would never understand or could even believe. She held that small prick and smiled. Men were so obsessed by their size, so vulnerable and hypersensitive and yet she knew that to her it did not matter the size of the conduit that delivered their soul to her, all that mattered was the richness of the reserve that they had on offer and this pathetic man had a lake to give, as long as she allowed him to last.

Her weight on his hips made him gasp with the agony as she allowed him to slip into her body. The strength of her thighs, the unbalanced weight that bent his spine into a further curve and the joints that ground under the pressure as she took him. It was not enough for Elspeth that she could sit on his little cock and milk him, she had to watch him struggle against the odds and fight to pleasure her and that was the task of the tawse in her hand. The leather would drive him to serve her while she fed on him and drank at the wellspring of his psyche.

Casually she laid a sharp blow of the leather tawse across his chest and then lowered onto him with a sigh. He cried out as her weight shifted completely to his hips and cock, he moaned and blabbed for her mercy as Elspeth sighed and took him in.

"I know that you have been fucking others. I know that you have been cheating on me! I can smell the fear and panic in your voice as you lie to me. I know when you have been drained; I know that you have cheated me of your full devotion..."

As she spoke, Elspeth felt an anticipatory flush swell from within until her skin warmed and a roseate glow flushed her breasts. She could feel him try to push deeper, but the lips of her pussy already ground against the root of his cock and his voice was one part groans of need while the words of pleading tumbled from his gasping lips in an outburst of penitence.

“Please, please, I will never fuck another woman, I promise I promise...”

His voice cracked as the tawse spent its weight on his chest.

“I promise, I promise...”

“Never to wank, never to please yourself at my expense,” panted Elspeth as her hand slithered to her clitoris in a slow movement that made her gasp as she teased herself with her fingers.

“Never, never, never...”

His voice faded as Elspeth milked him as she came with a slow wave of bliss. Her hand lifted to her lips as she tasted herself on her fingers. A finger slipped to the brooch that pinned her leather costume and pricked on the sharp pin that held it in place.

A single dew drop of blood welled and was daubed at the junction of cock and the Lamia’s swollen flesh. She bit her lip in self-control and then scratched him from nipple to cock as she ground his prick into her clenching pussy to force her

victim to climax.

He cried out. He gasped, his head hung slack and an involuntary sigh hissed from his lips as his body relaxed.

A small surge filled Elspeth and she felt that familiar flush of energy fill her body. Not the rush of a full measure, just a trickle of warmth that tightened her breasts and made her nipples clench. She looked down at the insensible man who draped on the frame in a near coma.

It would take hours for him to come round and she would push him traumatised into the street to fend for himself. Drained and prostrate with exhaustion it would be a couple of days before he recovered that essence that she had bled from his psyche.

For now he could rest in the cage...

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Michael McDonald woke and knew that he would have to wait for his mistress to release him. Every muscle in his body ached. His very bones felt weak and sore and his head seemed full of a haze that made it so difficult to focus, even on the small world that he had been confined to.

There was something about this woman. Indifferent to his limits, unsympathetic to all the pain and discomfort, unmoved by his prayers needs and wishes. She

did what she wanted, did what she fancied and always pushed him to the very point of being overcome by his own orgasm.

At work, director of a small private bank, he was the lord of all he surveyed. At play he was less than the shit on her shoes which he licked off with frantic devotion.

He was in fact less than nothing to her.

His hand ventured to his cock and he realised that his mistress had made sure that he would not play her false again. Never would he be allowed to spill his seed in self-abuse or another woman. The steel enclosure that stretched his bruised balls would make sure of that.

He was hers to be milked as she wished.

When she wished.

He sighed in satisfaction that she had him in hand.

## Chapter 10

## *London 2012*

Janice Dresden, Inspector for the Metropolitan police, stared at the map of Great Britain that had been taped to one of the incident boards. Pins stuck into it, seemingly at random. Each one of the thirty or so coloured markers showed where a suspicious death had occurred. Small tags showed the case numbers and the dates of the incidents. Since at least nineteen sixty, scattered around Britain, men had been dying just after sex. That meant fifty years of murders in a trail of death that seemed ever more bizarre. How could this possibly be just one person? The perpetrator must be over seventy years older by now!

Ridiculous!

Was she just chasing a trail of evidence that was nothing more than a statistical blip? Was it possible that these men all died of natural causes? That it was possible to get a heart attack after the stress of sex had passed? It was getting harder and harder to resist the pressure that was being imposed on her from above. That the latest death should be labelled 'misadventure' and that the case should be closed.

In an hour she would have to hold a presentation for her boss, the Chief Superintendent, and explain just what evidence she had collected that would justify the manpower that she had researching these cases. Janice knew that as soon as she used cases dating back fifty years to justify a serial-killer, that she would be slapped down as a fantasist, so perhaps it would be better to limit that cases to the five that had all happened in the last five years.



There was another problem, even though the deaths were almost all exactly the same, they lay strewn across the country, seemingly at random. There was no focus, no centre that could be pointed at. Scotland, Northern Ireland and England. Major towns and cities, rural backwaters there was no link between incidents. Janice turned to look at the timeline that her Sergeant had prepared and noted that there was never more than two years between deaths and never less than a single year.

Whoever was doing this was patient beyond the dreams of psychotic serial killers. There was no heightening of the method, no raising of the bar. Each one, from start to finish was a man who reportedly last met a middle aged woman and then was found dead, presumably after having intercourse with her. Drugs and chemical traces had not been found, though each time the scratches and bruises of hard sex adorned the victim as though he had been having sex with a woman who was way above him in strength.

There had to be better link than circumstantial evidence.

Maybe when the DNA tests on the traces that the woman had left would link them, but the trouble was that this was the first time that a sample had been gathered! She would have to wait until the murderer struck again to find a link...

She glanced at her watch and stood with a sigh.

With the file under her arm she entered the conference room to see the Chief Super sitting with a representative of the Public Prosecutor's Office. He waved her to a seat and opened the meeting with a hearty greeting.

Probably a bad sign...

### **Part III - Incubus**

## Prologue

## *Edinburgh 2012*

Alice Hillsbrough woke in the dark of her bedroom and saw movement. A brief passing of a shadow between her and the curtains that resolved when hands reached out and touched her throat. She bleated a cry and then the hands moved to slip under the covers and grasp her breasts before pulling away her nightie in one rapid tug that parted the cloth.

“Do not scream, or your death will not be one that’ be easy,” said a woman’s voice in her ear. “All I want is the book that your father copied and then stole. Now!”

A shiver passed through Alice. She remembered the young man who had also come searching years past for a book and she had spent years in fear of him returning. Now it was this woman in the dark, a woman who seemed to have the strength of six.”

“I have found it,” said Alice.

It did not matter that this woman was not the man that she had expected to return. The threat was real enough and it was time to give her the book that she had spent days searching for.

The woman’s grip did not slacken on her throat while the other hand coursed between her breasts and slipped to the crevice between her thighs. A finger entered her virgin cunt and moved in casual parody of intercourse.

“You are a virgin?”

Alice nodded and moaned as the finger deflowered her in a casual movement.

“No longer, now you are just another conquest... Where is the book?”

“In the cover of Livy’s history, by the collection of Seutonius,” gasped Alice.  
“Please take it and go. You are hurting me!”

The darkness congealed and the finger pressed harder into Alice as lips found hers and a tongue pressed into her mouth. The finger and tongue probed and then the hand on Alice’s throat slackened.

“I may return to taste some more, it is rare for me to enjoy a woman, but you are a pleasure for me in your fear.”

Alice slackened and Elspeth allowed her to sink from the probing fingers and tongue.

“If the book is not there, you can expect torment beyond your wildest dreams,” whispered Elspeth into the ear of her paralysed prey. “The same applies should word of my visit escape your lips!”

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Jason Smith, otherwise known under a plethora of names, sat in his hotel room and stared at his laptop. There was no doubt that Harold Hillsbrough had been the only person in the New York art library to be recorded as requesting the *Ars Satanica*. Now that the book was gone in the auction, sold to Elspeth the only possible source for a copy was any copy that Harold had made of the book, he had to have made a copy, how could he have resisted?

Obviously he could not...

He leaned back in his chair and considered his possible courses of action. Elspeth, the woman who had been Helena and a dozen different people was more than just elusive, she was like a phantom that slipped through the greys of normal life like a slip of red silk that was forever out of reach. However, she did not yet know of him and that was his advantage!

In New York he had lost her after the auction because he had suffered a moment of inattention, in London in eighteen-thirty he had been a week to late, but he had seen the consequences of her passage. The dead Russian, staring at the void, drained of every erg of his vital life. That was when Jason had realised that he was not alone; he was not the only Lamia.

Now the only link that he had was the *Ars Satanica*.

Elspeth had that book, an original copy of the book that she had gone to great expense and risk to obtain. Something in that book was a clue as to how he could find her, something would give her away. The problem was that apart from the

bastard, reworked and distorted copies that lay in the libraries of rich collectors, there was only the one copy, the copy that she herself had bought in auction.

Unless of course Harold Hillsbrough had made a copy when he had found the last original copy! A slip of the tongue to that daughter of Harold had given away more than he had intended, now she would be searching for the book... He knew that she had never heard of Ars Satanica until Jason himself had revealed its existence, now she would be searching her father's books and curios!

Jason slapped down the lid of his laptop and stood.

It was a time to act!

With the Ars Satanica in his hand he could perhaps decide what Elspeth intended to do. He had to find her and then he could put his own plan into effect. A simple plan that would see him the only Lamia.

He would fuck her.

Plunder her soul and take the vitality from her body and become a being whose power was the synergy of both their minds. Perhaps. It was worth the test.

A simple plan that had the guileless advantage of forthrightness!

Do to her what she had done to others for two thousand years.

Ravage and destroy her for his own benefit!

## **Chapter 1**



## **Zealand Isle - Denmark 1047**

The longboats moved on the swell of the German Sea with a steady rolling that was a vicarious pleasure underfoot to a northern fighting man. On the shore were piled the weapons and stores that would supply the fleet until the warriors of Magnus had begun to live on the land. Raping the Anglo-Saxons of their provender. Men moved hither and thither and prepared the ships with hands raw from the salt water and cold wind that blew the waves to occasional horseheads over the bay.

An observer would have noted the tall blonde man who was to lead his warriors forth. Magnus, King of Norway, labelled 'the good' by the priests and do-gooders of Denmark. Named 'Magnus the Faithless' by those who still crossed their fingers in memory of Odin! He strode amongst the milling soldiers, warriors and sailors commenting, exhorting and preparing them for the voyage from Zealand that would take them to the coast of England and on to place Magnus on the throne, as the only worthy successor to Canute.

Edward, the Saxon would meet the blade of an axe, the Godwin's of the North of England would rally around as they had promised and Magnus would have the crown placed on his head by the Archbishop of York, the man who had promised that the enterprise of Kings was worth the risk. Even the Scots were to lend their hand to help his path to the throne in Winchester.

A coterie of followers, hanging on Magnus' words, followed him along the shore and ensured that every utterance that the King said was greeted by cheers and roars of agreement. Ten thousand men, strong and true. All sworn to the new religion of the white-Christ even though most still muttered the prayers to Odin when the swords were out.

“Sire, there is a messenger just come from Macbeth of the Scots who would have your ear and attention,” said one of the pages of the king as he surveyed the ships pulled up on the beach along the bay.

Magnus looked at the man who was being presented to him and felt a slight flicker of recognition. A man small in compass, a mere three and a half ells in height, a man whose grey hair swept over his weather beaten face. A man who had at his waist a long-sword that would have been proud in a king’s hand.

“Are you come from the land of the Scots and Picts?” asked Magnus as he extended a hand.

The messenger did not lift his hand to match the king’s, but said, “I bring tidings that will please your ears, King Magnus. Macbeth of the Scots is ready to call his levy and cross the borders into the North of England. He tells me to bring you word of his brotherhood to your cause and the many warriors that he will bring to your venture.”

As the messenger spoke, Magnus lowered his hand. There were not many that dared to fail to shake hands with the king of Norway, but he let it be. The northern world was full of men who were more than they seemed and often traced their ancestry to the wild gods of the north.

“I would hear more,” said Magnus.

“There is more,” said the messenger, resting his hand on the hilt of his sword.

“More and less!”

“A riddle from the Scots?” asked the king.

“No a simple word. ‘Confidence’. These are matters that should not be twittered around the hearth fires like woman’s gossip.”

“We should speak in intimate isolation then,” said Magnus. “In the meantime take yourself to the groaning wooden boards of my hall and refresh yourself, for I would hear your news this evening. Tomorrow we sail through the wild Kattegat, in three days we will be on the beaches in the north of England and I shall meet my brother in arms, the anointed king, Macbeth.”

The messenger offered a slight inflection of the head. The smallest movement that indicated that he acknowledged the king, but he was obviously a man of renown even though Magnus could not quite place him.

As Magnus watched the man stride to his halls he turned to one of the men who clustered around him like flies on meat, “Who’s that man and what deeds has he done?”

“He names himself Lokhirr, sire when the mood is on him. When he was in Midgard with the Greeks he was known as Jason and in Iceland he is known as Styrsen Jomssen. Reputedly he was one of the Jomsvikings that you purged from the Eastern Sea, a man who, rumours hint, was a son of Styrbjörn. His sword is sharp and he speaks little, if at all, of his past.”

“Lokhirr is old, perhaps, but he is but fifty and Styrbjörn the Strong died three score years before this day. He is not enough timeworn to be the son of Styrbjörn the Strong, even if his father were forty at the birthing,” laughed Magnus. “The world of men is full of those who try to buy and sell the reputations of others! I’ll wager that this Lokhirr, this Jason of the Varangians in Byzantium is nothing but a hardened braggart who has discovered that others will do his boasting for him while he warms his hand before the fire with coy looks and a shining blade on his lap.”

“Unquestionably, sire. When shall he meet with you?”

“Tell him that when the moon is overhead we shall meet on the prow of my ship, the Silver Serpent and he shall tell me his tale in true solitude.”

“You will meet him alone?”

“What have I to fear of an old man who is just a messenger?”

“Nothing, sire. You are the greatest swordsman alive since King Olaf died at the battle of Svolder.”

Magnus looked across the bay at the armed might that he had caused to be assembled at his behest. A stirring array of ships and the men to arm them, a throng of warriors of Norway and Denmark that had not been seen in northern waters since Magnus’ last expedition. The destruction of the Jomsvikings who had plagued the Christians of the north like wasps.

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While the king reflected upon his might, the rightful fear of the Saxon English king and the length of his arm, the man known as Lokhirr who had taken the name of Jason in the warm waters of the Mediterranean tended to a captive that lay stricken with fear in his cot. Stretched out on the furs by the ropes that bound her ankles and wrists she wept as he ran his hands over her young body. She would provide his perfect escape when the deed was done and the revenge was complete.

He lusted and longed to complete his act of need on her tender body.

He felt the stirring in his loins and struggled for a moment to push it down and leash it under his command before covering the weeping wretch with a blanket. Supernatural powers struggled within him as he called on Loki to calm him to the deed that had to be done.

“Please, please, my lord,” wept the girl. “You do not have to tie me to have me! I am willing and content to please as I may!”

“Shush harlot! I must be sure that you wait for me here. Tonight I will return and will loosen your bonds and then you will be released to find another master.”

She nodded to the lie as she turned her head to watch Jason sweep his long sword from its sheath. For a moment it seemed as if was about to draw its razor sharp blade over her throat and then he smiled down at her.

“This is not the sword that you will die by,” he whispered. “That will be another,

not so sharp, but straighter!”

She wept and he seemed entertained by her fear.

Jason pulled a whetstone from his leather bag and set himself to ensure that his sword was sharp enough to kill a king. As he worked, a steady rhythm of stone on steel filled the room with a hissing that was like an iron snake hissing at its prey. Care and even strokes. Slight pressure and just enough water to pick up the steel and smooth the cutting edge as he smoothed the nicks and scratches of battle and created a perfect razor that was longer than his arm in length.

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The moon rode in amongst the clouds and a westerly wind bode well for the morrow. Waters would be smooth; the German Sea would be a rolling path to the shores of a new kingdom.

King Magnus, King Of Norway, King of Denmark and the Western Isles. The Orkneys and the land of Greenland. A man who had forced the white Jesus on his folk, a man who had cut down the avenues of oak trees where the greening bones of Odin’s victims had rotted for time out of mind. A man who saw himself as the new Canute, a King of the North. From the ice to the green lands of Eire, he would reign and become the stuff of legend.

This was the moment upon which he had waited all of his life. The moment when the dream would begin to become reality. In a week he would be on the soil of England meeting the Earls of the Saxons, the King of the Scots and Picts. Then he would sweep down and claim the throne in London. From there, he

would conquer the world, a veritable Charlemagne of the cold frozen wilds of the north.

He stood on the prow of his sixty oar ship and stared into the dark at the distant islands that made up part of his domain. The ship was lifted slightly by the high tide and it rolled beneath his feet like the golden serpent that it had been named after. The wood creaked slightly and the waves lapped at the wood with a steady whisper and slaps of the water on oak. Soon the messenger would come and Magnus would swear him to his service. He needed men like Lokhirr, men that were prepared to work for him in the night. He would persuade the man to service and use him, appeal to the man's obvious pride and need for recognition and bend him to his will.

A sound made Magnus turn and the slightest shift that told of another on board the 'Serpent'. He saw Lokhirr stepping the rower's benches and smiled at the man's obvious practiced step. Obviously a man who knew how to walk the length of a moving ship, a Viking of the old days.

Once again Magnus offered his hand and once again Lokhirr declined the offer.

"There are not many that are offered a shake of the hand with the King of Norway," said Magnus. "There are still fewer that refuse the first time and are offered the same yet again."

"I do not need the hand of a king in mine," said Lokhirr. "I see that you meet me in full array of battle as though you expect trickery!"

"I seldom have my mail shirt in my sea chest, I wear it continuously. It is not distrust, but the sensible precaution of a King that knows that his life is sought by many, for a dozen and one different reasons. Now tell me what the King,

Macbeth offers me that cannot be spoken of before my trusted thegns and heorls!”

Lokhirr swept his sword from his sheath and held it vertical; a gleam from the moon shivered its length. The two men were still three ells apart and Magnus too pulled his sword from its repose.

“Are you wanting to swear fealty?”

“To the man who destroyed my Jomsburg? I think not!”

“Is that the reason for this treachery?”

“It is no treachery when I have not sworn myself to your service, King!”

“Then revenge?”

“I prefer to call it satisfaction...”

“Now I know you, but it was four years ago and you have aged since I stormed the fortress of the Jomsvikings. Your hair is grey and your features make you look like a man of fifty, but I know those eyes, the ones that faced me at the gates, the same grey as the steel you carry.”



“Are you about to call for help, being faced by an angry old man?”

“No, we shall settle this duel in the old ways. Steel to steel!”

“Then be on guard, King and look to your sword!”

The two men squared up to each other. Magnus with the advantage of height, for he stood on the step leading to the prow. King Magnus had another advantage over his challenger, the glittering scale of armour that followed the contours of his body, for his opponent wore no mail.

It was Jason who took the first assay at offense. He feinted and then cut from above and was blocked by the swift moving blade of Magnus. Both knew that it was a simple opening that would cause the blood to rush and the adrenaline to pump as Magnus’ flickering blade riposted and cut at the left flank of his challenger to be met by an agile parry. Both breathed easily.

“Make peace with your white god, King Magnus,” said Jason as he stepped back to fight in the old way, using the blade of his sword like a heavy axe to overwhelm with sheer brute power and élan.

Magnus had faced baresarks before; defeating them was just a matter of calm method.

The king smiled, this old man would soon tire and then be cut down in a measure of strength. He raised his blade, hilt up, to parry and gasped as the blade of the sword that was seeking his life shattered his own blade and swept on, to be finally stopped painfully by the rings of his mail shirt. Only the hilt with a

finger's length of blade now stood in Magnus' hands from the hilt and he knew that this baresark Jomsviking, the last of his evil kind, would surely kill the King of the Danes on his own flagship.

Jason stood a moment and savoured his victory. How could this man know that he had the strength of ten men given to him by Loki in terrible ceremony in old Uppsala? He could not... now he would pay the price and go to the cloudy heaven that his weakling god had made for his feeble followers.

He curled his lip, disdaining to speak and whirled his sword in a lead blur of grey that would decapitate this mortal King. The sword swung, the blade swept the air and King Magnus fell backward, untouched by blade, into the grey seething water that slapped between his ship and the one next to it. For a moment his face registered shock that all his dreams could end now, in this way, and then he was gone. Dragged below the foaming rollers by his mail byrnie, to die a sailor's death of drowning after falling from the prow of his own ship.

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A cloud covered the moon and a figure jumped from ship to ship with agility and strength. The man known as Lokhirr, the man who had given himself the name of one of the Argonauts of ancient Greece, danced his dance in the dark before slipping to his rooms in the inn that graced the small town of Roskilde.

He climbed the sloping roof over the door way and opened the shutters that kept the cold night from freezing the girl who lay stricken under the furs that heaped over her. Jason threw the furs off the cot and stared at his victim. Soon he would become something else; soon he would be able to walk in this armed camp without chance of recognition.

For three years he had starved himself of nurture, he had allowed his face to become craggy with age. His hair grew long with grey streaks, his skin became like parchment, all the while creating the man called Lokhirr who could walk up to the King that he was to kill.

Jason stripped his leggings and tossed them to one side. Ram like, his prick stood ready to suck the life from the woman who lay frightened on the bed. In his mind a red curtain of need and hunger descended. It filled him with utter necessity, blinded him with its urge and made his prick lead him to where the source of the craving was focussed.

She did not cry out, the tight cloth that filled her mouth sucked her screams to silence. She flinched, but the ropes that bound her held and he slipped into her with a smooth force that recognised no constraint. His hips moved and he cried out as he felt his cock prick the bubble of her vitality. It sucked her from her and gave her to him. It drank at her vigour and gulped her spirit until she lay limp and empty under him while his juices leaked from her cunt.

‘Lokhirr the old’ was no more.

The man that had lied to have spoken to King Macbeth. The man who had taken the name of the first god of evil trickery, the man who had murdered two and become another man.

Gone was the grey hair, it now shone dark and gleaming. The skin was taut and stretched over a powerful frame and all the signs of aging were gone. Consigned to who knew where? Now he would walk into the camp and never be known for the elderly messenger from the King of the Scots. All would say that King

Magnus had slipped from his own prow at the moment of his greatest moment... the old gods must have punished him for his hubris.

A satisfying revenge even though Jason's blade had not parted the flesh of the man who had destroyed the Jomsvikings in an orgy of destruction and murder four years ago.

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Sixty years ago, Jason's father, Styrbjörn the Strong had taken him to the groves at old Uppsala. Together they had sacrificed a man to Odin. Jason had chosen Loki to be the god from whom he took his own name the god that would rule his life. That the foul one-eyed priest and magus who sacrificed for his father's son also died in the flames under the wicker figure that held the sacrifices who would die in the holocaust had made no lasting impression on the hard young man.

He had just read the curse and prayer on the dying priest's lips.

Seen that single grey eye grip him and urge him.

To become the avenger of the old gods.

## Chapter 2

## **London 2012**

Inspector Janice Dresden left the meeting clutching the file that she had used to present her case. It had been clear from the first that there was no interest, empathy for her wild story of linking the deaths of men after casual sex.

“It’s all very interesting,” had said the Chief Superintendent with a bored look on his face, “but all it does is raise the status of numerous accidental deaths to unsolved murder and in the present political climate that is not an astute move to make. We have to, I mean, I have to look at the larger picture and consider the political ramifications of opening an inquiry into what is just, as far as I am concerned, just Scotch mist.”

No amount of arguing had moved him from his position. He praised her for her diligent research and told her that the case was not only not closed, it had never been opened!

“On balance,” he had said, “I feel that further commitment of resources to this collection of circumstantial coincidences is a misuse of the limited resources at our disposal. I should like you to move your team to investigate the rash of violent robberies of north London jeweller’s shops that has remained unsolved for two months. I think that we can all agree that has a higher priority than chasing phantom killers!”

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Janice tossed the file to her desk and sat down staring at it for several long minutes. Finally she decided, that if there had never been a case, then he had been correct to say that there was nothing to close. In fact all the evidence in her folder was not even official now, it was all in limbo.

Finally she went to the intelligence unit and gathered all the files and materials that pertained to the jewellery-shop robberies. As she distributed the files to her colleagues, Janice could not get the deaths of all those men from her mind. That night, as she left the offices in New Scotland Yard she picked up the blue folder and stood for a moment with it in her hands.

Perhaps she had taken it all a little seriously, but on the other hand...

That night Janice kneeled in her living room with all the papers spread on the floor. Each pile was a single case; each case resulted in a death. Somehow they were linked, if the same woman was responsible, there had to be a connection! Since the DNA tests that she had ordered had been cancelled, there would be no proof that the deaths were tied together, but there had to be something else.

Janice Dresden, Inspector for the Metropolitan police felt an obsession looming in her mind, even if she had to pursue an investigation alone, in her own time, she would find who was responsible and why!

## Chapter 3



## *Harrogate 2013*

Elsbeth glanced at her watch and sighed.

A smooth satin skirt adorned her thighs ending just below the knees in a tight ruff of lace. Black stockings, seams straight as a ruler and bright red stilettos. With the silk blouse and the net gloves on her slim hands she was the perfect picture of a stern dominatrix.

The other female customers in the high class coffee shop glanced at her out of the corners of their eyes and sneered whilst the men pretended not to stare, but drank her in and admired her, even as they pretended to their wives that they were disinterested.

Elsbeth ignored them and touched up her black lipstick with care.

A few months ago she had closed the studio in Glasgow as her clients faded away until at last they had given their all. Better to move far away and close the little dungeon than risk being connected with the unreasonable fetishes of those weak men! Already, in Harrogate, she had found two new men who were already dedicated to their new mistress. Boring, rich and self-obsessed, Harrogate was the perfect place for her to open a studio. All she needed now was a third man to supply her needs!

While she waited for her visitor she flicked through the newly annotated copy of *Ars Satanica* and scratched the occasional note in the margins. With the original

in her hands, at last she was progressing in her research. Soon she could begin to scribe the symbol that described herself and then there was only the invocation to complete.

A young man entered the café and looked around as if he could not decide where to sit. Eventually he chose the seat opposite Elspeth and signalled to the waitress with a wave of his hand.

“A coffee please,” he announced to the waitress and then sat quietly observing the woman sitting across from him with interest. “I guess that you are Miss Jade,” he said to Elspeth.

She waited a moment until the waitress had placed his coffee on the table and was out of earshot.

“Jason?”

“Indeed,” he replied. “You are exactly as I imagined you to be.”

“I am very demanding,” said Elspeth. “All costs are paid in advance, all orders are obeyed and you are not permitted any other partners while you are mine!”

Elspeth smiled and closed the small volume in her hands and slid it into her handbag. For a moment Jason’s eyes followed her hands and then he spoke: “That is what we agreed, so I shall begin by paying your bill here.”

She raised an eyebrow and fluttered her gloved hand for the waitress. Somehow he was not like the others. He was young and obviously fit, he would be a challenge, without a doubt. On the other hand, he had all the more to give...

“I shall take you to my studio,” said Elspeth, “and we shall begin to teach you how you will be allowed to serve my needs.”

Jason stood and pulled her chair clear as she stood.

“Allow me,” he said.

“Thank you.”

They stepped into the busy street and strolled to Elspeth’s parked car.

“In future, I shall inform you when you may visit me,” said Elspeth, “You will always arrive when I beckon. You will always be ready to serve for my pleasure and gratification. At the moment, just once a week will be sufficient. You will bring me some small token of your devotion each time and if it is sufficient you may be permitted to serve me as I see fit.”

Jason opened the driver’s door of her car, waited until she was seated and then climbed in to the passenger seat.

“Furthermore you will not have any influence on punishments that I decide to

inflict. There will be no 'safe words' no limits and I shall mark you as my property as I will. If you find that this is not to your taste, it shall signal the end of our relationship," she said as the car pulled into the traffic. "I can be very firm when I feel the mood come on me and you can expect to be branded and pushed to your limits. Whatever they are!"

"That sounds perfect," he replied.

Never in the last twenty years had Elspeth seen a man who was coming to her for punishment who showed no dismay at her conditions. Often they debated ineffectively, argued that they were paying and therefore that had the say. Sometimes they even fled or shied away, ran or insulted her, but never had they coolly accepted her preconditions.

"So what is the charge?"

She looked at him for a moment, but he was just staring straight forward with a slight smile on his lips. Perhaps less a smile than a smirk, self-satisfied and smug. Elspeth wondered at him and reviewed how he had got into contact with her on her Internet site. He had not offered a photo, but that was not so unusual. He had seemed like a middle-aged man posing as young man, now he seemed to be a young man posing as a middle aged man!

"I expect at least five hundred pounds a week to be transferred to my bank account. I appreciate gifts that are both tasteful and expensive, that means that I have no list of cheap drosses on Amazon to give to me. Rococo, Cardin and Klaudia are the only thing that interest me," she replied. "Any hesitation or lateness on your part will be punished severely if I am in a good mood, if not then you can expect our relationship to be at an end."

“Fine!”

There it was again, that insouciance, an almost smug acceptance of her terms.

“We are here now...”

The car pulled up to the rear of a terrace of stone houses and Elspeth sat waiting for her new man to open the car door. Already she had decided that this young man would be perfect. It was all very well sapping the usual middle aged fetishists who she could wrap around her finger with a small ‘come hither’, but this man was a challenge that would be so totally exquisite.

She led him to the half concealed red door and opened it to reveal a staircase that went up to the apartment situated over the bookmakers that lay to the front of the building. The stairs were carpeted in a thick carpet and small erotic pictures ran in rows at head height. Elspeth led the way and looked down while Jason carefully shut the door and came up the stairs with quick steps.

His erection was plain, it tented his jeans and Elspeth smiled to herself.

When he reached the top of the stairs he stood for a moment as he got his bearings. Elspeth turned to open a door and suddenly felt an arm close around her neck. It was not the first time that she had been attacked by some foolish man, but this time she had been careless, but she was certain of her strength and had a wealth of experience at subduing her victims.

Almost casually she gripped his forearm and pulled. Her hand slipped from him as his grip remained firm while his other hand closed over her face.

“No you don’t, darling,” he whispered in her ear. “Now it’s your turn!”

Suddenly afraid for the first time in a hundred years, Elspeth twisted with all her strength and managed to loosen his grip a little, but now he was pushing her through the door that she had started to open. A huge four poster bed sat in the room, the only piece of furniture apart from a steel barred cell that occupied the corner of the room.

Elspeth stamped down hard with her stiletto on his foot and felt Jason wince with the pain, but his grip tightened again on her neck and the hand was back until it closed mouth and nose. She managed a last gasp before he threw her on the bed and kneeled over her.

“I knew that I would find you,” he laughed as Elspeth flailed at his face with her hands, raking deep scratches from cheek to chin. “Buying that book was foolish, it put me on your trail...”

For a moment they struggled before he caught her wrists and pinned her to the bed with his weight.

“You have spent too long thinking that you can have any man,” he gasped as he leaned over her. “But, I am not just any man! I am the man who is going to fuck you and take all of you for my own.”

“Who are you?” screamed Elspeth, “Who the fuck are you?”

Jason laughed and blood from the cuts on his face dripped onto Elspeth as she looked up at his smirking face.

“I am you,” he laughed. “A predator in a world of weak prey!”

Suddenly she began to struggle, she arched her back and tipped her attacker off onto the covers. A swift jerk of each foot and her shoes were off and she turned to the open door. Jason kicked out savagely and cried out in pain as his damaged foot kicked Elspeth, pushing her into the edge of the half open door.

For a moment she was stunned by the impact.

It was all he needed to grab her wrists behind her and wrench them into the air causing Elspeth to bang her head into the hard wood again. The handcuffs were on before she could recover and his foot slammed the door closed. A sudden buffeting blow knocked her to the ground and Jason stood over her. His foot smarted where the bones were broken, his face was scratched and bloody and deep purple bruises on his upper arms betrayed her attempts to free herself with preternatural force.

“Now, my dear, now that we have got through the introductions, I think that it is time that we came to know each other intimately!”

He picked her up and tossed her to the bed with casual strength.

“Now, do I claim you as mine,” he crowed. “Shall I sip at the glass or swallow it all in one draught?”

Elspeth tried to twist and roll off the bed but Jason was on top of her. His hands tore at her satin dress and ripped the blouse off in one swift pull that sent the pearl buttons skipping and flying as he closed his mouth on her breasts and pressed hard against her. His weight pressed against her thighs, he rocked and forced them to part as he hooked the chain between Elspeth’s cuffs into the hook that his fingers found at the end of the bed frame.

There was no purpose in begging mercy from an incubus! Elspeth knew the rules of her kind even though she had never met another in two thousand years. The first to climax, the first to come would be the loser and the winner decided how much to dip into the vitality of their victim, that was, if they could restrain themselves.

Fuck or be fucked.

If he could control his hunger...

She simply had to resist, but already she could feel the tip of his cock pressing at the lips of her cunt. Her own juices were coming and dripping and she could not help moaning as he entered her. Jason laughed and pressed home. Deep into her he thrust and then pulled back to watch her face as she realised that he was going to force her to climax.



“Ever seen one of these?” he asked as his hand came into view.

Elsbeth cried out in fear when she saw the powerful vibrator that he was holding. A single twist and it started into motion, back and forth with a savage buzz and a blur of motion at the tip that spoke well of its sure outcome.

She could not help herself as she watched in fascination as the hand disappeared between them. She could feel the drone of it, feel the motion and it made her attempt a last struggle as it contacted her clitoris.

Heaven! The gateway to hell.

Her head was full of the pleasure of it; it struck deep into her nervous system as Jason began the rocking that would finish her. In and out he plunged as Elspeth tried to resist the pleasure, but in vain.

The orgasm came; it hit her in a rush.

She could feel a tugging at her vitality, a tearing at her soul and she knew that the laughing man who was raping her was sucking her vital force from her body and there was nothing she could do but quake in post orgasmic shudders. He took and took, far more than a mortal woman could have given, but nowhere the full chalice of Elspeth's vigour.

Jason stood and looked down at the stricken woman on his bed. A few grey hairs showed, a few wrinkles spidered from her eyes.

“Will you die an old woman?” he asked rhetorically.

He opened one of the bedside cabinets; some sort of restraint was needed. A small whip, a razor sharp knife and the amorphous form of a leather hood with straps and a bright red ball gag that would just be ideal. No need for handcuffs in the cage... the gag would keep her quiet and anyway, Elspeth was almost unconscious.

He drew on the slick hood and tightened the straps and laces to leave his prey with a smooth black face where the rounded globe of the gag was forced between her bruised lips. It was over and Jason picked up the drooping Elspeth and carried her to the corner of the room.

“Perfect, you have a cage where I can keep you for the next time,” he laughed as he tumbled her through the door and slammed it closed, pressing the lock home with his thumb. “Normally I do not have to be so physical, so next time with you it will be sweet love and not rape... You’ll just die in my arms!”

Jason tested the bars with a savage pull and smiled.

“Locked in your own little larder, darling! Tonight I shall taste you again and who knows, perhaps I will drink you dry?”

Elspeth watched him leave. It was all she could manage to stay conscious when the door slammed. Shattered and emptied of will and verve, she was heaped like a rag doll in the corner of the cage where she normally kept her own sad victims!

The sexual fetishists that craved her to dominate them and then gave their all for her own special mode of amusement.

## Chapter 4

### ***York and Harrogate 2013***

The jewellery shop gang, the Albanian krokodil manufacturers and the bungled operation that had failed to catch that Long Island American bitch that was trading male and female slaves for lifelong sexual misuse. In the last six months Janice Dresden had been totally wrapped in her investigations and she had to admit that she had had some notable success. The only fly in the ointment had been that American case. It had been botched from the American end anyway, so no opprobrium had come her way.

One of the American detectives with whom she had liaised had mentioned another investigation that he was interested in. A 'cold case' really. His department encouraged a little private research into old unsolved crimes, quite unlike the London Met! The case of a number of women who had died during or just after sexual congress in a series of seemingly random deaths, he explained. All spread over decades of the records. No signs of rape, no physical attacks, no bruises or signs of non-consensual sex.

Just death at the point of ecstasy.

It had brought back her own frustration with that similar case in Great Britain and she had spent hours talking with the American detective talking about the problem. In the end they had parted and Janice had returned to London when the American cooperation brought failure.

That had been in January. Two months later came the car accident that left her with no parents and she took six months leave of absence. Just a month into her

leave she was already on the point of calling New Scotland Yard and cutting short the whole idea of chilling-out for another half a year.

With no present boyfriend and a social life that bordered on asocial, she was bored and longed to get her teeth into some case or investigation.

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Janice pulled over to answer the insistent ringing of her phone.

“Hi, there, Janice here,” she answered.

“Listen, I just called because a reminder flashed up on your workstation and even though you’re on leave, I thought that it might be important!”

“All the cases that I was working on are either closed or in the hands of the DPP,” answered Janice.

“OK, then. I’ll just tell you what it is and you can decide if it’s relevant or you can get back to your holiday.”

“It’s not a holiday!”

“Leave of absence, then. What it says here is that you should call the Yorkshire Police because they have a suspicious death that cross-references with some case that you were investigating last year.”

“A death?”

“Yep, someone that died in an alley at night in the back streets of Harrogate.”

“Suspicious?”

“Sexual, actually. They died of a heart attack after climaxing...”

“Jesus. I thought that I’d taken all the reminders off the system! When did it happen?”

“Three hours ago. In Harrogate.”

“Call ‘em and tell them I’ll be there in an hour.”

“Where are you now?”

“York, well at least just twenty minutes from York. Address?”

“Wait a sec... Bower Street, an alley round the back. Just look for the big blue lights.”

“Thanks, give ‘em a call in Harrogate...”

“Will do, have fun! Hope you’ve got your warrant card?”

“Always!”

“I’ll warn ‘em that you’re on the way.”

Janice finished the call and set the satnav for Harrogate.

‘Forgot to ask. Male or female,’ she thought as she pulled from the layby.

Just forty minutes later she was pulling in by the police van with the flashing lights. She stepped out of her car to be greeted by a uniform to whom she flashed her card. Slipping under the crime-scene tapes she approached the tent that had been set up by forensic officers over the body.

As she walked down the cobbles of the alleyway she stopped to drop her ID back into her handbag. It was then, as she was looking down that she saw a gleam of gold and picked up a small gold coin. One side was a woman’s head looking to the left, the other a horse with one leg lifted. Obviously a Roman or Greek coin, pierced to take a ring for a chain.



The scene in the tent was chaotic. The medical examiner was just packing up and three detectives stood arguing with each other about the status of the case. Had the man died of accidental death or misadventure? That seemed to be the nub of the problem.

An hour later, Janice was heading back to her hotel in York.

‘How could they not see that it was rape?’ she wondered, ‘because, of course the victim was a man!’

If it had been a woman lying bruised and clear signs of sexual activity all around then the cry would have been rape. But, it was a man in the alley. A man who had been fucked to death. A man who had orgasmed and then died of heart failure and she, Janice had the only clue to the woman involved in her hand.

A small coin, a coin that could perhaps tell a story or two. The coin was not the property of the man in the alley, of that she was sure. It was the property of the woman who raped and killed him. The woman who had been killing men for decades.

Overpowering and fucking them.

Raping and killing.

A succubus!

She-devil.

## Chapter 5

## *Harrogate 2013*

Elspeth watched through the eyeholes of the mask as the scratches and bruises that she had inflicted on Jason faded, to leave just the crust of shed blood drying on his powerful frame. It was the final proof, as if one were needed, that she was not just in the hands of a random maniac, a confirmation that Elspeth was in more than mere danger, she was facing certain destruction!

She heard the door downstairs slam closed and sat still for ten minutes struggling to stay alert as her eyes threatened to close and her mind teetered on the edge of consciousness. Many were the times that she had seen her own victims succumb to despair and despondency; she dared not do the same.

With the gag in her mouth and nothing in the sparse cage to raise the alarm for help from outside she was thrown entirely on her own devices. It took over half an hour of her precious time to regain some interest in her surroundings. Her hand went to the coin that she had found all those years ago and she found a little strength in the familiarity of the smooth gold.

At last she moved and gripped the bars of the cage that she had had installed just a month ago. Bought from and fitted by the manufacturers it was fitted with a simple solid lock that was a button that depressed to lock the door of the cage. The bars were solid; the key was hidden on a hook between the four poster bed and the wall.

Unreachable.

The key might have been on the moon as far as Elspeth was concerned!

Her hands went to the walls that formed the other two walls of the cage and tapped them, but they were both masonry that would defy all attempts to break them down. For another five precious minutes she sat and remembered the two workmen that had fitted the cage and proudly declared that no captive in their expensive BDSM cage could escape without the key or...

...there had been something else!

Elspeth had been out of the room most of the time that the workmen had been there, but when she had come back they had passed her the keys and warned her that another set could only be supplied with a week's delay and the price of replacing them included the personal arrival of one of the company's locksmiths.

One of the workmen had fancied her, that was plain, so she made a joke of it. She had laughed and offered him a test drive of their his device, so he had climbed into the cage whilst the other locked it and passed the keys over to Elspeth.

"No one can lock us into our own cage," had said the man who had passed her the keys. "I for one have no intention of becoming the plaything of some dominatrix! There is of course another way to escape!"

The man inside the cage had reached up to the top angle of the cage and found the plastic caps that covered and neatened the screws that held the bars from the top of the frame. Consumed by his own cleverness he started to grin.

“It’s simple really,” he had said as he fingered a couple of them in rapid succession. “Just get the pattern in the right order and the hinges uncouple.”

In a matter of moments the door was off and he had climbed out of the cage with knowing smile.

“What’s the point of that?” Elspeth had asked.

“Simple,” he replied. “You’d never believe how many women lose the keys with some poor sod in the cage and are desperate for the locksmith to turn out. No captive would ever get the presses in the right order, it has to be just right. Normally we get a call and tell the woman who lost the keys how to open it for a small fee, but you might as well know. Consider it a ‘special’ service!”

The workman slid the door back on the hinges with a click and then pointed to the three of many studs that he had pressed. Middle, left, middle and right, in that order.

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From the inside of the cage it was difficult to remember which three buttons he had pressed. Elspeth’s fingers passed from one to the other above the door. All five of them could be pressed down, but she could not remember which three it had been. For a few seconds she thought it out and then, starting with the left most she pressed the code.

Middle, left, middle and right.

No result!

She started with the second possible three studs and pressed the pattern again. Still no reassuring click, so that left just one more try. Hands shaking she pressed the buttons... without result. Gritting her teeth, Elspeth tried again. The tight hood over her face made it difficult to see what she was doing and she had to work mostly by touch, but once again there was no result.

“Shit. Fuck!”

At any moment, Jason could return, and when he did it was sure that her last chance at escape would have gone. She could feel tears in her eyes, Elspeth was shattered and almost at the point of resigning to her fate. All hope had faded to be replaced by acquiescence to her doom as she sat down and allowed herself to weep in frustration. As she sat she imagined the victorious Jason returning and pulling her out of the cage. With no fight left in her she would be thrown on the bed and fucked until she gave him the last of her strength. Even if he did not finish her immediately, she would be almost comatose and unable to take advantage of any chance to escape her end.

Trapped; like one of her own victims, with the added twist that she understood what was happening!

Her hand slipped to the small coin that was her talisman. Her fingers felt the

front, the small horse and then the reverse, the face of Tanit, her guardian goddess and then she realized. Front and back...

Middle, left, middle and right... but that was from the outside of the cage.

Middle, right, middle and then left, from the inside!

In seconds she was out of the cage with the door lying on the plush carpet. By the bed, in one of the cabinets was a knife. Elspeth fumbled around and then cut the leather mask from her face and spat out the ball-gag.

At that moment she heard the door at the bottom of the stairs open.

Jason had returned!

She looked at the knife in her hand and realized that even with its help she could not face him in her present state. He would be hyped up and she was in no condition to fight him! Elspeth slid under the bed and took up a position as far from the door as possible as the door opened.

She saw his feet. He stood still for a moment and then cursed in a hard language that she did not understand. His foot kicked the ruined mask in frustration and then he turned and left.

She waited.



There was nothing for him here. She could hear him check the living room and kitchen before he stormed down the stairs in a rush and slammed the door behind him. Exhausted by the narrow escape and the fear of Jason she tried to stay awake, but her loss of vitality overcame her psyche and she slipped into an exhausted slumber.

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Six hours later Elspeth was standing over the ruin of the man in the alley that she had used up in a frantic fuck. Recharged and already plotting her revenge she failed to notice that the small coin, her talisman, was gone from her necklace.

She faded into the night, her natural habitat, with just one thought in her mind.

Jason!

## Chapter 6

### *London 2013*

Elsbeth looked at herself in the reflection of the window and moved her head to get the best possible view of the slight crow's eyes at the angles of her face. Despite the fact that she had absorbed the vitality of three men since Jason had sucked her dry, it seemed as if some permanent effect of being attacked by an incubus had to be expected.

‘Perhaps when I finally get him?’ she thought as she smiled.

The thought was gratifying but it was only a thought, not yet reality and in fact she had no real plan about how to make it so. Other than the name ‘Jason’, the way that he looked and the fact that he was an incubus, she had no idea how to find him, trap him and then finally ensure that, when the final struggle came, he would be the one to succumb.

Elsbeth turned to look at the man who was her latest attempt to totally restore her lost youth and purge those small signs that her nemesis had inflicted upon her. He was so young, so fresh, so fit, so full of his life. To her he was like a smooth, unlabelled, glass vessel that held liquor that had to be sampled. Drunk, sipped or drained. The container had to be emptied in the way that seemed most right at the time.

He sat on the hotel bed and studied, for a moment, the woman that he had picked up in the Soho bar. There was no doubt at all in his mind that she was perfection as far as he could discern. He had never seen such sexual perfection!

Her figure was stunning.

Sexually

She could not have made a model, she was too shapely for that, but who wanted to take some knobbly beanpole to bed for a fuck anyway? Breasts, they enticed, shapely and large, but not excessive and they balanced the hips and the shapely muscular, yet feminine legs. A narrow waist, smooth neck and a characterful face that would not look out of place on a billboard for haute couture.

‘Haughty’ might have been a suitable one word description. Her dress sense was almost designed like a lure! Heels, seamed stockings, narrow skirt and tight sweater. All in black and Morella-cherry red. Final touches, a hint of gold, long back and red nails and perfectly applied makeup. The final touch had been the fur coat that exuded luxury, money and sex as it revealed the contents of the valuable gift that it packaged.

How had he been able to land such an exotic catch?

It was clear that she was no street girl, neither a call-girl. They were usually attractive, to that he could attest, but this creature of the night was that rarest of catches. A woman who had the mores of a man! A woman who loved to fuck, had the money and the luxury of enough time to make it her blissful pastime. Best of all, a woman who was perfect for games in the darkness. She had been at the end of the bar, in conversation with the barman who lounged and had bathed in her light.

It had been so simple, he had simply gone to her and used the oldest and sometimes most effective chat up line in the book.

“Fuck?” he had said.

“In my hotel?”

“Or mine.”

“Which is closest?”

“Piccadilly?”

“Marble Arch. You win! How about now?”

“Of course!”

“I’ll pay your tab.”

“Of course you will, of course you will,” she replied.

They had hurried to the hotel like young lovers. She was at least thirty, he twenty five and holding hands they rushed past the neon of Piccadilly to reach her hotel just thirty yards further. Breathless and unable to speak a word, because if nothing else they did not know each other, they entered the room and Elspeth went to the window for a moment to look down on the street below.

She caught her reflection in the glass and considered for a moment, before she pulled the curtains closed and turned to face him. A slight smile twisted her lips. Irony?

Perhaps!

“Strip,” she ordered.

He glanced at her and realised that it was not some erotic game that this mistress of the dark was playing as role play. This was an order that she expected to be obeyed. It seemed ludicrous to reply ‘yes mistress’, it was not that kind of game. He was then the inferior. She had picked him up...

Of course he had spoken the first word. Of course he had issued the challenge! That was in the rules of the game. But she had attracted that first move on his part and now she expected him to satisfy her! He bent down and stripped his shoes and socks off under her conceited gaze. He felt almost as if he were the whore and she was the client who was paying for a small service.

“Slowly, boy. I want to appreciate you properly! Slow,” said Elspeth.

It was so delicious, this sexual power that she had over men. The knowledge that no matter how depraved, how totally indulged they were, she was the beast of the bedroom and her partner was the insignificant innocent who was to be fucked, used, blown out and then tossed away as a husk. It was how she had so easily become the perfect dominatrix to satisfy her hunger. It was how she had played the aunt who fucks in her Scottish cottage all last winter until at last another rough headstone had adorned her patch of the moors.

That one had even willingly dug his own peaty bed while she stood over him.

“Name?”

“Mike,” he replied as she stood, “and yours?”

“Helena Petrovna Blätavsky neé Van Hahn,” she said in a light tone as if the tumble of words was the perfect counterbalance to his one syllable answer.

A slight look of shock came into his features and then he smiled.

“I cannot think of a more appropriate name for a creature that is so perfect,” he said as he started to unbutton his shirt to reveal the pattern of a vast tattoo that covered all the surface of his skin. Black ink tapestry on skin it was a dense mass of writing that Elspeth immediately recognised:

‘Kulometow Pinech Relaswech wördigasi. Kidchimgas chilidum Wachaii Welebhe Permech. Ketholud’ ... the writing started at his collarbone and wound around his chest to leap to the tops of his arms in a single bound. That strange doggerel German and Latin hybrid that was such a favourite of so many occultists centuries ago.

“Kornreutheri?” said Elspeth, suddenly interested in this strange young man who was rather more than he had seemed when she had spied him in the bar.

He looked shocked and then glanced down at his skin. How had this woman known the author of the script that he had had inscribed on his skin?

He nodded assent.

She had recognised it immediately, of course she had. If she used a name like Petrovna Blætavsky then she must know something of his obsessional hobby, the occult.

“There’s more,” he said with a slight tremble in his voice.

“Of course there is,” replied Elspeth as she watched him strip naked for her amusement, “or at least there had better be! I always demand more.”

The writing wound over the whole of his body apart from hands and face. It followed a serpent trail that Elspeth followed with her fingers as she spoke the words of those half remembered spells that were nearly and not precisely the spells to call demons.

Her finger followed the trail and she felt a slight shiver as she found herself remembering something that had lain buried deep for a hundred years. Something that lay on the outer limits of recall. Finally her hand reached his cock. Adorned by the calling spell for a demon named ‘Amisalog’ it begged to be read like the rest.

Her hand closed on his prick and pulled a little.



“It’s a fuck that you want?” asked Elspeth in a coy voice. “Do you want my cunt?”

Mike gasped and nodded as one of her hands pushed him to fall to the bed leaving his engorged prick standing like a lonely tower in a sea of cursive and curlicued tattooed script. Fully clothed, shoes still on her feet, Elspeth climbed onto the bed and sat over his cock. It pointed into the shadow of her tight skirt, trembling with his heartbeat and the pent up lust and need that boiled in his Brian.

He could feel the heels of her stilettos scrape his naked thighs. He felt the short fur coat fall from her shoulders onto his legs with the soft touch like a kiss. He saw her breasts swell under that silk and the parting between buttons that revealed the naked skin that curved under the blouse. He could see her nipples swell and press through the silk; he looked up and gasped as she slowly lowered onto his cock.

For a moment he felt contact as his cock rested against the groove of her sex before the warmth swallowed it.

One small degree at a time. Her avaricious and greedy cunt swallowed the spell, the cock and his sanity. Mike tried to raise his hands and touch those breasts. He longed to cup them, to spread his fingers as support for them. He longed to run his fingertips over the tightly bunched nipples and then roll them between his fingers.

“No, darling, it’s just a fuck, it’s all I want!” she breathed as her hand closed over his wrists.

In the madness of his craving he pressed against her with his arms. He pushed towards her breasts. She should have given, she should have been rocked back and his hands should have cupped those perfect breasts. Should have... Instead he felt her hand grip like iron. They closed like fetters around his wrists and bent his arms back to the bed as she displayed an almost hydraulic strength. It was like a child in an arm-wrestle against a weightlifter. With no sense of effort on her part, Elspeth simply bent him to the shape that she desired and then pinned his hands and forearms beneath her thighs.

“Now, fuck me!” she whispered. “Fuck me...”

His hips pushed up and thrust home. Mike heard her mumble something and then realised that she was reading his straining body as she allowed him to fuck her. He watched as she pricked her finger then watched the hand slip into the waistband of her dress.

A blot of blood spread on her white blouse where her finger contacted a moment.

He heard her call spell after spell. Adonais, Melchior, Baal Saggath and Lilith. The spells uttered from her lips as he strained to fuck the Lamia that was on the point of feeding from her victim. As he strained, as she fucked him and drew in his psyche, she read his body in a litany of Medieval Latin that none knew better than she.

At the moment that he felt climax come, he felt a suction on his mind.

A void near his soul, a pulling at his aura that ripped it from him in a vortex of perceptual agony. Abstract nerves that Mike never knew that he had, thrummed with agony and then parted and her voice lapped at his mind. She sucked him up, pleasure on a physical plane and anguish and terror in the transcendent one.

Elsbeth screamed with the pleasure. Cried out because this man had so much to give and climaxed, weeping tears of rapture because he, the victim, almost understood what was happening! Almost fathomed that she was tearing ravenously at his soul. That the woman who was violating him on the physical level was raping him on the mystical plane.

Now it was over.

Mike lay in a pool of sweat that already was soaking into the coverlet. His body was slack, bereft of life. A book that was scrawled with the graffiti of an obsession that had in the end mastered him, without him ever fully realising that he had finally met the demon he had longed to call.

Elsbeth lifted from her victim

She was still muttering the spells.

She stopped and bent down, absorbed in a small detail of the writing that drew her to roll the still-warm book of spells on the bed. She looked at the spell to call the demon 'Amisalog', a former Semitic god.

Now she remembered what she had lost for so long. She recalled the notes that she had written in the long sought-for 'Ars Satanica'. Now she no longer needed

the book that she had lost. The hint was in the script that allowed the summoner to bind the demon.

That recursive hint which used the demon's own power against itself.

Medieval cunning combined with a modern deception.

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The hotel-room door slammed.

High heels scratched the marble as she left the hotel without a backward glance.

An hour later Elspeth, Helena Petrovna Blätavsky neé Van Hahn was in the first class compartment of the express train to Glasgow. Finally she understood how to draw that symbol that would encompass her being.

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By the time the train passed York and Harrowgate on its way north, Inspector Janice Dresden was staring at a man killed in his prime. He was closely covered with strange tattoos, lying bereft of his life and soul on the bed of an expensive hotel.

This time the body was still warm.

## Chapter 7

## *Heatherstone Moor and Glasgow 2013*

Black magic requires ritual.

The requirement grows with the inexperience of the magus.

That does not mean that a caster needs to collect black human-tallow candles and draw pentagrams on the floor in chalk. Learning long enchantments and reciting names of demons and forgotten gods without a mistake are not strictly necessary for the spell caster. These things are all aids to self-control, a discipline in controlling the mind, its notions and emotions while the Brian configures the spirit to enact the invocation or charm.

The ritual ensures that the mind is prepared in the same mode at the beginning of the evocation, the ritual paves the path to the destination. Meanwhile the thoughts follow their own language that can be described by diagrams, occasionally seen in grimoires. The diagram for each entity is unique, lines that twist and turn and shapes that allow the adept to mentally smooth the calling and oil the passage of the being who is being called.

It is this pattern that must be designed and worked over for long hours of concentration and meditation. For every adept the configuration is a little different, though the general pattern form is the same.

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The Scottish moors are bright with purple heather in the late autumn. In just two months the colour would be gone and the cold would grip the huddled hawthorn and heather. The colour is otherworldly, a bright lavender that contrasts with the greys and olive greens of the reeds, grasses and rocky outcrops.

Elspeth arrived at her cottage on Heatherstone Moor in the late afternoon. She parked the land-rover in the half ruined barn and spent a few minutes staring over the moors with clearness in her mind that she had long-times not experienced. A transparency of purpose, a translucency at last, that bode well for the enterprise that she was about to embark upon.

The plan was simple. Invoke herself with the spell that she had almost elucidated and a diagram that needed yet to be crafted. If she prepared well, then the invocation would be a few seconds of utter meditation and would either fail disastrously or succeed in some way that she could not anticipate. She would place herself under a geas of compulsion giving her power over herself. No longer would she feel the compulsion to fly into an uncontrollable fugue, she would be able to control those urges to suck at every morsel available in one overwhelming need to replenish her youth and splendour.

Then she would be ready at last to hunt down the man who had dared to capture her. She would hunt him down, pen him, control him and bleed him dry of every drop until at last she would bury the empty husk in a shallow grave on Heatherstone Moor with the others who had provided her with nourishment at the cost of their very lives.

Her power spread like an imperceptible web from the small cottage. It pulled at the two who would complete the coven that Elspeth was weaving. The force would point them to her; deliver them to her until, at last she would close the circle.



Elsbeth opened the cottage and lifted the dust sheets from the furniture and lit a fire in the grate. It was not yet cold, but better to warm the rooms and feel comfortable. For the next two weeks she would be working on the invocation and the figure that she would have to hold in her mind. For the incantation, there would be no sound, no diagrams and no diagrams on the floor. The cottage on the moors served as ritual. It was a haven, a place that was as intimate as the inside of her own mind. The rest was just a matter of meditation, the stilling of the uncertainties, the calming of fears and the soothing of her anxieties.

Elsbeth sat and watched the flames in the fireplace. She heard the crackles of the logs as the resin in the pine logs popped. In her mind she went deep into herself and sought the roots of her own existence.

Elsbeth would summon herself and stake everything on the unknown.

Destiny would take care of the remainder!

Destiny and her summoning.

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“Don’t worry, my expenses don’t have to be entered in your time sheets,” said Janice as she sat in the cafeteria of the Glasgow Pollockshaws police station in the rather grey suburbs of Glasgow.

“Well thank God for that,” said the Inspector who sat opposite from her. “Now then, I pulled the three files that seemed the most relevant.”

He coughed with embarrassment as he passed the first.

“Last two years, men who died, probably during sexual activity,” he coughed again. “In no case was the woman or other participant identified.” He slapped the printouts on the table and continued: “The second bunch are men who have disappeared. I have sorted for ages fifteen to fifty as well as including just the last two years. Last of all we have all the female sexual offenders.”

“Thanks for auctioning this so fast,” said Janice as she picked up the printouts and slipped them into her handbag. “Sorry to have put you out of the way!”

“That’s OK,” said the Inspector. “Listen, I have to ask you something... I don’t mean to pry into your investigation, but is this in any way private? I mean, as far as I know the London Met charge every minute without fail and...”

“It’s not private,” said Janice. “Unofficial is a better description really. I took some leave and wanted to follow a hunch about some deaths over the last few years.”

“Well! Good luck with that,” he replied. “Don’t worry, I’ll not tell a soul and if y’need any more, just call me up here and we can discuss it over a drink or two!”

It was clearly a chat-up line, but Janice ignored it as she clutched the printouts

and headed for the door.

“I’ll do that!”

Janice left the small police station and headed back to her hotel.

She had a clue, the small gold coin, she had her list of deaths and missing persons, now all she had to do was to make a prediction of where the next would be and when.

What she had to figure out was why the perpetrator had struck again after just a short period of time?

Tugging at Janice was the summoning, a subconscious leverage on her actions.

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The man known to the modern world as Jason Smith stepped from the train onto the platform of Glasgow Central station and watched the people passing him with the air of a Rajah watching the little people running hither and thither whilst he was preoccupied with greater things.

He knew her name, he knew her intimately and yet there were so few clues to her. He had managed to get over the fact that he had foolishly allowed her to escape. Overconfidence, hubris, call it what he may, next time would be

different. He would squeeze the bitch dry in one glorious fuck when he caught her. There was no way that she measured up to his strength, his cunning and his need. She would succumb and he would feed as never before.

He found that his dreams had changed since he had tapped her force. Occasionally he saw strange scenes. Wild moors, heather and mountains, a small ruined farm, a Land Rover parked outside. He saw scenes from Rome and glimpsed interludes that made no sense, but Jason knew that he had taken part of her and no matter how Elspeth managed to recover, part of her would always be in his inner consciousness.

This station, it too was engraved in his consciousness somehow, even though he had passed though only once or twice in his long life. The crowd was well ahead now, people rushing to get to their petty concerns whilst he, Jason, had business that was too important for words.

He closed his eyes, but nothing came, so he wandered along the platform and tried to relax, to allow some inner spirit to guide him. But Jason was not a man who could meditate and unwind at command; he was a fierce spirit who had always had a goal in sight.

Leaving the Central Station, Jason headed to find a hotel where he could indulge himself whilst he tried to place the pictures in his mind and find the place where Elspeth lurked.

Where she thought that she was safe!

He did not sense the small tugging at his consciousness, he just followed what he

thought was his instinct.

He was sure that the heather and moor was in Scotland, some inner light told him so. The problem was to find the scene and translate the wisps of newfound memory into a real location that he could visit. For now he would find a mate in the hotel and feed his never-ending need to refresh himself.

It was not that it was necessary, once a year, once every two years would keep him in a youthful condition.

He enjoyed it... the cat and mouse of destruction.

Power and sex.

Incubus!

## Chapter 8

## *Glasgow 2013*

Janice picked up the small coin and inspected it again. It had been easy to identify, a shekel of Carthage with a horse on the reverse and a small portrait of the Goddess Tanit on the obverse.

Valuable, certainly, but not exceptional.

A couple of thousand pounds would buy another. The piercing for a ring to hand it from a chain devalued it and there were, as far as Janice could tell, hundreds on sale at the moment on the Internet. The coin on its own would not lead to the woman who had fled the scene in Harrogate. As for the incident report printouts from the Glasgow police... well they were also useless as far as she could see. Janice had written each one on a small card and arranged them on the floor of her hotel room to try to see a pattern. She had coloured them by date and year and placed them to find that there seemed to be no pattern. She had taken away the cards from any incident that had no sexual overtones, the simply missing, deaths that occurred that did not occur 'in flagrante delicto' and there was still no pattern that she could see.

She sat on the edge of the bed and looked at the map disconsolately.

She looked at the coin for the thousandth time and sighed. Maybe her Chief-Super was right. Maybe there was nothing here. She had dreamed of spotting a pattern and finding the woman who was responsible for so many deaths, but it was hopeless, there was nothing to see here.

She threaded the coin onto the slim chain that hung from her neck and let it drop to her breasts. Perhaps it was time to give it all up, the thought that she was an Agatha Christie heroine who would solve a complex case in a flurry of amateur insights, perhaps she should just enjoy the rest of her leave of absence, travel a little, forget her job and then, at the end of it all, head back to her well paid job and find a partner to share her life with.

In a last downhearted attempt to pick up her enthusiasm again she replaced all the markers back onto the map and stared at it by walking around as if looking from an unusual angle might just trigger some insight.

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An hour later Janice was in the Hotel bar with a colourful cocktail in front of her. Walking out of her room, finally, had triggered the decision to lay her obsessions and feelings about the ‘murders’ to one side.

The barman, well, she could fancy him she decided.

Perhaps that was what she needed. It had been a year since she had shed her last boyfriend and thrown herself at her work as a surrogate. He had always been trying to press her in directions that she did not want to be led. She wanted to lead, she needed a man who would fit her needs, a man who would bend to her will.

Perhaps a one night stand might be just what she needed! The bar slowly filled until it was clear to Janice that Jury’s Inn was a watering place for more than the guests.



The small booth where she sat stayed empty but for her and though she tried to look open to conversation she found it a bore to grin like a fool at all the men who passed her by. Occasionally her fingers went to the coin around her neck as she thought guiltily that she had hidden evidence from the Yorkshire police and wondered if she could in some way reverse her impulsive pocketing of evidence at the scene of a crime.

When she looked up from the coin she noticed a young man staring at her. Good looking and casually dressed he held a glass of wine in his hand and when he noticed her attention he smiled and stepped up to the booth.

“Been stood up?” he asked.

“No, not yet,” she said as she tried to give a light-hearted answer to his opening line.

His eyes caught the coin that was in her fingers and it seemed for a moment that he was disconcerted.

“Mind if I sit down?”

“Not at all, if you introduce yourself first...”

He slid into the booth and turned to face her. His eyes slid again to the coin and then back to lock with hers.

“Seems like we both arrived alone. My name’s Jason,” he said.

He did not seem at all put out that Janice was perhaps fifteen to twenty years his senior and he turned out to have a charismatic charm that put her at her ease. Soon they had each told the other a little about themselves. A small revealing that could only lead in one direction.

“It’s too noisy here, I think that it might be an idea...” said Janice.

“Your room or mine?”

“Mine,” said Janice before she remembered the map and cards on the floor of her room, but she decided that she would not care, he knew what he wanted and she was getting excited thinking about it.

‘What does that all matter?’ she thought, ‘time to let it all go...’

Together they went up in the lift and stood before her door.

“One thing though,” said Janice as she stood poised before the door. “With a condom...”

“Of course,” said Jason with a warm smile.

He glanced up the corridor and noted that there were no security cameras in this level of the hotel. Perfect! The glint of gold caught his eye and Jason wondered how it had come into this woman's possession. Of course it could be another... but he had seen it last time between Elspeth's breasts and he was sure that it was the same coin.

The door opened and Janice stood aside to let him into the room.

She turned to switch on the light and in that moment Jason pushed her into the room with a brutal shove that sent her crashing into the door post of the small bathroom. The door slammed behind him and Jason stood over her with a light in his eyes that was not a lover's gaze. Janice looked up at the man that stood over her and flinched when his hand came to tear the necklace from her. For a moment he inspected it and then closed his eyes for a moment as if trying to recall something.

Janice lashed out with her feet; she kicked up and caught him between his thighs from below with all her force. A muffled cry came from Jason, but he did not fall in agony as she expected he just reached down and grabbed her jacket and shook her like a doll.

Never had she been in the presence of such sheer strength. The jacket tore as his fingers rent the cloth like tissue paper. It stripped from her as the seams burst and then his other hand closed around her throat.

"Where did you get the coin?"

The question was delivered in a monotone that was all the more frightening

because of a lack of emotion.

“A boyfriend,” she lied.

“Liar! Don’t lie to me bitch!”

He cast a glance around the room and then dropped Janice as if she were a ragdoll of no account.

“Help,” screamed Janice at the top of her voice.

Jason’s hand closed over her mouth and she tried to bite him. Once again his strength overcame her and both of her hands at his wrist failed to even move it. He let go of her throat and then swiped her a casual slap that thundered through her head like an explosion. Leaving her on the floor he went to the map and regarded the small cards that lay on it.

Janice drew breath and was about to scream again.

“Just one more sound,” he hissed at her, “and I will fuck and kill you.”

Jason’s clenching fingers were enough warning to stop the cry in her throat.

He kneeled and looked closely at the map before picking up one card. Finally he picked up the map and sent all the index cards flying before he dropped it and stood over the stricken Janice.

“You have no idea at all what you are getting mixed up in,” he said before speaking in another language of which Janice could recognise no single word. “Soon you will not have to worry about it!”

His hands went to his belt and started to pull it loose.

“A nice evening we have had here,” he said. “You picked up the wrong man to fuck!”

His hand fumbled at his trousers.

The knock on the door broke the silence and then the voice of a man: “Hotel security, open the door!”

Jason cast a look around the room and then the door and finally down at Janice.

“I may be back!”

Jason flung the door open just as the burly security man was about to insert his key and shoved the man out of the way as if he were nothing more than a small passing hindrance and then he was gone. The hotel security man was sitting

stunned as Janice peeked around the corner to see her attacker disappear.

“Are you OK?” she asked.

He looked up at her and a trickle of blood came from his mouth where Jason had struck him.

“I’ve been better!”

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The police took an hour to interview and inspect Janice. When she showed her warrant card and gave a description they followed the form, but she insisted that she did not wish to be involved in a report. The Inspector in charge nodded and made a few notes before she was left alone to sit on the edge of the bed.

Janice carefully found all the cards and checked them off against the printouts from which they had been made. One was missing; her attacker had taken a single card:

*Brian Macgreggor*

*Age 23 yrs*

*Disappeared hiking Nov 22/23rd 2012*

*Heatherstone Moor*

With the police looking for him, Jason might have problems getting around... Janice looked at the map and found the place. Just fifty miles north into the wilds of Scotland, though what she would find there, she could not guess. The summoning net was tightening.

Janice slept fitfully and woke early at first light.

Breakfast was just a cup of coffee.

The drive started at seven.

## Chapter 9



## ***Heatherstone Moor 2013***

The figure was prepared.

A plain sheet of paper inscribed with a shape of convoluted lines that finished with a curlicue twist that wove through the web. It was the shape of the Lamia's spirit, the path to her soul.

Elspeth had finished it a day ago, but somehow she had hesitated to begin the summoning. No doubt must remain before she began the ritual that she had planned all those years ago. What had begun with a lost book had finished in inspiration gained from the pelt of a man that she had fucked and drained.

There was no avoiding it, she had to start or the hesitation might mount to become overwhelming, until at last Elspeth could not go through with it. There was no ritual as such, just a beginning, a middle and an end that would flow through her mind like a river of power.

She pulled all the shutters on the small cottage closed and locked them. She secured the door and dampened down the fire. Satisfied that all was prepared she entered her bedroom and slipped fully clothed under the covers. For a moment the candle in the living room lit her bedroom in eerie shadows. The pictures in darkness, the covered cage for her victims a disconcerting rectangle of lines and the windows nothing but a few lines of fading daylight between the closed shutters.

Her mind calmed as she repeated a poem that she had always used to clear her mind:

*This was a mistress, this, perhaps, a friend.*

*With pale, indifferent eyes we sit and wait*

*For the dropt curtain and the closing gate:*

*This is the end of all the songs man sings...*

Again and again she repeated the familiar words of the poem as she allowed her mind to focus on the shape that she had drawn so carefully and studied for days of uninterrupted meditation.

At last she could see the shape, every curl of the lines burning as they rotated in three dimensional movement in the matrix of her mind. Finally a small point of light appeared at the beginning of the figure. Elspeth willed it, coaxed it along the line. It ran like a bead on a wire, following every crease and curl as the spell was traced by her will.

First the name and then the summoning.

Like to like, unlike to unlike. The bead slipped along the wire of her pattern. It beckoned; it pulled and tugged at her psyche as it pulled her to obey her own imperatives. It bound her, twisted her to become nothing more than herself bound to her own will.

In the background, Elspeth could feel her energy wane, she could feel the flow as she used her own vitality as an accumulator to power the course of the bead

along the wire. Occasionally it flamed with passions and remembered moments in her long life. She sensed the summoning that she had started, she could feel her own aura as she forced that bright dot along its pathway.

Elsbeth's sense of the room, of the world around her diminished as she was absorbed by the lines in her head. She faded and appeared to fall to a deep sleep.

A cataleptic stillness, scarce a breath.

More than sleep.

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The large limousine struggled up the long track. At the wheel was Jason. In the distance he recognised the massive rounded heaps of Ben Lomond and Ben More. Suddenly there was a grinding as the tracks within which the wheels rolled, became so deep that the car grounded and came to a grinding halt.

Jason cursed in ancient Norwegian and climbed out of the car. It was not the car that he was at all bothered about, it was the inconvenience! The car was only a hire car taken under a false name anyway. He had become surer of his recognition of the mountains and moors as he ventured into the Trossach Mountains.

He climbed out of the car and bent to look under the body where it was now clear that a move in either direction was impossible because the rear wheels had

lifted from the ground.

“Bacraut,” he said again in Norwegian and stood to look around.

It was clear that he was close to the place that Elspeth’s stolen memories regarded as home. In fact, he decided, it might even be better to arrive on foot. The car would have been far too noticeable anyway.

Jason set off on foot through the high heather pulled by a force that he did not even sense.

It took an hour of steady hiking to reach the small summit from where he could look down at the small farm. Instantly recognisable to him even though he had never been there before, he knew that this was the place where Elspeth hid from the world.

There, visible through a gap in fallen masonry was her Land Rover.

The small walled field with the slight standing stones.

The low cottage where she was hiding.

He set off down the hillside with a feeling of supremacy in his heart, a feeling that finally, by luck he had cornered the bitch that he so very desired to drain of all her vitality.

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Janice had a place, Heatherstone Moor, but it was broad and long. A place marked on the map that she had bought in Dryman as just an huge indefinite area of rock, stunted trees and vast swathes of heather that would make crossing the moor well-nigh impossible to cross on foot. It was late evening before she decided to take the small track that started as paved, became a gravel drive and then developed into two ruts down which her small hire car could not go. That decision was driven by a need that she could not sense, it was just a light pull at her mind that guided her steps.

For a few minutes she tried to decide what she was going to do.

In the end she decided that the track that she had found was too good to miss and that she would pull the car off the road and hike a little to see what was visible from the top of the rise that lifted the moor in just two or three miles.

A wind started, a cold north easterly that caused her to button her parka tight and pull up her hood. Janice started to walk at a steady pace until at last she gained the top of the rise. From here she could see across the moor to the stark mountains beyond, purple and grey-brown.

Janice stopped and looked along the track. Just half a mile further along a car was stopped on the track. Beyond that the track went on and she could see no reason why the driver had stopped where he or she had.

She started down the gentle slope and was at the car in just half an hour.

It had grounded out and could not be moved. The keys were still in the ignition and when Janice felt the radiator she felt slight residual warmth that suggested that the owner had been gone perhaps two or three hours. Janice checked her watch.

It was now five and she could just reach her own car before nightfall if she hurried. She chose to press on! Instinctively she knew that the car had brought Jason here and she had to know what had drawn him to the same place that she desperately sought.

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Inspector Janice Dresden reached the cottage two hours after the sun had finally set over Ben Lomond. Light escaped in dim lines between shutters that had been pulled closed and locked into place. It looked as though only the cottage was habitable, the rest of the buildings were a murky shambles in the dark and gloom of the cold nightfall.

She moved to the closed shutters and peeped through, but all she could see was the grime on unwashed windows and a slight flickering as though the light came from flame or hearth.

Rubbing her hands to keep them warm she started to wonder what on earth she was doing here. Brought by coincidence and inquisitiveness, she was the cat that was staked out by her own foolish curiosity! What did she intend to do? Arrest a man who had been so strong that she had been treated like a ragdoll? Confront

some woman with no evidence at all that she was a serial murderer?

Suddenly the whole thing felt more than foolish, it felt precarious.

Janice almost headed back, but she knew that if she did, she would never know what this was all about, never solve the riddle that had plagued her for a year, never know.

She pressed against the front door a little. It did not give.

Janice felt the cold in her bones, the feeling of despair.

She knocked on the door.

## Chapter 10



## ***Heatherstone Moor 2013***

At last!

Elspeth felt a surge of total triumph as she contemplated the man stretched out on the bed. The hood stretched over his features, dehumanizing her nemesis. It smoothed his proud features, creating a doll-like puppet, barely individual. A helpless creature who could not even respond to the abuse that she intended!

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He had entered the cottage with such pent-up certitude. Incubus on the hunt for female flesh, he was the embodiment of male supremacy in a cruel world that he always dominated. He saw her standing naked before him, the woman who was to be his victim for a second and final time.

He smiled and reached for her before his world crashed to ruins.

Elspeth was no longer the woman that he had raped and drunk from; she had stepped to a higher place and was to Jason as he was to the mortals that he played with so carelessly.

A brush of her fingertips crossed his face.

It felt like ice, cold, more than that; it was a chill that penetrated to his very bones. He tried to strike her, but suddenly she was beyond his reach and he was falling defenceless to the floor. It was dream in slow motion, a nightmare of helplessness. He saw her bend over him and reach down with a single finger that reached to touch his forehead. It sucked all the consciousness from him and he faded to black as Elspeth laughed with exhilaration at his powerlessness.

Elspeth shackled him with chains to her bed; she touched the irons that she used to fetter him with a caress and they fused to close and seal him into the manacles. She drew a mask over his face to remind him of the one that she had been forced to wear and then she ripped every shred of human clothing from his muscular body using her fingernails like knives.

His body was a marvel, a fine physique indeed and one that promised such pleasure for her in the hours ahead. She gloried in her power and moved around the room with light step and a song on her lips.

The unexpected knock on the door startled her from her reverie.

She opened the door and ushered the strange woman into her house with a small smile. Then she noticed the small glint of the gold coin that was revealed when the woman opened her coat. Another part of Elspeth's destiny, caught in a supernatural web.

Elspeth extended her hand and the strange woman gifted the naked Elspeth back the coin of Tanit.

“It is mine,” said Elspeth.

“I know,” came the reply.

“You come here at the wrong time for whatever purpose you determined.”

“I have to see you, I have to know you and I have a duty!”

Elspeth stood in front of the fire. Her shadow made her a vast presence that filled the room to the point where Janice almost no longer fitted.

“Stand still!”

Janice stood as ordered while Elspeth walked the five steps around her.

“Were you following the man known as Jason Smith?” she asked.

“Yes, but really I was looking for you!”

Elspeth turned and opened the door to the bedroom. Manacled to the bed was the insensate form of Jason. Naked and chained his prick stood solid, even though he was not conscious to cause it to be erect.

Elsbeth made a small motion with her hand and Janice knew better than to argue with this woman. Elspeth turned and said, “Did Jason feed from you?”

Janice shook her head and replied, “He was going to... fuck.”

Elsbeth managed to look down at Janice despite the fact that she was the same height. Then she stripped the police inspector! Elspeth did not undo buttons, unzip zips or unhook hooks. Her hands simply tore the clothes from her. Simple tugs at the thick cloth and the clothes and underwear was rent from her body. She reached out to Janice and ran a finger in mock-affection down her forehead down her cheek until at last her fingertips reached the collar of Janice’s sweater. Janice felt a nail cut her cheek and felt a warm drop of blood oil the fingertip to her throat. Then the fingers gathered and stripped Janice in one smooth motion that rendered her naked in a single sweep of the hand.

Naked, Elspeth was a goddess of sexuality. Firm orb-like breasts, sweet pink nipples capping them. Naked sex that formed a valley from her flat stomach, a sweet dripping slit that longed to be sated. Broad hips and well-shaped legs, oily black hair that moved and rippled as Janice watched. Curled like snakes to form perfect ringlets that cascaded like a waterfall over her white shoulders and back.

In contrast, Janice was spare, pert, but small breasted. Small signs of age, small indications of imperfection. A briar bush between her thighs, short hair that fell only as far as her shoulders. A modern figure that was modelled on diet and exercise and not femininity and sexuality. She felt inferior in the luminous glow of Elspeth, listlessness contrasting with vigour.

Long fingered hands hung the coin about her neck on its chain and then without

a word, Elspeth pointed at the cage in the corner of the room and Janice knew that she had to obey. She was to be a witness, a spectator to whatever it was that Elspeth had planned for Jason.

Elspeth regarded Janice behind the bars...

It almost seemed a shame that she could not fuck the woman who cowered in that small cage, to reduce her to a helpless husk. There were of course other ways... On the other hand it exhilarated Elspeth that, for the first time, there was a witness to her predations. A person who would fearfully witness her triumph, the final domination of succubus over incubus. Perhaps Janice had arrived to become something more? Been called? Perhaps the balance had to be held in place as Jason suffered his due sentence?

Elspeth pursed her lips and wondered what was going through the mind of the helpless human female. Fear, that was certain, but surely she too felt some small portion of the excitement that Elspeth was experiencing? Why else had she so foolishly come to the cottage?

In her elevated state, Elspeth could not help but think of Janice as nothing but a mewling animal that scarcely had intelligent choices to make. The Lamia was now so brimming with the power that had rebounded when her summoning brought her spirit into the thrall of her mind that she felt invincible. She was something more than mortal now, not a half-way being, but truly in control of herself.

She looked down at the caged naked woman who looked up and decided...

Soon Janice would receive a gift beyond gold and gems. Would she value it, misuse it or perhaps she would cherish it and make the most of it? Perhaps she would remember Elspeth fondly, perhaps not...

“Jason Smith is a stalker of all women,” said Elspeth to Janice as if she were a judge pronouncing sentence. “Rape, death and destruction follow him wherever he goes. I mean to end the thousand years of his predation now and end him here.”

“You are no better!” replied Janice, almost frightened at her own temerity. “You murdered men and have done so for decades!”

Elspeth laughed.

“You are so wrong my dear little pet!”

“I have seen the trail of destruction that you have caused,” wept Janice.

“It is not decades, my dear. It is lifetimes, centuries, millennia that I have preyed on the weakness of men. Made them suffer to gain a moment’s ecstasy while they thought that they could have me as they willed. I sucked them all dry. The fetishists, the husbands who cheated their wives, the perverts and rapists. I fed on them all and so many more besides for the greatest of causes.”

There was a slight pause and then she smiled at Janice.

“Myself!”

As Elspeth spoke, Jason started to recover his wits somewhat. One moment he had been confronting Elspeth, the weakling Succubus that he desired to destroy and drink from, the next moment she had touched him with a caress of her hand. He looked at the naked woman who stood before the bed and quailed. Now he understood that he was in the presence of true authority, that in comparison made his power seem but a faded dream.

“Please Queen, forgive me!”

Elspeth smiled and whispered in his ear, “You do not mean it! You think that you know who I am, you still believe yourself to be superior to woman, but you are less than the lowest dust on my shoes...”

Her hands reached out and the claws of her nails scored his flesh, dragged raggedly, carving him in straight lines that welled blood finishing with a score of her nails across his face where they rendered the leather of the mask like razored talons..

“It does not matter who you think I am. It does not matter who in fact I am... For you, I am death, I sentence you to the lower hells of all that is most filthy in this world and the one that comes next. I condemn you for your vanity, your superiority, your masculinity and all the pain that you have inflicted on womankind!”

Elspeth mounted Jason.

He tried to evade her, he twisted in the shackles that held him tight; he bucked and fought for his life and existence as she rode with the storm. As she did so she laughed and slapped him with the flat of her hand. She scratched and played with him as he fought for his very soul as she teased him with words of mockery and contempt.

Finally she allowed herself to drop onto his cock.

It slid deep into her bare cunt and was swallowed in one smooth motion. Suddenly he stilled, he dared not move and provoke a climax, he dared not come first, but Elspeth laughed and her hands went down to her blossoming pussy and rubbed the cherry of her clitoris with eager circular movements.

She orgasmed with a cry of bliss and still he dared not move. She plunged on him and sucked at his cock with her pussy until at last Jason began to pant with growing need. He could not help himself, despite the pain, despite the brutality of this fuck, he could not resist the suck of her, the hand that slapped his balls brought him ever closer to climax.

“Come on little Jason, little Styrsen Jomssen, Lokkhir son of Styrbjörn, come for mummy! Come for me, give me it all willingly. Lokkhir, give it to me freely and I shall give you a last special gift.”

Jason moaned.

The eyes rolled in the slits of the leather mask.



Spittle foamed from his mouth and his tongue extended to be kissed by Elspeth's lips almost tenderly while her other hand grasped his balls and slowly twisted with savage intent.

Janice could see Elspeth riding that cock; she saw it standing from him when she lifted. A junction between female power and male weakness. She saw the soft lips that curled around it and grasped it. She saw the ooze of Elspeth's passion flow over the bruised balls that hung so vulnerable between his thighs. Janice saw every twist of the muscles, every attempt to resist thrusting and then the final physical submission to the woman who rode him.

"Do you give it freely, son of Styrbjörn, do you surrender to me and willingly offer your life?"

"I give it to you, it is yours..." he gasped.

Elspeth allowed her weight to bear him down and push him to the very limit. Her hands held his masked face still while she lowered her face and kissed him lasciviously on the lips as if she were a lover tasting the bliss of her man.

Jason cried out with a skull-ringing shout. His body arched and he pushed deep into Elspeth to climax at last with a wail, a cry and the shout of his ultimate and complete demise.

A shout that echoed through the room.

A scream that was his last breath on earth.

Elsbeth flung her head back, she opened her mouth but no sound issued forth. Her eyes closed as she contained the vitality that she was sucking into her, a bloom rose from her thighs to her breasts and beyond and her hair slowly lightened.

First a dark-black red that suffused her ringlets from scalp to the final curls.

A spreading bloodshot amber that shone like a light from her.

A brightening to a golden hue that lit the room.

Finally a light of snow, a pure white.

## Chapter 11

## London 2015

The man who sat at her side turned to tilt his head to look up at his mistress. His eyes drank in her regular features, the slim neck where a thin gold choker supported a bright gold coin. Janice looked down at the man and frowned, how dare he look at her without permission? Her hand descended from on high and came to rest on the top of his head for a moment before she slid the zippers closed and blacked out his vision.

Janice occupied the Chesterfield armchair as if it were a throne. How she had taken to this new life of hers! The man was married; his wife was a pale non-event compared to the intensity of his new partner, the partner who promised him an oasis of obedience. If she ordered him to divorce, then he would part from his wife. If she commanded him to anything he would obey. This was the heaven that he had sought, the submission he craved.

He, meanwhile, was her experiment, her little trial to measure her strength and ability.

She unhooked the leash and stood. Her lace gown draped over her body to the floor, it shadowed her body in darkness but it allowed the outline of her spare form to be seen.

“Come,” she said.

He crawled where she led. The fetters were not genuinely necessary; they were part of the sexual ritual that Janice was constructing in her mind. He would obey

her every word, but Janice was still uncertain of her strength and need the reassurance that the chains gave.

She paused to open the door to the room with her bed and the man misunderstood her intent. He lowered his head and kissed the uppers of her stilettos with gently pursing lips. Janice allowed him a minute of service, there was something so piquant about the fact that he still thought that she was a conventional dominatrix who had taken him under her wing.

“That’s enough,” she said.

He followed her to the room that he had never yet seen, but often entered. This was to be the last time. He climbed onto the bed as she stretched him face up and ready to be ridden.

The cock had to be released from its cage and persuaded to stiffness and then the ritual would be concluded. This was what those foolish men craved and it was what she offered. She stroked him and told him that she was allowing him release before she unlocked the metal jacket that kept him for her own exclusive use.

His prick sprang to attention in moments and she teased it a little until a single dew-drop of clear honey appeared to weep from the single eye.

“I think that you are ready to fuck me,” she whispered as she climbed over him to position herself ready over the tip of his cock.

He tried so hard not to move, she could see the muscles of his thighs tense as he

resisted his urge. Then she slipped onto him. Slick with anticipation, a flood of liquid perfumed impatience was dripping down her thighs. His cock slid into her like a hot knife and she gasped with bliss.

“You may not move,” she hissed. “This is my fuck!”

A strangled gasp came from his lips, but he remained still at her order.

Janice glided up and down on him, pushing ever further along the road to ruin. Her cunt tensed and gripped him as she pole danced on his shackled body until she was almost at the point of climax.

“You may come, now!”

His hips finally gave up their struggle not to flex and he thrust upward as hard as he could. For a moment his strength lifted Janice’s knees from the bed and then he gushed into her ever last erg of his spirit and vigour that she craved.

His body hung arched and then fell back to the bed and a feeling of incredible lightness of being flooded through Janice at the very moment when she too climaxed.

\*\*\*\*\*

Now she was young!

Twenty at most, or perhaps just sixteen! It was so difficult to tell, so demanding to adjust to this unconceivable gift that she had been given! The gift of everlasting life, everlasting youth given at the whim of a woman whose power was now beyond calculation.

Why?

It was a question that was not ever going to be answered.

Janice's hands ran over her adolescent body. The breasts were just a little fuller; the skin was smooth and taut. The crow's feet at the corners of her eyes had been smoothed and her hips were just a little shapelier. The small tattoo of a lizard that had adorned her shoulder was gone; it had faded after the first time.

She stroked herself and shivered at the touch.

It had taken three men to bring her to this desirable state and many more would be needed to keep her youthful. One thing that she was certain of, was that she would never allow herself to ever show any signs of aging...

...no matter how many men had to forfeit their lives.

**The End**



## **Author's Notes**

*In the order that they occurred to me, some small explanations...*

### **Succubus**

A Female demon that arrives at night, sometimes in dreams, to drain men of their powers and Christian morals. They used to be considered to be fearsome and frightening in aspect, now-a-days they are usually thought to arrive in the shape of a perfect temptress.

### **Incubus**

A male succubus, a demon with fearsome attributes that preys on women and fathers demonic children on them while draining the vital force of the victims as he does so.

### **Lamia**

Originally, in Greek myth, a queen of Libya who antagonised the Greek goddess-queen Hera so much that she was recast as half snake and half woman to punish her. As usual it was all about a beauty contest! Later the singular Lamia queen became a nightmare threat of Christian priests who warned of the sexual temptation that they were said to inculcate in helpless and lustful men. Lamia had become in effect succubus.

### **Sack Of Carthage**

The Romans defeated the Carthaginians in war three times. The first a twenty year struggle in the third century BC. The second was the famous tussle with Hannibal. The third war was a siege in which just the city of Carthage itself stood against the whole of the Roman Republic. The sack of the city was brutal in the extreme and all traces of Carthage were obliterated in the holocaust. The war was Rome's first 'unjust war' and triggered what the Romans believed to be the 'Punic Curse'.

### **Magnus The Good**

Magnus the Good, so named by priests because of the way in which he forced the Norwegians and Danes to become Christian, expunged almost the last witherings of the Viking spirit. He destroyed the wild Vikings of Jomsburg and died by drowning as he was about to set out to conquer England just twenty years before William the Conqueror made his bid at the battle of Hastings.

### **Vitae summa brevis...**

They are not long, the days of wine and roses:

Out of a misty dream

Our path emerges for a while, then closes

Within a dream.

*Ernest Dowson, from "Vitae Summa Brevis" (1896).*

### **Panormus**

The Roman name for the 'modern' city of Palermo in Sicily.

### **Ars Satanica**

A book that does not exist, but it is similar to many of the 'Majik and Sorcerie' books promulgated and printed in the Middle Ages in Europe. Examples of real and available magical treatises are:

*Malleus Daemonum*

*De Praestigiis Daemonum*

*Manuale Exorcismorum*

*Processus Satanae*

All of them are chocked to the brim with futile ritual, misunderstood quotes and ineffectual summonings, spells, magics as well as the usual warped Christian gibberish.

## **Irene's Website**

[www.MissIreneClearmont.com](http://www.MissIreneClearmont.com).

## **Zealand**

The largest Island of the Danish archipelago. The one on which Copenhagen now stands.

## **Tanit**

The goddess of fertility brought to Carthage from her Phoenician home cities in what is now the Lebanon. The Carthaginians seemed to believe that she needed a crop of victims at the season's turns to ensure the fertility of the land and sea and sacrificed children in a red hot brass bull in the centre of the city of Carthage to keep her happy. She featured on much of the coinage of Carthage and was considered to be the 'home' Goddess.

## **Harrogate**

A small stone built North Yorkshire town that is notable for the induction of total and indescribable boredom in the visitor. Only Hexham is even more liable to make you snore.

## **Macbeth**

Mac Bethad mac Findlaích was king of Scotland by right and a relative of the monarchs of the Western Isles that also make up part of Scotland nowadays. He became involved in a near civil war between the Godwin family and the king, Edward the Confessor. He paid for this intervention in English politics with his life when the English invaded and placed their own candidate on the Scottish throne.

## **Filiki Eteria**

An organisation, a secret society, formed by native Greeks as they fought to eject the Ottoman Turks from their native country.

## **Heatherstone Moor**

A place in Scotland that is purely the writer's fancy at work. Imagined to be in the Trossachs.

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