



Hell on Earth

by Roy Ellison

Smashwords Edition

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Armageddon.

The End.

The Apocalypse.

No one expected it to happen. There were no portents, no signs, no warnings. From one day to the next, a chasm opened, destroyed the capitals of the world and spread over the globe, tearing apart human civilization. It rained blood and acid, the humans perished as the flocks

of demons emerged from the depths of hell. Desperate warriors gathered to resist the invasion, battles were fought and lost. When it all was over, the legions of hell established a draconian rule on Earth. They divided the world amongst themselves, enslaving the surviving population. Soon, their own capitals grew amongst the ruins of our civilization, built by our toil, powered by our sweat.

Amongst the demons, four were the most powerful. They formed a series of shaky alliances, fought each other and struggled to find who would be the master.

They were:

Baal Zabuth, the Lord of Flies and Decay, the pestilence and destroyer.

Asturath, the Lady of War and Slaughter, the killer and defiler.

Aesma Deva, the Master of Wrath and Hatred, the despot and beguiler.

Belul, the Queen of Lust and Joy, the seducer and defeater.

In these dark times, the remaining free humans were barbarous warriors and fighters, roaming the devastated plains of the world and fighting for plunder and challenge.

Lucy was hiding. Outside, the beasts were howling, men were screaming, their guns roaring at their assailants. She hid her scruffy blonde hair between her arms, shuddering at every explosion. The demon troops were charging uphill, spitting fire and screaming blasphemies at the defenders. Another thundering boom shook the foundations of the centuries-old castle.

Her father stormed in, ducked down to her and said:

"Lucretia, my dear, please be careful and stay down. Everything will be well. The reinforcements will come any moment. Just be quiet and wait for me to come back."

She looked into his eyes and saw that he was lying. Still, she suppressed the urge to cry, put her chin up and nodded silently. He ran back out. This was the last time she would see his bearded, unwashed face. She desperately tried to remember his look, to keep his portrait in her heart. Beyond the inner court, the machine gun covering the gates fell silent. Then, one by one, the guns died down. Finally, all was silent.

Only then, a furious roar of victory blasted the grey stone walls. The fighting was done. The killing would be next.

Lucy sobbed, trying to hold back her tears. Suddenly, she felt a presence in the room. She scrambled to the cupboard, hiding inside. The demon soldier walked in seconds later. He sniffled. He looked around, checking hiding places, looking for something to kill. He came closer and closer, his pig-snouted face disappearing into the now-empty ammunition crates. When he finally reached the cupboard, Lucy clenched her knife and prepared to jump at him. He opened the door and she wordlessly charged at him. Surprised, the creature fell over.

The girl slashed at his face, trying to blind him, still silently striking at him. The beast struggled, attempted to free himself and finally managed to grab her. With a blunt move, he threw her against the wall, tore the knife from her hand and grinned, his face bleeding and torn.

However, he did not kill her. Instead, he pulled her up by her feet, the girl still stoically trying to resist. With a guttural voice, he said:

"You're quite the fighter, not like your no-good clanmates. I guess I'll keep you. You'll make a fine pet."

Lucy could not remember how long she had been in this cage. The ball of steel bands was strapped to a large demon beast that carried the pig-snouted warrior's belongings. In a sedan chair, the swine-beast and its courtesans preceded the bearer. The girl was devastated. Sometimes, one of the attendants would bring her food and water, occasionally, the hog-man would come over and poke her with his rod of office and watch her squeal for his amusement.

She had soon given up all hope. The last thing she could do, was cry herself to sleep and hope that the monster would eventually tire of denigrating her and let her die.

The monster and its band of warriors were on their way to a new battlefield, to fight against human rebels or allies of its master's foes. The trip seemed endless and was only occasionally broken up by skirmishes against local fighters or squabbles amongst the demon beasts themselves.

One night, when most of the other travelers were sound asleep, Lucy suddenly realized that someone was approaching one of the guards. She stared into the darkness, desperate to see what was going on. The assailant snuck up on the watching demon warrior. Moving behind it, the shadowy figure grabbed the demon's head and twisted it, breaking its miserable neck. Lucy rejoiced. The being approached. It wore a black cloak and a veil. Lucy tried to attract its attention. The attacker came closer.

Lucy saw a woman's face, harsh from the fighting. It was a pale apparition, clad in nuns' garbs and carrying various weapons with her.

She looked at Lucy, made a sign for her to keep silent, unlocked the cage and approached her master's tent. Lucy scrambled away.

Suddenly, all hell broke loose. Several warrior women stormed the camp, firing their guns and striking at the surprised demons with swords and axes. The monsters quickly reformed, setting up their defenses. The pig-faced one emerged from his tent, the nun's torn and twisted body in his arms, his concubines licking the woman's bleeding wounds. As he turned the tide of battle, the dying woman screamed at Lucy:

"Go to Flame Valley! Avenge us!"

Lucy turned and ran.

Weeks later, Lucy walked on. The soles of her feet had become thick and leathery, she had stolen some simple clothes from a travelling salesman and her hair had become a scruffy mess. She was itching all over and was evidently hungry and thirsty. Marching along on the sorry remains of some overgrown highway, evading demon patrols, she had hardened. Still, the loneliness occasionally got to her. She cried, but soon, the tears would no longer come.

Interestingly enough, the few people she met on her travels were friendly, some gave her food, some gave her directions. When she mentioned that she wanted to go to Flame Valley, people grew silent, nodded and told her the way, anxious not to alert any eavesdropping

spies for the demon lords. Apparently, Flame Valley was some sort of human stronghold.

From what she gathered, a few women who had escaped slavery and destruction had found a hidden valley far away from the sad remains of civilization and had built a fortress there. They occasionally sallied forth to fight the demons in the area, sometimes even venturing further.

After months of travel, Lucy finally reached the area where the monastery was supposed to be hidden. She noticed that the number of demon patrols was much higher around. They were searching for the stronghold, some of them even using crude flying devices to observe the area from above. She evaded the patrols, once barely escaping their monstrous bloodhounds by fleeing through the woods.

She had just found a resting place under the majestic trees of the valley forest when she heard the high-pitched whine of a devil dog pack. She jumped up, looked around and suddenly noticed the movements in the undergrowth. A few forest animals burst out of it and she knew she had to run. She sprinted away, the baying beasts racing behind her. Gunfire cracked as the human slaves of the demon wardens fired their rifles at their quarry. She darted through the shrubbery and tried to throw things in her hunters' way. It was pointless. The boar-sized, scale-covered monsters almost caught up to her. She tripped over a root, fell down, rolled and tumbled down towards a creek.

With a splash, she disappeared in the water, her burning lungs filling with water. She struggled to swim, the beasts jumping in behind her and quickly approaching through the foaming water. She swam to the surface, spat out the water she had swallowed, coughed and saw the monster come closer. She took the knife she had found on her travels

and stuck it into the beast's nostril, sinking her hand into the gaping aperture. The water took a greenish-blue tinge as the bleeding abomination struggled to attack her. When it eventually died, she swam away, hiding from the other pursuers.

She pulled herself out of the water a few miles downstream and searched the environment. She found a path and followed it into the hills. The landscape soon switched to a wooded chaos of nooks and crannies, dotted with bizarre rock formations. The whole place was surreal and confusing. However, she soon realized that there were signs and symbols that slowly led her along the labyrinthine place. At last, she reached a larger area devoid of vegetation. It was covered by an overhang of rock, shielding it from outside views.

Tired and dusty, she sat down. She was interrupted by a harsh voice:

"In the name of the One. Who are you and what do you seek?"

A woman had appeared. She wore a nun's veil and garb, a metal plate armour and carried a quarterstaff. It was clear that she was very well trained, her arm muscles easily visible through the habit.

Lucy got back up. She was tired and bruised. She just wanted to sleep.

"My name is Lucy and I was sent here by one of you. I'm supposed to avenge her, but right now, I only want to sleep."

The woman smirked evilly. She said:

"My name is Theresa and you will sleep when you are dead."

With these words, she attacked.

The first blow crashed down on Lucy's head, throwing her to the ground. She cowered, turned and evaded the next. Her attacker, apparently expecting this maneuver, brought in a low sweep and knocked her on the arm, disabling it. Lucy scrambled away, but the reach of the staff allowed her aggressor to keep on bruising her. Eventually, she understood, turned around and jumped at the taller woman. She moved under the staff, knocking it aside with her blackening arm and brought up her knife. The other woman instantly dropped the staff, clenched her fists and struck her twice in rapid succession, forcing her away. The nun recovered her staff and the game started again.

Soon, Lucy was tiring from the blows and the stress. She saw that this enemy was not to be defeated. However, she realized that there was one last chance. She scrambled at her, took a beating, rolled between her legs and grabbed the staff, tripping her foe over her own weapon. The woman went down with a crash, but soon got back up. Sadly, she found that Lucy had used her precious moments well, for she found the girl's knife at her throat.

She hissed:

"I'll sleep when you're dead."

The garbed woman laughed and replied:

"Even better, you'll sleep in a bed and you'll even get some food beforehand. It isn't much, but if you want, you are welcome."

Lucy relaxed, took away the knife and was instantly hit in the face by her would-be victim. Suffice to say, she lost consciousness.

When she awoke, she was rested. Her wounds were bandaged, her body was clean and the bed was hard but comfortable. Much more comfortable than the dusty road she had slept on in the last months. She slowly got up and realized that she was locked in a small cell directly carved in the rock. She tried the door, but found it locked. She found a small window-hole and peered through. Outside, the chaotic maze of rock continued. She weighed her options. She was a prisoner, but this wasn't demon domain. Maybe the women would keep her. They had fed her and washed her. It sounded nice, even though she was still in captivity.

Just as she was about to reach a conclusion, the door opened and the woman from earlier came in. She said:

"Stand and listen."

Lucy did as much.

"We have brought you here. You are safe. The mother superior wants to speak to you. When in her presence, you will only speak when spoken to. Is that clear?"

Lucy nodded.

"Excellent. Here are some clothes. Put them on, then follow me."

Lucy slid the frock over her head and did as ordered.

She followed the muscular warrior nun through the tunneling corridors of what soon turned out to be a massive monastery carved into the rock itself. Its walls and ceilings were decorated with ornaments and a the faint sound of a choir could be heard. When they finally reached their destination, it was a chapel carved into the mountain itself, outfitted in muted but beautiful tones of red and blue. In front of the altar, an older woman was kneeling. She wore a more decorated version of the other's uniform, which showed a little of her aged but wiry muscles. She got up and said:

"You are the girl that almost defeated Theresa. I like that. We may need people like you."

Lucy nodded.

"If you are willing to subject yourself to our order's strictures, we will train you to become a fighter. You will be able to put your talents and your anger to good use. Do you want to join us?"

Lucy immediately answered:

"Of course. The demons must be stopped."

"Perfect. Theresa, you will be her mentor. Train her well, you will be judged by her abilities."

"I will."

The next months brought big changes to Lucy's life. First, she was addressed as Sister Lucretia at all times. Second, the nuns started a vicious training regime of combat training, religious indoctrination and physical and mental hardening. She was woken early every morning, started with climbing and running in the dangerous and confusing environment of the monastery's surroundings, then had some morning training in close combat as well as weight training. The afternoon was taken up by meditation and mental conditioning. She was told about the

demons, their strengths and weaknesses, their interests and desires. The evening was once again used for some training finalization.

During this time, she was eating like a horse. The nuns had set up several farms in the area, where she was soon expected to work in order to feed the inhabitants. She soon put on a lot of weight, earning herself several pounds of muscle and becoming quite an adept fighter. As she blossomed into adulthood, Lucy had become a tall and athletic woman with a strong, rather curvaceous frame.

The nuns seemed quite happy about this. She soon mastered the various weapons and excelled in all kinds of martial exercises. When she was ordained as a full member, she had proven that she was in all ways excellent. She had managed to achieve this level in a fraction of the normally required time. The few other novices were rather jealous of her success.

The final step of their training had come. They were to ambush a group of demons and kill them, bringing their heads as trophies.

After a few days of travel, the novices found their mark. They had stalked a group of demon warriors for a while. Now, they were ready to attack. They took positions around the camp. Helena, the eldest, directed them to their locations, they readied their weapons and attacked. With a scream, they charged the demons. The surprise was perfect.

Lucy rammed her glaive into the first demon's body, a large, foul-smelling beast similar to an ant-eater and an ogre. She cut open its belly, soiling her robe with its entrails. She howled, whirled her weapon around and cut off the beast's head. She looked around and saw her allies fight valiantly. Behind them, however, a new danger was looming.

A large, spider-like creature was approaching. From its elevated torso, a second, human-looking body hung. The monster's secondary body was the body of a curvaceous woman who grabbed the first nun and bit her head.

Lucy reacted instantly. She ran at the beast, used the polearm as a perch and hurled herself at the monster. She kicked it in its lower face, freeing its victim. She drove it back with a few stabs of the glaive, then forced it into a corner.

The creature, bewildered by the resistance, spat a flood of gastric acid at her. She tried to roll out of the way, but the attack destroyed most of her clothing and scorched her skin. Lucy felt the mind-numbing pain blasting through her mind, but she wouldn't scream. Instead, she gritted her teeth, rammed the spear into the monster's dripping maw and killed it. She turned and saw the others finish their marks. Quite a few of them were wounded by now. However, they had won this battle.

Making short work of their enemies' corpses, they took what supplies they could and escaped back to the fortress. There, they presented their trophies.

The mother superior, visibly impressed by the success of the students, was happy to induct them into the order. Their heads were shaved and they took their vows. Then followed a rather sober celebration during which the mother superior admonished them to never forget their mission and fight as hard as they could to win the Earth back from the demons.

A few weeks later, Lucy was called to the mother superior's quarters. As she came in, she recognized Theresa as well as another, much older nun. The mother superior motioned her to sit and said:

"Sister Lucretia. You have been with us for quite a short time, but you have already excelled in the art of war. However," and she smiled gently, "you showed next to no promise in the art of religious obedience and liturgy. This is fine by me. Your talents are clearly martial in nature."

Theresa nodded in agreement. The mother superior continued:

"As it is, you may eventually become a very powerful fighter against the demon menace, but you are still far from enlightenment and we have great doubts that this is your destiny. Instead, allow me to make an offer."

Lucy agreed. As a matter of fact, she found the religious fuss rather pointless and uninteresting.

"Mother superior, I totally agree. If there is any way to focus on the practical business of demon slaying, I'd be grateful."

"As a matter of fact, there is. The venerable mother," she bowed to the older nun, "has discovered a series of texts which may lead us to a prophecy of great power. If you were to recover it, we could prepare a powerful offensive against our foes. We need someone to gain this prophecy, but the text suggests that only a living saint may be powerful enough to obtain it. Will you become a living saint of warfare?"

"I will."

"Excellent. Sister Theresa, you will continue to help Sister Lucretia on her way, but you both are now to work with the venerable mother. Act as she wishes and fulfill your destiny!"

The venerable mother led the pair into the depths of the fortress. They passed numerous doors and gates, hidden cells and checkpoints. After what seemed an eternity, they emerged into a large underground complex lit by electric light. Down here, the walls were tiled and the

whole setup appeared to be much older than the fortress. It must have belonged to an ancient, now defunct culture.

The venerable mother showed them around and explained:

"This is the heart of our fortress. Before the fall of mankind, our forebears set up this facility. It is a strange place, shrouded in mystery, yet ripe with knowledge. Here, we might find salvation."

They continued to a large, tiled room with numerous white beds. It was some kind of laboratory. She added:

"In this hall, we have found the sacred texts that tell us of the creation of the living saint which you shall become. Familiarize yourself with the place, you will spend a lot of time here."

The older woman smiled grimly.

Soon, Lucy and Teresa settled in. They lived and trained together. The other researcher-nuns frequently interrupted them, in order to take samples of Lucy's blood and to perform strange examinations on her. After a while, Lucy accepted the proceedings. Something was happening, but she still had no idea what.

After a while, Lucy was summoned to the venerable mother's office. She came in, followed by Theresa. Inside, a large group of sisters was expecting her. The venerable mother said:

"Sisters, this is Lucretia. She will be the living saint. You have the duty to prepare her. Explain what you will do."

The first sister to speak was a short one. She seemed to be out of shape and worried. She said:

"I am Sister Alexandra. I have devised the nectar of strength that will give you power like no other."

The next was a middle-aged woman, her face keen and proud.

"I am Sister Theodosia. I'm a surgeon and I will transform you into a creature that the demons will be unable to resist."

The third one was a tall, grim sister. She snarled:

"I will teach you to break them and to make them sorry for the sin of their existence."

Lucy was shocked, but saw what was going to happen. She bowed her head and said:

"I trust you to do your best."

Soon, Lucy's life changed. Every day, Sister Alexandra administered the nectar, a rather painful injection. After a few weeks, the effects started. Lucy's frame began to change. Her slightly muscled, shapely body was growing more and more muscular by the week. Her body swelled, becoming massive. Her exercises were changed to fit her new shape, preventing her tearing her tendons from the burst of strength. After a while, she had crossed into heavy-weight bodybuilder territory, her arms bloated with baseball-sized biceps. Her chest had become huge and deep.

As she moved the weights, she could feel herself change into something else. She became aggressive and irritable, sometimes barely managing to confine her lust. Theresa sometimes helped her cope.

By the time that Sister Alexandra declared her to be ready, Lucy had become a 5'11" muscle-bomb. Her body was so large and buffed that her muscles actually restricted her a little. She had put on 90 pounds of muscle in a few months, almost doubling her weight. When she tested her strength while fighting, she easily beat Theresa into submission every time. She could bend steel bars and drive a sword through a block of wood with one strike.

In order to prepare her for the challenges at hand, Lucy wrestled with beasts in the area and when the sisters managed to capture a live demon, it was she who had to fight it single-handedly. Lucy's fame rose and she soon realized that the younger nuns were aspiring to become like her. Of course, since the nectar was rare, they couldn't reach her level, but it was good to see them try.

One day, as she was lifting, Sister Theodosia came in. She said:

"Sister Lucretia, we are ready. Tomorrow, we will change you. Sleep well, for the day has come."

When Lucy confided with Theresa that night, she couldn't help but to cry. Theresa sat there, holding her musclebound friend and comforting her. She felt that the changes had come too fast and that the poor girl who was still only a teen, at least in mind, was being sucked into something she could neither understand nor control. At the same time, she was envious, for Lucretia might be the one to turn the tide. At least, she hoped she would, to make all this worthwhile.

Sister Theodosia led Lucy to the operating table. It was a massive construction, specially designed to support the young woman's bulk. Lucy climbed on top of it easily. Her mind felt weird. Over the last weeks, she had become increasingly confused, unable to understand the

changes the chemicals of the nectar brought. Her bouts of aggression and arousal had made her feral in her ways. As Sister Theodosia hooked her to the narcotic and the other assistants came in, she drifted into a strange, drug-fueled sleep. Theresa held her hand.

She was at home. Her father and mother were outside, talking to the people of the town and preparing things she couldn't understand. The word they hushed with fear, "demon", frequently came up. She felt fear well up within herself. Then, the dream switched to the day her parents had perished. Death hadn't been kind to them, the demons had had their fun. She felt angry beyond reason. All she wished to do was to destroy them and to rid the world of their presence. Occasionally, she drifted back into consciousness. She heard the sisters talk amongst themselves, she felt strange touches inside and outside her skin.

When she finally awoke, she felt tired and bruised. She was wrapped in bandages, her face and body covered in sterile covers. Her breathing was difficult. Theresa was there, but she frequently drifted in and out of consciousness. She could hear her familiar voice, telling her that everything went well.

When she had recovered from the anesthesia, the three sisters came and took a look at her. Lucy was lying on her bed, several drips and cables attached to her body. She could barely move due to the bandaging. Sister Theodosia said:

"Hello, Lucretia. Good to see that you have recovered. Are you in pain?"

Lucy answered with a muffled "no".

"Excellent. You see, dear colleagues, the surgery was a complete success. With her new form, she will be able to control the demons' powers and instincts. After all, these beasts are but creatures of lust, deviation and anger. To master them, a warrior needs to embody and harness the lust."

The third, still unnamed sister with the grim expression nodded. She said:

"They will cower before her."

"They will. Now let us see whether my work meets our expectations."

With these words, she removed the covers from Lucy's body and began cutting away the bandages.

When she was done, they helped Lucy on her feet and led her to the mirror. Lucy fell silent as she saw her new naked self. Her breasts, reduced by the heavy training, had been replaced by a pair of enormous, soccer-ball sized tits with bloated nipples. Her lips were swollen, her face was weirdly seductive. Also, several parts of her body were pierced. All this combined with her hypermuscular body made her a strange, meta-human being. The third sister added:

"Excellent. In two days, you will be at my doorstep."

She turned and left.

Two days later, Lucy arrived at the silent sister's house. It was a small dwelling not far from the monastery, but still distant enough to be entirely isolated from the hubbub of the cloister. The place was deserted, not even a tree in sight. Instead, a few unsightly rocks and a sandy plain marked the cave-like hut's surroundings.

As Lucy approached, she was still far from graceful and stumbled along. She was still unaccustomed to the massive implants which blocked her vision, reinforcing the effect already produced by her overdeveloped pecs. She still wondered why these changes had been necessary. Theresa had been with her all the time, tending to her scars and ensuring that the various holes in her body remained open. She had inserted several plugs into the apertures, which gave her ears, nostrils, navel and sex a knobby appearance. Right now, Lucy was wearing a special outfit, featuring her nun's veil, a skintight compressing bodysuit and a pair of heavy boots.

She knocked on the door, her chest sore from the healing.

From inside she heard:

"I'm coming."

The woman appeared in the doorframe and said:

"Down."

Lucy gazed at her with a dumbfounded expression.

"Down", she repeated.

Finally, Lucy lowered herself to the ground. It was a slow and rather arduous procedure. When her breasts touched the ground, she gritted her teeth, ready to get back up and punish the older woman for her audacity. However, she couldn't muster the inner strength. For some

reason, the words of the other one kept her down. The older woman put her left boot into her face and said:

"Very well. You will serve me well."

Lucy tried to protest, but it was useless. The words wouldn't leave her mouth. Instead, the woman ordered her inside, gave her a sorry place to sleep in and soon began making her do the daily chores of her life. For every thing Lucy wanted to do, she had to ask the other one. Quite frequently, the older woman refused, forcing Lucy to endure the strictures she imposed on her. After a while, she grew accustomed to the servitude she had to bear with. Finally, obeying her orders became a second nature to her, until she no longer needed them. Instead, she knew what was being asked of her.

Then, one day, the woman said:

"Lucy, get over here. Bring me some tea."

Lucy did as ordered, her bulky body moving with a certain power, but now lacking the tension she may have held before.

"Good." The woman took a sip of tea. "You've been an excellent servant and you have learned your place. Since you now accept my domination, I will teach you to master all you meet. You will learn this. You will use it as I say."

Lucy agreed silently.

From this day on, Lucy was taught the art of domination and mastery. She learned the way of the voice, the strength of threats, the power of violence and fury of retribution. She learned to endure the pain and to inflict it. When she emerged from the measly hut months later, her once

broken back had mended. She now walked with newfound, even greater pride and confidence. She felt she was now finally ready to become a living saint.

As the still anonymous nun followed her out, she said:

"Sister Lucretia. To prove that you have internalized what I have taught you, you will have to prove your abilities. Are you ready?"

Lucy turned around. She had grown over time, making her 6'2". Her muscles had matured, her powerful stance increasing her intimidating bulk. With a deeper, more mature voice, she replied:

"Of course. Bring me a demon to break."

The older nun smiled grimly and said:

"No, my dear, this would be too easy. Anyone can destroy those she hates. No. In order to prove your worth, you will have to break someone you love."

For a second, Lucy was afraid. She instantly recovered to her new, ruthless personality.

"Of course. I'm ready."

The old woman's dry smile changed to a disdainful sneer as two nuns brought Theresa in front of her.

"There you are. Make her your slave and you will be the true saint."

Lucy was on the verge of crying. She couldn't bear the situation. With all her force of will, she walked closer to her friend, who looked at her in confusion. This woman, who had taken her with her and protected and

led her through the arduous transformation into someone who might save the world, was about to become her own love's victim. Theresa, realizing that this hulking behemoth of a woman was no longer her friend, despaired as the older woman smiled ecstatically. When Lucy was in front of her, she bent down, looked at her friend and whispered:

"I'm sorry."

The other one silently replied:

"I know. It's okay."

And Sister Lucretia did as she was asked to.

That night, Lucy returned to her old quarters she shared with Theresa. She was sore all over. Her body was now covered with sacred tattoos of holy texts and mystical symbols to ward off demons. The wounds left by the tattoos were covered in bandages. She hadn't seen the finished works yet, but she could feel the writing under her flesh. Inside, she sat down on her bed and said:

"Come in, slave."

Theresa walked in demurely, her head down. She submissively approached her mistress, awaiting orders. Lucy looked at her friend. Her eyes were empty, silent and devoid of emotion. She had used her powers to break her spirit. The procedure had been arduous. At first, she had ordered to lie in the dirt in front of her and made her lick her boots. When she realized that Theresa was doing this out of love and friendship, she stopped. Instead, she bent down and pulled her friend up by her hair. She had stared at her with total disdain and said:

"I am no longer who you remember me to be. I am no longer your friend. You will learn to hate me and I will destroy you."

She said this with a flat and unemotional voice, then let her drop back to the ground. She then started to beat up her mentor. Her fists struck her with the power of sledgehammers. She kicked her, threw her to the ground, pulled her up, choked her and made her feel she was in total control. When her attacks began threatening Theresa's life, the weaker woman tried to defend herself, but the muscular behemoth that her friend had turned into just snarled and broke her defense.

Finally, her struggle became desperate, but futile. Theresa realized that she was completely at the mercy of this insane beast that had once been her friend. She valiantly tried to defend herself and her dignity, but when she lay wounded, bruised and naked on the sand, Lucretia just grinned and proceeded to piss on her.

She kicked the destroyed woman and rolled her on her back and said:

"You are mine. You will serve me until you die."

Theresa tried to get up but couldn't. She sniveled:

"I am yours. Please, let me be yours."

Lucy's thoughts returned to the present and she said:

"You will sleep on the floor. From tomorrow until the day of your death, you will serve me."

"I will."

When her skin had healed, Lucy was called to the council of the order. When she arrived, the women were awestruck by her presence. There she was, a 6'2" beast of a woman, wearing combat boots making her even taller. She was clad in a skintight black suit made of bullet-proof

fabric, which hugged her over-exaggerated curves perfectly. Through the fabric, the various piercings were visible, each one shaped to represent a holy symbol of the order. Over the suit, she wore a set of armor plates, which made her appear even bulkier. At her side, she carried a large sword and a dagger, as well as a shotgun slung over her shoulder. On her head, she wore a nun's veil, covering her bald scalp.

As she stepped in front of her elders, she did not bow. She merely looked at them gravely.

The mother superior stood up, clearly impressed by the young woman's total transformation, and said:

"Sister Lucretia. You have received the best training and the most powerful blessings we can offer. You are the epitome of the tenets of our order. Go forth and destroy evil in the name of good. Return truth and righteousness to the world. The sacred scrolls of our order tell of a demon fortress in the East. There, you will find the first of the demon lords. Defeat it!"

Lucy smiled grimly and bowed her head slightly.

"I will do as is the will of the order."

She turned around and headed for the gates. She turned her head and said:

"Follow me, slave. You will be my shield-bearer."

Theresa, clad in a simple nun's robe over her armor, instantly responded. Together, they left the monastery.

As Lucy reached the road, she had a strange feeling. It was a pang of regret. She realized that she was now in all respects a monster. A human monster, but still a warrior beast, not at all different of the demons that roamed the land. She flexed her massive arm and watched with disbelief

She said this with a flat and unemotional voice, then let her drop back to the ground. She then started to beat up her mentor. Her fists struck her with the power of sledgehammers. She kicked her, threw her to the ground, pulled her up, choked her and made her feel she was in total control. When her attacks began threatening Theresa's life, the weaker woman tried to defend herself, but the muscular behemoth that her friend had turned into just snarled and broke her defense.

Finally, her struggle became desperate, but futile. Theresa realized that she was completely at the mercy of this insane beast that had once been her friend. She valiantly tried to defend herself and her dignity, but when she lay wounded, bruised and naked on the sand, Lucretia just grinned and proceeded to piss on her.

She kicked the destroyed woman and rolled her on her back and said:

"You are mine. You will serve me until you die."

Theresa tried to get up but couldn't. She sniveled:

"I am yours. Please, let me be yours."

Lucy's thoughts returned to the present and she said:

"You will sleep on the floor. From tomorrow until the day of your death, you will serve me."

"I will."

When her skin had healed, Lucy was called to the council of the order. When she arrived, the women were awestruck by her presence. There she was, a 6'2" beast of a woman, wearing combat boots making her even taller. She was clad in a skintight black suit made of bullet-proof

fabric, which hugged her over-exaggerated curves perfectly. Through the fabric, the various piercings were visible, each one shaped to represent a holy symbol of the order. Over the suit, she wore a set of armor plates, which made her appear even bulkier. At her side, she carried a large sword and a dagger, as well as a shotgun slung over her shoulder. On her head, she wore a nun's veil, covering her bald scalp.

As she stepped in front of her elders, she did not bow. She merely looked at them gravely.

The mother superior stood up, clearly impressed by the young woman's total transformation, and said:

"Sister Lucretia. You have received the best training and the most powerful blessings we can offer. You are the epitome of the tenets of our order. Go forth and destroy evil in the name of good. Return truth and righteousness to the world. The sacred scrolls of our order tell of a demon fortress in the East. There, you will find the first of the demon lords. Defeat it!"

Lucy smiled grimly and bowed her head slightly.

"I will do as is the will of the order."

She turned around and headed for the gates. She turned her head and said:

"Follow me, slave. You will be my shield-bearer."

Theresa, clad in a simple nun's robe over her armor, instantly responded. Together, they left the monastery.

As Lucy reached the road, she had a strange feeling. It was a pang of regret. She realized that she was now in all respects a monster. A human monster, but still a warrior beast, not at all different of the demons that roamed the land. She flexed her massive arm and watched with disbelief

as her huge, grapefruit-sized biceps contracted and swelled against the fabric. Maybe it would all make sense once she fought the beasts. She hoped it was worth it.

They walked along the blasted road for a while, the faint remains of the middle line of the highway still visible. Occasionally, some bent and broken remains of street lamps or buildings could be made out protruding from the all-encompassing reddish sand. As they approached the burnt-out shell of a small town, Theresa grew uneasy. Lucy could feel it too. She stopped and made a sign to her follower to be quiet.

She drew her sword and walked towards a group of buildings, motioning Theresa to continue along the road and bait the lurking assailants. Theresa did as asked and walked along the street, her glaive at the ready. Suddenly, she heard someone call out:

"Drop your weapon, woman."

Theresa turned in the direction of the caller. It was a young man's voice. He seemed to be afraid. She decided that it was best not to threaten him or make him do any stupid things. She slowly put the glaive to the ground but prepared to draw the pistol concealed in her cloak.

Meanwhile, Lucy quickly skipped through the remains of a drugstore, climbed up a rainpipe and pulled herself on the roof of a nearby clothes shop, long since abandoned. She soon discovered the stalkers. A group of three young people, from the look of it two girls and a boy were surveying the road, clearly aiming their rifles at Theresa. With a quick look, she assessed the situation. These were no threat, only to themselves. She just straightened herself up and said with a calm voice:

"Put your guns on the ground, kids."

They turned around fast, raised their guns and stopped. Lucy gave them a long, controlling stare. After what seemed like an eternity, the three dropped their weapons. Lucy smiled drily. She said:

"You did well."

The girl said:

"Don't kill us. Please."

"I won't. What were you trying to do anyway? Who are you?"

The taller girl answered:

"I'm Tonya, this is Jason, my kid brother. The other girl is Mira. We're hiding from Marlin."

"Who's Marlin?"

"He's the boss of Marlintown, further down the road. He protects the people from demons, but they have to work as slaves. We didn't want to do that, so we fled. Who are you?"

Lucy replied sternly:

"I ask the questions."

She immediately regretted it. The three young people started sobbing uncontrollably.

"Okay, you three. Calm down. You're safe."

She turned around and ordered Theresa to come up.

"Where's your hide-out? We can talk there!"

Soon, they reached a small hut built in the carcass of a shopping mall. When they were all inside, it was completely crowded. Lucy couldn't help noticing that Jason was desperate to conceal his massive hard-on. She found this to be entertaining. This little guy would definitely fight to impress her. At the same time, the inner Lucy was totally shocked by the young man's reaction. None of this was making sense. It seemed that the nuns' training had transformed her mindset completely.

She ordered Theresa to get to the floor and sat on her back, waiting for the three youths to explain themselves.

Finally, one of them started:

"We're originally from Lukestown. It's a little way down the road. When Marlin came to power, he decided he wanted Tonya to be his concubine. He's in league with the demons and they want some sacrifices. We couldn't do anything about it, we fled. They have been hunting us ever since. In order to survive, we robbed the travelers on the road. Sorry for attacking you."

Lucy listened to the lament, then said:

"Good. I will take a look at this Marlin."

The next day, Marlin awoke from his sleep. The naked women at his side stirred slightly as the bellow went up again. He got up, looked out of the

window and saw a warrior standing in front of the town's gate. The warrior shouted again:

"Come here and fight me, weakling!"

He grabbed his things, ran outside and screamed at the guardsmen:

"What the fuck are you doing? Who is that?"

The guardsmen replied with confused gestures.

"Whatever." He walked to the parapet and said:

"You there, warrior, what do you want?"

The woman looked him sternly in the eye and said:

"To fight you and kill you, demon servant!"

Marlin felt a slight pang of fear. The woman seemed to be powerful enough. He replied:

"No problem. I will kill you myself." To the guardsmen, he shouted: "Open the gates!"

They complied, letting her in. Lucy strode in, took up a fighting stance and waited for him to come down. Marlin was a tall, muscular and broad-shouldered man, with a shaved head and a pot belly. He was easily able to pound a bull to death with his fists. As he saw her, he said:

"Not here, my dear. Challenges should be met in the pit!"

The guardsmen, the hangers-on and some of the people started chanting "The pit! The pit!", as Marlin led the procession through the town to the central fighting pit.

When they arrived in front of the pit, Marlin took off his shirt and jumped down. He stretched a little, let his muscles swell and displayed his strength, before strapping on his bracers and neck-guard. When he was done, he shouted:

"What is it? Are you coming or what?"

Lucy unstrapped her armor and removed it, revealing her massive physique. She waited for a second until everybody had taken in what a muscular behemoth she was, flexing her muscles, then jumped down. She took up a fighting stance and watched her opponent. Marlin soon started to circle her, pacing across the sandy ground and trying to assess his enemy. He soon realized that this woman was a professional fighter and that he would need some dirty tricks to take her down. Well, dirty tricks indeed.

With a kick, he threw some sand at her face, immediately following with a straight blow to her crotch. However, she threw her face around, deflecting the dirt with her veil and turned sideways to block his attack. Before he could react, she entered his range and hit him with a lightning-fast combination of punches to his face, throwing him off-guard. As he recovered, she spun around and sank her foot deep into his fat stomach. He spat, trying to find his equilibrium, but she dropped down, spun her muscular leg against his calf and felled him.

On the ground, he finally regained his senses, rolled to the side evading a slamming attack with her elbow and got back up. He ducked and weaved, suddenly coming at her with a flurry of jabs, trying to drive her against the wall. She quickly parried most of them, only one of them glancing her face. She responded with a quick side-step, and rammed her knee deep into his side. He curled up, trying to catch his breath and to suppress the pain in his kidney.

She used this momentary distraction and hammered his face with a wild series of straight blows, driving him down. He tried one last thing, grabbing her and wrestling her to the ground, but he found her too heavy to lift. Instead, she just pulled him up by his face, mashed him

between her spherical tits and began choking him. When he finally lost consciousness, she lifted him overhead and shouted:

"This is what happens to demon-lovers!"

She threw him out of the pit, a deadly silence washing over the crowd.

She climbed back out and shouted:

"You have betrayed mankind by bowing down to such a weakling and coward as this! Give me one good reason why I shouldn't destroy the sorry bunch of you!"

One of the villagers stepped up and said meekly:

"Don't kill us. He protected us from the demons. We had to serve him, but he would defend us!"

She looked down on him, making him shrink even further. With a scornful glance, she said:

"Then I will teach you to protect yourself. If every one of you is able to fight, you will no longer be the thralls of demons!"

The man bowed down and mumbled:

"But how? We are neither strong nor well-armed."

She gave him a demeaning look and said:

"I will teach you. Strength is good, but tactics will help you better!"

Lucy and Theresa spent the next days training the villagers to fight for themselves, the now humbled Marlin willing to help the defenders. Whenever he crossed Lucy's path, he averted his gaze, hiding his hard-on. Soon, the three outcasts returned, adding their expertise in banditry and survival to the villagers'. Soon, the town was able to defend itself. Lucy took her time to plan defenses and to prepare traps for demon attackers. She warned the people of the town:

"When the demons find out that Marlin is no longer your ruler, they will send someone to see what happened." She turned to Marlin: "You will act as if you still had your position, but you will lead them into a trap. Destroy them all, and you will be free!"

The speaker of the people asked:

"But what do we do if they get reinforcements?"

"Leave that to me. I will go to their fortress anyway and I will keep them occupied."

And with these words, she smiled for the first time since her parents died.

After a few days of training the people to fight, Lucy moved on. She decided to find the demon palace of Baal Zabuth and to destroy him. The matter at hand was to find out where to go. As a result, she patrolled the area around the town, looking for scouts. When she finally found a group of demon soldiers creeping through the wreckage of the city, she waited until they felt at ease, then walked out in the open.

"Good evening, demon scum!"

The beasts, weird creatures with fly-like faces, hairy bodies and four arms, armed with blades and rifles, stared at her through multi-faceted

eyes. They were clearly surprised by her boldness. The leader, a beast clad in the remains of a Pink Floyd shirt, replied with a buzzing voice:

"What the hell? Who are you? How dare you address us in this way?"

Lucy drew her sword.

"I dare it and I will kill you, unless you tell me where your master's fortress is."

The creature let out a chittering laugh.

"Look at the human. Look at its sorry body. Look at the pathetic weapon. Look how few arms it has. You are no threat to us. Run now, and you will live."

As a reply, Lucy jumped forward and cut off its head. The chittering instantly died down. The others fumbled for their weapons, but the warrior nun was already over them. With a quick swing, she, cut down one rifleman, side-stepped the other one and rapidly punched the next one in his large eye. The fist sank deep into the meshed material, covering Lucy's hand with demon blood. Meanwhile, the other rifleman had recovered, but found himself skewered on Theresa's glaive. The last remaining beast stared at her in disbelief and fumbled with his six-shooter, trying to get a clear aim at the rapidly approaching warrior woman. Before he could fire, she gripped his wrist and clenched it, crushing the soft insect flesh to pulp. The gun dropped to the ground, the demon tried to hold her off with the three remaining arms, but Lucy put the sword to his throat and said:

"Where is your master's fortress? I ask you only once."

Three weeks later, Lucy and Theresa reached the outskirts of the House of Baal, the demon's fortress. The area was a devastated stretch of land, the meagre remains of a once fertile valley. When the two women saw what the monsters had done, they couldn't help but despair. Indeed, the

parched, torn land seemed to scream for the mercy of death, its few remaining plants gruesomely distorted shades of their forebears.

Towards the horizon, the domed towers of the fortress loomed. The building itself was surrounded by a shanty-town of rickety buildings, made by the local demon warlords and occupied by their followers and slaves. As they observed the amassed hordes, Lucy and Theresa decided to hatch a plan before going on. Infiltrating such a place would be quite impossible, unless they found a special trick.

After a few days of observation, they saw a procession of religiously garbed demons and their human followers approach. They were chanting hymns to Baal Zabuth and flagellating themselves. Lucy was surprised to find the clothing they were wearing to be quite similar in style to what she was wearing. However, this immediately gave her her plan. Approaching the mob stealthily, Theresa and her tried to silently kill two of the nun-like demons. The two women sneaked closer, mingled among the believers who were clearly too ecstatic to realize that enemies were amongst them. They reached the first nun and Lucy grabbed her from behind, wrapping her arms around her neck.

The creature turned around, visibly unimpressed by Lucy's attack. It revealed a face covered in teeth, not unlike a remora. Lucy, surprised, slammed her forearm down the creature's throat and tore it out. The creature gargled and died. Seconds later, she had stripped the monster of its garb and slipped it on.

She turned around and faced Theresa. She said:

"You next. Move, slave."

They followed the procession to the center of the city, reaching the House of Baal after crossing a bazaar and several rings of fortifications. Clearly, wearing the robes of demon nuns meant being ignored by the guards. As they approached the main building, they noticed a terrible buzzing in the air. Soon, they understood why. The entire place was crawling with insects, mostly flies and cockroaches. All over the area, rotting cadavers and heaps of waste were lying around. The whole place was a charnel house. Its walls soon revealed themselves to be made of shit and earth. The whole building resembled a huge, rotting hive.

The two women walked through the gates and into the courtyard. There, the procession took up positions in front of a kind of rotten cathedral. The building seemed to be a gothic church built of insect shells, bones, shit and corpses. The stench was overwhelming.

The devotees started chanting. Soon, they were ecstatic, shaking their heads in unison and howling hymns to Baal Zabuth.

Suddenly, the gates of the cathedral were opened and a swirl of flies and mosquitoes emerged. Amongst them, a dark shape grew. Then, with a roar, a bloated, swollen creature, its body covered by bug eyes appeared. The monster stepped up on a platform in front of the cathedral and thundered:

"I am Baal Zabuth. My worshipers, you have come. This pleases Baal Zabuth. Bring forth the sacrifices."

In this moment, Lucy realized that the next step would be played by ear.

Lucy drew her sword and quickly pushed through the masses, walking towards the side of the group. Theresa followed her as quickly as she could. The other worshipers seemed to be caught in a trance. However, one of the minders of the massive fly-demon suddenly looked into their direction. The creature bent over to Baal Zabuth, caught its ear and whispered something. The monster soon reacted, turning into the direction the minion pointed to.

Lucy quickened her steps, pushing the believers aside. She reached the side of the group when she heard the monstrous beast scream:

"Intruders! Get them! Kill them!"

As one, the demonic zealots turned and faced her. Lucy ordered Theresa to lift her up. The older nun gave her a leg up and Lucy clambered on top of a causeway next to the mass of worshipers. She turned around and saw the horde fast descending on Theresa, so she turned around, bent down over the edge of the catwalk and held her hand out to Theresa. The other warrior nun jumped up, grabbed her mistresses' muscular forearm and was soon pulled up, Lucy straining against the cold steel of the causeway. The demon worshipers approached and grabbed at the escaping warrior woman, pulling her back into the turmoil. Theresa screamed as the strain increased.

Lucy kept her wits and with an imperious stare, sent the attackers back to the ground. With supreme effort, she pulled Theresa on the catwalk and took a second to catch her breath.

However, the demon had spotted them by now and approached as fast as its bloated body would allow, its every movement accompanied by the buzzing of flies.

The beast approached ever quicker, its arms powerful even if covered in layers of rotting flesh. Lucy faced it, struck at it with her sword and followed her blow with a furious kick. The monster roared as pus and maggots dripped from the wound. All around them, the flies buzzed ever louder, creating a layer of insects on Lucy's body. The swarm attacked her, forcing her to evade it, the already flimsy catwalk becoming ever less stable.

She shut her eyes as the flies and mosquitoes tried to attack them. She flailed around helplessly, trying to get rid of the buzzing horror around her. However, the monster was only waiting for this. As soon as she was distracted, it slammed into her, landing blow upon blow. The nun staggered back under the fury of the assault, still blind from the attacking swarm.

Lucy was forced to the edge of the catwalk. She could feel the insane crowd scream for blood. Suddenly, she realized she was going to die. The beast continued its attack, eventually locking one massive, putrefied hand around her huge neck. As its fingers closed around her throat, Lucy, completely disoriented from the sensory overload, contracted her neck muscles and resisted the beast's crushing grip. Instead, she swung herself up, wrapped her legs around the beast's arm and easily ground it into pulp between her massive thighs. The monster howled with pain, pus and blood dripping from its broken skin. For a second, the flies ceased their buzzing. Lucy found her footing again and lopped off the monster's arm.

However, her victory was short-lived. The beast instantly recovered, pulled itself up and reformed a second, distorted arm from the stump of the first. The creature grinned awfully and said:

"My dear child, your ways of warfare are pointless against the likes of me. I am Baal Zabuth, the Lord of Flies, and you cannot kill that which is many."

Lucy stared at the beast and screamed as she lifted her sword again, cleaving into the monster's body. The demon-lord laughed and shouted:

"It is to no avail. Nothing you do can hurt me, for I am corruption! I am the defiler! All that is filth, all that is unclean, all this is mine! The world is mine!"

Lucy suddenly realized what she could do. She jumped up, climbed on top of the beast and uncovered her sex. With supreme effort, she balanced on top of the flailing beast and pissed on it, her fluids burning the monster as the religious piercings blessed the water.

The creature howled as it suffered, trying to get her off it, but Lucy clung to it, slowly burning it. As she reached her end, the beast screamed at her, trying to gather its forces. Lucy just stared at it, lifted her blade and cut the beast's wound, effectively destroying it.

As the creature died, she lifted her sword and screamed in triumph. The demon servants howled in pain as her bellowing roar resonated through the fortress. Most fled as fast as they could, for here was a human who was able to destroy the demons.

Lucy stood over the creature's carcass. She was covered in bile and pus, her armor was spoiled, her face was still twisted into an expression of deep disgust. She stared at the fallen monster, her breath heaving. Her

overinflated chest swelled from the effort. Pulling a knife from its hilt, she started to cut open the monster, revealing several egg-pods within. Inside these translucent orbs, new demon larvae were visible. With a stab, she killed the creatures. When she was done, she finished cutting up the demon lord. Beside her, Theresa stared at her companion and mistress as she worked through the body. The cold professionalism terrified her.

At last, Lucy reached into the creature's skull. She pulled and rattled something until it finally dislodged itself. With a gush of flesh and blood, she extracted an oblong shape of mother of pearl. It was a strangely formed orb, which had once formed a part of the creature's brain. Theresa looked at her with skepticism and asked:

"What is this?"

Lucy looked at her and smiled in a disquieting way, her face still smeared with slowly drying fluids.

"This, my dear slave, is the angelic core. The sister without a name told me about it. It is the element of God that all demons possess. Only in a demon lord is it large enough not to disappear immediately upon its death."

"What of it?"

"It holds the key to the demon's power."

"And what are you going to do with it?"

"I will make the demon's power mine."

With these words, she opened wide and stuck the ovoid shape down her throat. The thing was quite huge and she found it hard to swallow. It clogged her throat, she retched and gagged, trying to pull it down. Her eyes bulged, she looked as if she would suffocate any second now. With another jerking of her muscular neck, she finally made it disappear. It was only then that the ordeal began. She fell to her knees, her eyes

rolling behind her lids, her face turning red and blue, her body shaking with convulsions.

Theresa stood helpless as her friend seemed to die. As the muscular woman dropped to the ground, rolling around, her body wracked by pain, she saw that a transformation was happening. Her skin was becoming cracked and started to fall off. Under it, a perfectly white, new skin became visible. As the waves of pain died down, Theresa bowed down to her friend and saw her transformation. From her perfectly white, pupil less eyes, golden tears ran as the last vestiges of her humanity fell off her. Her tattoos remained as elevated writing on her perfect skin, sometimes appearing to burst into flame when watched from the corner of the eye. As Lucy got back up, she realized she had grown a bit. She was now easily 6'6" tall, her muscles having expanded accordingly, maybe swelling even further. She tore off the sad remains of her clothes and looked down on Theresa.

With a voice like distant thunder, she said:

"Kneel down, Theresa, for you have witnessed the first step of my ascension."

As Lucy and Theresa left the crumbling fortress, the fleeing demons howled and screamed in despair. Lucy realized that humanity had just won a gasp of breath but further confrontations loomed. They continued until they reached a road and started following it. After a while, the chilly air made Lucy shiver. Of course, she wouldn't have admitted it, but Theresa said:

"Mistress, maybe you should find something to wear."

Lucy smiled, then burst into laughter. It was a loud, booming sound. Her whole muscular shape was quivering with elation. She dropped to the ground, the stress of the last weeks finally leaving her. Theresa stared at the huge mountain of muscles with massive, spherical breasts, in every way a strange caricature of humanity, howling with laughter.

"Are you well, mistress?"

Lucy calmed down, sniffed and said:

"I'm fine. I just had to. It was too much lately and now, it's better. Let's find something to wear!"

They continued for a while until they found a broken and destroyed town nearby. As they approached, they saw a herd of large pigs dig up the soil and search for roots. In their midst, a heavy-set woman in her fifties was checking on the animals. When she saw Lucy, she screamed in terror and fled.

The women looked at each other, clearly aware that Lucy looked completely inhuman.

"Mistress, maybe you should find a way to disguise yourself. There is no point in alienating those we seek to help."

"You are right."

Lucy quickly looked through the woman's shed and soon found a heap of scavenged clothing. Looking through the heap, she soon found a headdress, a cape and a veil. She assembled a set of clothes and put it on, covering herself from head to toe.

It did nothing to disguise her massive, hulking body, but it reduced its strangeness. When she covered her eyes with a sheet of gauze, she got back up and asked:

"Is this better?"

"It is. You still look very intimidating, though."

"Perfect. Let's go to the next town. I need a good night of sleep."

They arrived in the town of Barricada by nightfall. After a short discussion at the gate, Lucy and Theresa disappeared in the confusing labyrinth of streets that formed the confusing city. Barricada had started as a few simple houses on top of a hydroelectricity plant and had slowly grown into a huge shanty town with markets, water sellers, several towers and quite a few mansions of the various slumlords.

The town was an attraction point for all the straggling survivors of the World's End. The two women soon found an inn and a bathhouse and decided to settle down for a while. Theresa quickly set up a working household and established contact with the local chapter of the order. After a few days of settling down, the two women paid a visit to the chapterhouse. It was a rickety building close to the turbines, loud and cramped, and hosted a group of nuns.

Theresa knocked on the door. Soon, it was opened and a short, elderly woman in a nun's garb looked out. She asked:

"Who are you? What do you want?"

Theresa was surprised. She pointed to her headdress and replied:

"We're nuns of the order. We want to speak to the mother superior."

The old woman stared at her blankly, then said:

"She isn't here anymore. Was killed a few weeks ago. Where are you from?"

Behind Theresa, Lucy had enough. With a shove of her mighty arm, she opened the door, pushing the old woman aside. She added: "I'm sorry."

and walked in.

Inside, a group of women of all ages, lanky, tired and hungry, stared at the intruders. One of them screamed and ran away. Lucy removed her veil and said:

"Have no fear! I am Sister Lucretia of the order and I am here to bring you good news!"

The women gasped, horrified at the sight. Finally, they calmed down, astonished by the giant's bizarre appearance. Lucy looked down on them. Was this all there was? Was this the force of the order? These puny waifs? She couldn't help but sneer.

Theresa led the older woman back into the room and shut the door. Lucy waited until they were ready, then she said:

"I have killed Baal Zabuth. My next target is Asturath. I need to find her and defeat her."

She paused for them to take in the new facts.

"The demons can be destroyed and they will be destroyed. Our order was created to do this and I expect you to do your part."

One of the middle-aged nuns finally gathered her courage and asked:

"But how can we? We are small and weak! We cannot stand up in a fight!"

Lucy looked down on her and a glint of amusement might have appeared in her perfectly white eyes.

"I will teach you how to defend yourself and those who can fight will be taught how to destroy the demons. Finally, there are many ways you can help. Let's not forget that the people must see that the demons' offers are worthless when faced with true faith!"

The women were clearly intimidated, but seemed to be ready to accept Lucy's words. Lucy told Theresa to check the available reserves and the state of the building. Meanwhile, she ordered the elderly nun to make a list of the order's members and to filter out those whom she expected to help the cause. Also, she ordered her to create a directory of those people and organizations favorable to the order in the city.

Finally, Theresa took Lucy aside and said:

"Mistress, we'll need money to make this organization work. If we want to train them as an armed force, we need to feed them and get some equipment."

"How have they survived until now?"

"Most of them are beggars, some of them have other ways of finding an income."

"I see. Well, we'll just have to find some funding. Any options?"

"There is a gladiator's arena, there are bounties to be hunted, there are a few things to be taken off. There are also a few demon lords in town which could stand a little lightening before we dispose of them."

"I think it would be best for us to stay hidden for now and not to draw attention to ourselves. We need something discrete."

Theresa replied:

"The son of one of the patricians has disappeared and the parents are desperate. If we find him, we might get the support we need."

"That sounds good. Send the women out to see if they can find a trail."

"I will, mistress."

Lucy watched the nuns disappear quickly. She realized she was in the middle of a war now. She put on her hood and veil and returned to the inn. Once in her room, she stripped and stared at herself in the mirror. The flames of her tattoos were flickering red. She cupped her monstrous

breasts, marveling at their surreal roundness. They seemed a tad smaller now that she had grown. She wondered whether she would return to her proportions later on. Finally, she couldn't resist anymore and just went into a massive flex, letting her enormous biceps pop out to its fully swollen size. She reached over with her other hand and caressed it. Her body felt alien to her, the total transformation she had gone through having thoroughly alienated her from herself. Touching herself and caressing the boulder-like abdominals she soon couldn't help herself anymore and dropped on the bed with a crash. The floor creaked as she struck her clit, thrashing about wildly. When she finally came, the entire inn was woken.

During the next few days, the nuns searched the city, trying to find clues about the boy's whereabouts. Theresa stayed at the chapterhouse and collected the information. Meanwhile, Lucy explored the city, getting to know the people and the various paths. Soon, she easily found her way even in the darkness, evading the local gangs and sometimes disciplining the more dangerous ones. After initial resistance, the local strongmen soon realized that cooperating with the veiled giant was a much better option than counting your teeth from the gutter. Using her well-honed method of domination by voice and acts, Lucy quickly accessed the gang networks and soon had the entire underworld swarming on the search.

After a few days of searching, Theresa approached her:

"Mistress, I have some information on the disappeared kid."

Lucy was at the chapterhouse. She had constructed some free weights from scrap and was now pumping it intensely. Her grapefruit-sized biceps swelled and stretched with effort.

"I'm listening."

"If I put everything together, I'm pretty certain that the kid isn't in the undercity. Unless he's been killed outright, there is no trace of him. No

corpse, no suspicious signs."

Lucy racked the improvised weights and asked:

"Which means?"

"The kid isn't here, so he must be either outside the city, sold as a slave, for example, or inside. In this case, I think that it is most plausible that he was taken by a rival family."

"Excellent."

"Since the slave traders seem to be really scared of the father's revenge in case anything happened to his son, they seem to be out of this."

"Which leaves us with a suspicious group of rivals."

"Exactly. The problem is that we have no way to approach them for now."

"Are you sure about that? I guess that a friendly visit to some of the more dangerous elements of society should allow us to narrow down the circle of suspects."

"And then?"

"And then it's high time they had a visit of the emissaries of faith."

"Wrong answer!"

Lucy's voice thundered as the bald man lost a piece of skin to the uncovered concrete. The guy was a large and burly man, but against the fury of the hyper-muscular young woman, he was powerless. His guards and attendants lay dead, wounded or unconscious. Theresa, playing the good cop, asked again:

"Lionel. We know you are the most prolific pimp in the undercity. Your girls and boys must have seen a bit of the more exclusive bedrooms of

this town. So please, for your own sake, tell us which ones are actively fighting the Darmana family."

"The ones with the stolen kid?"

Lucy shouted:

"We ask the questions!", and gave him another blow to the stomach.

Theresa added:

"Those. Exactly."

"I tell you, I know nothing! Nothing! Please!"

Lucy dropped him. She bent down.

"Perfect. Then, my friend, you have one day. One day to find out what we need to know. One day to save your miserable skin."

Lionel cowered and said:

"Okay, I'll do what you want. Will you leave me alone?"

Theresa replied:

"If you're good, you'll come through this alive. We might even help you to a less sinful life."

"What?"

He immediately fell silent as Lucy clenched her fist and smiled evilly.

The next day, Lucy and Theresa got the requested list. It turned out that there were two families directly fighting the Darmanas. Theresa suggested that a discrete first approach would be preferable. As a result, they spied on the two families beforehand and prepared their visit. Soon, it became clear that the Erato family was very interested in the

Darmana's business, whereas the Zul family mostly held grudges about things long past. They put the focus on the Eratos and had their visit announced. When the day came, the two nuns put on their best garbs, which they had made by the other nuns, and approached the family's estate.

The chamberlain of the house of Erato was unpleasantly surprised by the two guests and their entourage. As he welcomed them, he saw that the two clearly important nuns were in the company of a dozen others. Between them, a hitherto unseen older woman was waiting. The two warrior women guarding her were intimidating. Really intimidating. Staring at their buff physique, he wondered where the normally calm and friendly nuns would find such terrible creatures. Maybe they were joining forces with the demons?

He finally asked:

"Greetings and welcome to the house of Erato. Who might I announce?"

The taller, veiled woman replied with a powerful voice:

"We will see your master. Tell him the Order has come to make him realize the will of God."

"What?"

"Get your master unless you seek to doom him!"

Intimidated, the chamberlain ran off, finding his master. The Lord of Erato, an elderly gentleman, thin, tall and grey-haired, his long hair and moustache perfectly groomed, was currently attending his business with his accountants and managers, clearing up problems that might have

come up. As the chamberlain burst in, he was surprised and looked at his servant with wonder:

"Why, greetings, Stanley. What is the matter?"

The man burst out:

"Nuns! They have come to make you meet God!"

"What? Why?"

"Sir, you must flee, they mean business!"

The Lord of Erato looked at the trembling man and replied:

"I doubt that. Show them to the audience room. I'll be right there." To his subordinates, he said: "Gentlemen, I fear that something has come up. Please finish your work and we'll continue this later."

As he got up, he told the chamberlain:

"Get the guard ready. I don't want any surprises."

"Of course, sir, right away."

After a short wait, the Lord entered the audience room, looked at his guests and couldn't help swallowing. The massive, veiled figure was intimidating all right. Still, a man has to do what he has to.

"Good day, my ladies. May I offer you food and drink?"

The tall woman spoke from behind the veil:

"You may."

Once they were served and had a little small talk, he asked:

"I am honored by your visit, but tell me, what can I do for you?"

The tall woman was still sitting there, leaving food and drink untouched. She said with a calm voice:

"Tell us about your relationship to the house of Darmana."

"As you may know, we are rivals in business. Other than that, no relation. None asked, none granted."

"Very well. What do you think of the Darmana's son's disappearance?"

He couldn't help but smile. Those women went straight to the point.

"I have no idea about this."

"Perfect."

Suddenly, the old man realized that the chamberlain was trying to catch his attention. He ordered him closer and heard:

"Sir, one of them is missing. I just counted them, one isn't with them anymore."

"Are you sure?"

"Absolutely. They all look the same, so I counted them."

"Interesting."

He leaned back and addressed his guests:

"I am aware that it is customary to donate a certain amount of money to your cause. Please receive my contribution at a common dinner I invite you to join."

As the nuns agreed, some of them hungrily, he murmured to his chamberlain:

"Find her and lock her up. Do it now!"

Meanwhile, Sister Helen, a nun by calling and thief by profession, was sneaking through the palace, looking for the missing child. She was short, lanky and altogether harmless, were it not for a stiletto dagger she carried with her under her nun's outfit. She was a street urchin, forced to take up her profession and her calling by need. Serving the newly arrived warriors came hard to her, but she eventually complied. Indeed, finding the child was a priority for her.

She admired the rich decoration, the honorable portraits and the priceless antiques, making a mental note of their locations for a later visit. She continued her prowling when she found a door guarded by two massive thugs, each one armed and armored. She slipped into a nearby room, quickly stepping across a well-kept library, and went to the window. She opened it, gazing down into the abyss of the undercity and climbed out. She shimmied over to the other window, which she realized was barred. She could, however, peek inside.

She saw a guest bedroom, furnished with all kinds of amenities, with a child inside as well as several attendants. The young man seemed to be angry right now, even though she couldn't hear what about. Anyway, her goal was accomplished, since this was the missing heir. She quickly descended the facade and let out a piercing whistle to alert the others of her findings. Then, she returned to the chapterhouse.

When night fell, Lucy, Theresa and Helen were getting ready for the liberation attempt. Helen had provided ropes, climbing gear and even a set of discrete clothes. These were rather pointless for Lucy, but they tried none the less. When they were ready, they quickly moved to the palace, evaded the guards and entered the main complex. Above them, the moon slowly crept up behind a cloud. The building was a tall concrete structure, its lavish facade hiding the much more forbidding

back. Its crenelated towers created a threatening silhouette against the pale moon. Guards were everywhere.

Helen was quite unhappy with this. She whispered:

"We must have raised their suspicion."

Lucy replied:

"Apparently. This requires a change of plans. I believe they would have moved the kid by now. Theresa, have the spies seen anything suspicious?"

Theresa, who had some of the nuns watch the palace during the day, answered:

"We haven't seen anything special, mistress. They brought in some supplies and checked them thoroughly. They didn't try to send anything from here. I wondered why the security was as loose as this now."

Lucy thought aloud:

"I think this is a trap. I don't know what they plan, but they didn't try to move the child, even though they realized something was afoot and they lowered their defenses. They are waiting for us."

Helen was growing impatient.

"So, what do we do now?"

"We walk right into it. You, on the other hand, find the child and bring it with you. We'll just sort things out while we're at it. Isn't that right, slave."

"Excellent, mistress!"

"Very well then."

Lucy and Theresa quickly entered the building as Helen disappeared into the shadows. They could hear a short scuffle as she ascended the walls. The two women walked through the fortress, not too interested in remaining hidden. After all, they were to be a diversion. Pretty soon, there were shouts of "Intruders!" and "Here they are!". Lucy and Theresa waited until enough of the guards were approaching and then started fighting them. Using only batons, the two warrior women drove through their assailants. Lucy smashed the approaching black uniformed guards' heads in, throwing them around with ease. She kept an eye on her slave, but Theresa prevailed as always. After all, a lifetime of training wouldn't go to waste.

At the height of the battle, Lucy just grabbed one of the warriors, lifted him up by his foot and threw him into an approaching group of new fighters. Soon, the floor was covered with prone and unconscious guards. The few conscious ones held their heads or tried to remain calm so as not to disturb their fractures.

When the assault ended, Lucy stretched. Very few of the attackers had even managed to get to her, her superior reach allowing her to hold them at bay before they even could reach her. She looked at Theresa, who was breathing heavily. Clearly, her own supercharged physique was perfectly adapted to such blatant displays of power. She would have to find a way to allow Theresa to keep up.

Making a mental note, she continued to the hall, ready to confront the Lord of Erato. As she entered his quarters, she saw him blissfully smiling at her. He lay on a large bed, enjoying the company of several slave girls. With him, a tall, muscular woman with strange scaly skin was taking advantage of the situation. The snake woman was almost as tall as Lucy,

but her spiraling horns made her appear taller. She smiled at Lucy, baring her fangs:

"Welcome, child of the Order. I am Yaga, servant of Asturath. I am glad to welcome you to your death at my hands."

Yaga got up, stretched and fingered with her crotch until she found something. She produced a small cylinder of beaten copper texture. She grinned and caressed it gently, inciting a moan of pleasure in the slave girls. The cylinder suddenly expanded, becoming a large spear with twin spiral tips. The weapon looked similar to Yaga's own horns. With a faint lisp, she said:

"Prepare to die, nun scum."

Lucy threw off the clothes she had used to disguise herself and revealed her monstrous physique. Her pale white skin was adorned with the flaming words of the Lord. She had recently acquired a few new symbols of holiness in the form of some new surface studs. She was bare-chested with the exception of a neck holder-bandeau that covered the top of her massive breasts. She drew her sword and sneered at her foe:

"You will fall, demon spawn."

The other one seemed surprised at the address and replied:

"I must correct you! I am no spawn, I create demons myself."

With this, she motioned the slave girls to come closer and surround her. She extended a supernaturally long and sinuous tongue and licked her

nipples, gently stroking them with its triple-split tip. Finally, the nipples let out a greenish substance. She beckoned her slaves to come closer.

"Drink the milk of strength and you shall become as I am."

The slave girls surrounded her and began licking the dripping liquid from her breast. They moaned in ecstasy as their bodies began to change.

As Lucy saw what was happening, she charged. The hulking woman ran at the writhing group of demons to be and brought down her sword on them, lopping off the head of the first one. However, she realized that her opponent had managed to begin the transformation. One after one, the slaves fell to the floor, bucking and howling in sensual ecstasy. With every spasm, they grew more powerful, their muscles growing under their skins. At the same time, their faces turned more and more brutish.

As the first slave girl's head hit the floor, the others attacked Lucy and tried to pull her down. She struggled to remain upright, the women's growing muscles making them heavier and heavier. Yaga stepped away a little, raised her spear and thrust it at Lucy's neck. The tips penetrated her ivory skin, spilling blood. Lucy gritted her teeth as Theresa howled in despair. However, Lucy was far from giving up. Instead, she released the slave girl she was throttling, grabbed the spear and tried to wrench it from Yaga's hands. The demon woman held fast, using the leverage to maintain control.

Concentrating, Lucy kicked one of the slave girls that was piling up on her at Yaga, forcing her to lose concentration for a second. Lucy pulled with all her might, dislodging the spear from her opponent's hands. She gripped the shaft tightly and broke it, leaving the tip in her skin. Gasping, she retreated a little, putting some distance between herself and the demonic slaves.

Meanwhile, Yaga had recovered and shouted:

"You can't escape and you can't fight with just one hand. You're doomed! I have defeated you!"

She laughed and screamed in triumph.

While she was distracted, Lucy grabbed one of the slaves by her neck, twisted it and threw her against another one, giving her precious seconds to reform. With a look, she ordered Theresa to sneak to Yaga's back and advanced once again, maintaining a careful distance to the other slave girls. They tried to enter her reach, but every time, a stroke of her sword cut their efforts short.

Finally, Yaga was done celebrating and returned to the matters at hand, vomiting up a similar cylinder, this one quickly changed into a spiral-bladed sword. The weapon had several intertwined blades and seemed quite gruesome. With this, she advanced calmly on Lucy, swinging it leisurely. She attacked.

Lucy was soon hard pressed to maintain her balance in the face of her opponent's relentless attack, her attention further divided to keep the other enemies in check. However, Theresa was almost there. With a sudden thrust, she stuck her blade between the intertwined ones of her foe's sword. The other one grunted with effort as she tried to dislodge it. Lucy's muscles swelled as she tried to keep the weapon. Then, suddenly, she released it and slammed her massive body into her opponent's, throwing her back and into Theresa's waiting weapon. The demonic woman was rather surprised as Theresa's spear emerged from her chest, covering the opponents' bodies in blood. Lucy continued her savage attack, grabbed Yaga's head and wrenched it off her body with a gasp.

Immediately, the demon slaves collapsed.

Lucy dropped the still living head, breathing heavily from the effort. Then, she collapsed.

The next weeks brought a well-deserved influx of money to the order. Not only did the Darmana family find it necessary to show their gratitude, but several of their allies and even their long standing enemies decided to prove their complete innocence regarding the demonic possessions by contributing to the order's success. Once the surprising amounts of money were counted, checked and invested, Lucy called her sisters together and told them:

"This city will become a beacon for our order. It is both easy to defend and easy to reach. We will build a stronghold against the demons and raise an army to fight Asturath."

The women nodded solemnly. She continued:

"Using the support we have found here, we will create a realm of law and order, where mankind can live safely! You will become the spearhead of our freedom. Are you ready for this?"

This time, the crowd erupted into cheers. Theresa, however, remained calm. For a moment, her heart swelled with pride at her pupil's success. At the same time, she felt sorry for her. Lucy was slowly losing her humanity. She might even pay the ultimate price and lose herself within her new role. They would have to talk, but she couldn't. Being a slave, she had no choice but to love her unconditionally.

During the next weeks, the chapterhouse was rebuilt to become the central fortress of the city. Lucy and Theresa began training the nuns in the art of combat. Soon, the place was bustling with muscular and

powerful women, training, sparring and meditating. After setting up the curriculum, Lucy had retreated to ponder the situation. The fight against Yaga had shown her that she was the only one amongst the nuns that was able to fight a full demon on equal terms. This was only possible because she had received the nectar of strength. She had to find a way to give it to her disciples. She needed the help of a true scientist.

After consulting the various and chaotic archives of the town, Lucy decided on a course of action. In a nearby mountain range, there was a single, larger mountain which the locals called the Holy Mountain. Upon this peak, a fortress of scientists appeared to have survived the apocalypse. Even if not, she expected to find some information there. She left Theresa to take care of the daily business of setting up the order's control of the city and left alone, carrying her weapons with her. She once again wore her simple clothes, appearing as a simple, although overly large, wanderer. She left the city in the morning, traveling north.

After a few days of marching, she saw the range appear in front of her. Those were tall, majestic peaks, covered in snow and ash. On their flanks, twisted trees grew desperately, the local wildlife having adapted to its new environment. Lucy started her ascension, first walking slowly, then climbing to reach the fortress. The climb took some time. She was certain she had been spotted by now, but no defender, scout or warden showed himself. She wasn't challenged. Instead, she was forced to realize that the local wild beasts knew no fear of humans. When she reached a plateau, she saw a bear and her cubs. She hid herself as fast as she could, edging along the ledge to evade them. The mother advanced in her direction. She looked at the climbing woman with interest.

Lucy continued to climb but realized that the beast had taken interest in her. Finally, she couldn't do anything else but climb up and act as non-threateningly as possible. This was quite difficult for a being as monstrous as herself. However, by moving slowly, she managed to

escape the beasts without provoking their ire. When she had distanced them, she couldn't help but sit down for a while and recover. Even though she was a formidable warrior, she was quite sure that fighting this beast would prove to be more than she could handle.

The next day, she reached the part of the mountain where the fortress was supposed to lie. She wandered around for a while until she finally found it. It was a large complex of huddled buildings, encircled by a makeshift wall. Several of the buildings were older than the apocalypse. She approached the complex, then, as she found the gate, she put her hands to her mouth and shouted:

"HO! Anybody there?"

No response. She waited for a while, tried again, then decided to enter the structure. She climbed up the wall and descended into the huddle of buildings. The whole place seemed to be abandoned. She drew her sword and explored. After a few minutes of tensed observation, she concluded that the area was empty. Frustrated, she lowered her weapon. Suddenly, she heard the slightest of sighs. There was someone here!

Seconds passed, then Lucy rushed forward and made a grab for the observer. Her arms closed around the frail body of a little kid. The child, probably a girl, screamed in surprise and tried to escape. Realizing that her watcher was far from dangerous, Lucy tried to calm the kid and released her. The kid looked at her defiantly. Lucy asked:

"Are you alone, kid?"

The kid looked at her with wide-open eyes and replied:

"Don't kill me, demon. Please!"

Lucy was flabbergasted. She said:

"I'm no demon. I'm human, just like you."

The girl gave her an incredulous stare:

"Yes? Then show your face!"

Absentmindedly, Lucy removed her veil, only realizing her error when it was too late. With a piercing shriek, the girl ran off, horrified at her captors bizarre appearance. Lucy followed her as quick as she could, unable to say anything to calm the panicking child. However, she realized that the kid was completely headless in her fright. She saw the abyss appear in front of her, the kid running straight towards it. With a jump, she outpaced her, grabbed her by the neck and prevented her from falling. She gasped and sat down, still holding the sobbing child to her.

At this moment, she came face to face with a gun's barrel and the angry, yet controlled gentleman behind it. He said:

"Leave the kid alone, demon!"

She stared at him from her pupil-less eyes and said:

"I'm no demon. I am a member of the Order and I'm looking for the scientists of the holy mountain. Are you one of them?"

He looked at her and replied:

"Prove that you are no demon."

With that, she released the kid, who scrambled back to the man. Then, she bared her body, displaying the holy symbols and scriptures on it. Two things happened. The man calmed down when he realized that she was no demon and tensed when he saw her body. It was odd to see his eyes flash as he feasted them on her magnificent body.

With a clogged throat, he said:

"Fine. You're alright. I'm the scientist. The only one left. My name is John. This is Susan. My daughter. You are welcome."

John led Lucy to his home. It turned out to be a small, disorderly cabin in the midst of the complex. Stepping in, Lucy realized that the roof was ridiculously low, forcing her to stoop. She got in, John offered her a place to sit down. Susan was watching her in confused amazement. He sat down and said:

"Tell me your story."

Lucy did. It took her the better part of the day. Eventually, John prepared some food which he grew in the complex. It was actually quite good. When they were done eating and Lucy had finished her story, John said:

"Well, that's quite a bit. It's fascinating that you have subjected yourself to such a transformation. I can't say I would be ready for such a sacrifice. Now, what leads you here?"

"To be honest, I have doubts that I will find it here. As I told you, I was given the nectar of strength which gave me my power. I am now setting up an army to defeat Asturath and I need the nectar for my soldiers. I expected to find some people able to create it around here. Since you are alone ..."

He interrupted her:

"I get it. Listen, I may not look like much, but I might be able to help you."

"How?"

"I have been exploring the archives and cellars of the base and I have found a few interesting artifacts which might grant you your wish."

"Excellent."

"However, I need to prepare them and understand how they work precisely. This means that you would have to wait for a while until I'm done."

"Good. Then do this."

He nodded. Lucy felt odd. She had allowed this puny man to interrupt her, to make her wait. He was clearly not respecting her role or her way of thinking. Still, she couldn't help herself. Maybe he reminded her of her youth.

Lucy spent the next weeks at the fortress. She helped repair broken passageways, worked to harvest plants, feed the animals and take care of Susan. The child had still kept a certain fear of her, but was slowly becoming more thrusting. Lucy, at the same time, was confused by the child. Still, they spent some time together and were becoming acquainted.

Lucy let her hair grow out, soon sporting a bunch of golden hair, giving her a kind of short afro. Looking at herself in the mirror, she found it ridiculous. She couldn't get herself to cut it off again for some reason. This might be because she was feeling attracted to John. For the first time for years, she had someone to talk to, someone who didn't think that she was the messiah, a monster or just another piece of cannon fodder to be expended in an endless war. John seemed to feel likewise. After a while, they ended up in bed together. He was clearly amazed at her incredible body shape. When she climbed on top of him and smothered him with her huge spherical breasts, he was ecstatic.

At the same time, she was confused at how much she loved sex. After all, her body had been reconstructed to become the perfect tool for fucking, but she had never actually seen the point of it. As a result, she

was shy and uneasy at first, which astonished John to no end. After a while, it seemed to work though.

Waking from peaceful slumber, Lucy turned to John. He was lying beside her, still fascinated by her bizarre body and her visible innocence amidst a body of sexual domination. It was weird. She looked at him and said:

"I don't know how to say it, but I think I might love you."

He nodded:

"It's hard to say in a world like this. It twists you and forces you to become what you cannot be."

"Yeah."

She embraced him, laying her huge breast on his chest.

"You know, I'm not Susan's father. I just found her, she was an orphan. Her parents had probably been killed by demons. I just offered her a shelter. Didn't expect to become a father without a wife."

"The world changes us."

"It does."

"Well, I'll have to change the world."

She climbed on top of him, making him exhale as her weight lay on him. She was easily twice as heavy as he was, and a good eight inches taller than him. Contracting her cunt, she quickly drew his hardening member inside herself and began fucking him with her inner muscles only. Soon, they were gasping for air as they approached ecstasy.

Later, John prepared a meal for the three of them. Susan tried to tell Lucy about a story John had told her, but was confusing the giant woman with her narration. Lucy had to fight the urge to just force Susan to tell the story in the correct order by using her powers of domination. When the story was finally done and they had eaten, Lucy asked John:

"Remember why I came here? I wanted to find the nectar of strength. You said you could help me. Can you?"

John looked into the fire for a while, then said:

"I can help you. But it will change you further. It will make you more of what you have become and I am unsure of whether you should take this path."

Lucy replied:

"If I have to change to change the world, I will. I have no choice. After all, people are counting on me. They need me to fight."

John got up.

"Okay. If you've made up your mind, follow me."

Lucy got up and followed him into the depths of the fortress. Soon, she realized that this building was similar to the nuns' cloister she had been transformed in. After what seemed like hours of walking through concrete corridors, John opened a door and revealed a laboratory. He walked over to the workbench and showed her a large glass container. In it, a vaguely organic substance was growing. It was lumpy and grayish. It didn't look too healthy. He turned to her and explained:

"This is the thing that produces the nectar of strength. It feeds on flesh and blood and exudes the nectar. I have been thinking: It is a bit crazy, though."

"Let's hear it."

"Since you took the demonic power in you, you constantly regenerate, isn't it?"

She nodded.

"I could implant it in your body and allow you to create the nectar from yourself. You'd be able to strengthen those you want."

She stared at the gray mass and asked:

"It wouldn't eat me up?"

"Probably. If I calculated correctly."

"Well, it sounds worthwhile. Where would you put it?"

He came closer and took one of her huge breasts in his hands and said:

"Right here. I have no idea what's inside, but there's plenty of room."

At this moment, Lucy felt an absolute distance from the weapon her body had become and said yes.

When she awoke, the room was dark. The only light came from a few machines who were quietly working at their tasks. She had something down her throat, which she quickly gagged out. She looked around, but found herself strangely weakened. She found a signal button lying on the bed next to her and pushed it. After a while, there was a bustle outside and the light came on. John was looking at her with surprise and relief.

"You're already awake! This is way too early."

"What?"

"I'm sorry, I must have wrongly calculated the anesthesia. I could only hint at your weight, besides, the demon blood makes all this much more complex. It was quite a pain in the ass to even cut your skin."

"Alright. Is everything OK?"

"Yes, of course, I'm sorry. It went well. You're on the road to recovery. Let me get you something to drink and eat. You must be parched."

After a very short recovery, the bandages came off. Looking into the mirror, she was astonished by the new size of her breasts. Each of them was now easily the size of a basketball, but they had lost their perfectly round shape, getting a slightly more natural looking style. Still, they were over the top and cartoonish, even for a woman her size. She touched them lightly, held them up and turned to John.

"Wow. They are huge."

"They have to be. When I opened them, I found a sealed implant inside which was clearly marked as being filled with holy water. They are a kind of retaliation device if you should be killed. Even though this is very disturbing, I left them in and just added the source of the nectar."

"Retaliation."

"Indeed. Anyway, you should be able to produce nectar from yourself in small quantities. I hope it helps."

"I'll make the world safe again. So that Susan can live without fear."

Lucy stayed with John and Susan for a while, but soon left to return to Barricada. The trip back wasn't too difficult. She arrived at the city

roughly two months after she had left and she found it changed. When she arrived at the chapterhouse, she found it well-defended. She was challenged by some now quite buff warrior nuns who became very humble once they realized who she was.

Minutes later, she was in Theresa's office. Her shield-bearer dropped to her knees and greeted her with all the devotion of a slave. Lucy was pleased but oddly irritated by the distant and inhuman contact. Clearly, the trip to the mountain had blurred her vision. She said:

"Rise, slave. I am very pleased with your work here. Yet, I have found a way to make you serve our cause better."

With this, she released her huge, swollen breast from her bra and worked on her nipple until it started dripping a honey-like fluid.

"Drink, slave, and become more akin to your mistress!"

Theresa was shocked at first, but soon suckled on the massive woman's teat.

At first, nothing happened. Lucy had to admit that she was a little disappointed. However, after a few days of regular exercise and training, Theresa's muscles suddenly bloomed. She was just working on the free weights when she felt a strange tingling in her arms. Her already well-developed muscles began to jerk and twitch, contracting and relaxing out of control. It felt as if there was something moving beneath her skin. Scared by the sudden change, Theresa dropped the barbell with a loud thunk. She stared in horror at her bizarre upper arm. Then, as sudden as it had started, it stopped.

Theresa continued staring at her biceps, irritated by the weird effect. Then, a growing tingling went through her body. At first it tickled a little,

but then, it grew more and more intense until it became painful. She gritted her teeth, but as the pain became mind-numbing, she screamed. The other nuns ran to her.

However, the pain subsided.

She gasped.

As she turned to the others, she wanted to say that she was well. Then, out of thin air, her body exploded.

Within seconds, it filled with huge slabs of muscle. Watching her swell, the other nuns were terrified. Thick cords of muscle wrapped themselves around the existing muscles. Her body grew to bestial proportions within seconds. Screaming, she transformed into a dense mass of muscle under their eyes. By the time the change finally abated, she had become even more powerful than Lucy. She lay on the ground, spasming as she was rushed to the infirmary.

As the doctors and nurses tried to make heads or tails of her condition, Lucy arrived. She bowed down to her friend and said:

"I'm so sorry. I hadn't expected this."

Theresa only breathed deeply.

Lucy got back up, pulled up a chair and sat down as the doctors found that they couldn't do anything. They hooked her to life support and feeding, wondering when the change might stop.

Just at this moment, Helen came in and shouted:

"The demons are attacking!"

Lucy and her followers rushed to the gates of the city. Around them, the various guards of the noble houses ran, surprised by the assault. When they reached the city's main entrance, they saw the approaching horde. The armies of Asturath filled the horizon, rank upon rank of black clad demon spawn advancing relentlessly.

Soon, the defenders manned their guns and began pouring lead and steel into the masses. Clearly, the demons tried to take the city in one fell swoop, charging their main army at the gates to stop the guardians from preparing a successful defense. Within minutes, they hit the gates, clearing away from them to set off the explosive charges they had placed. With an ear-drum tearing blast, the gates crashed open, the demon warriors entering the city's first ring of defense. The nuns found themselves trapped in front of their enemies, the gates of the second wall closed behind them. Lucy realized that they were trapped. This was clearly the opportunity the noble houses had waited for. With a little luck, they would be able to destroy the meddlesome nuns and at the same time impress their demon oppressors enough to make them accept a better deal.

As explosions and fires erupted around them, the nuns retreated to the ruins of the houses in the outer ring. Lucy screamed:

"Retreat into the underground, we'll reform there. There's no point in fighting them here!"

Quickly, the nuns ran to the drainage pipes and floodgates of the subterranean network of the power plant. Behind them, the demons were hot on their heels. As Lucy fended off the pursuers to allow her sisters to escape, she suddenly saw how the demons had managed to surprise the city guards.

Up in the sky hung a huge dirigible, covered in blasphemous symbols which only became visible now that its camouflage system was turned off and it began bombarding the city. This was the demons' headquarter and it looked undefeatable from where she was. Sighing, she speared the last demon warrior that had followed them and jumped down into the manhole.

Time to make a plan.

Lucy quickly sent Helen to the chapterhouse to see how the fortress was holding up, then ordered the nuns to retreat as fast as possible into the center of the city. Above them, the thundering roars of explosions rang. Lucy advanced through the shaking corridors, finally emerging in the city square. The sun was being blotted out by the dirigible's shadow. She saw the members of the house guards wave white flags, trying to appease the attacking demons, but it was to no avail.

The airship opened fire, incinerating the watchtowers and passages of the fortresses. Around them, fleeing people tried to leave the city but found themselves encircled by disaster. Lucy ordered the nuns to confine the fugitives and lead them to the relative safety of lower town.

Meanwhile, she was joined by Helen, who was out of breath and gasping, but managed to say:

"She's ... still growing. Help her!"

Minutes later, Lucy threw open the door of the infirmary and was shocked. Theresa had grown and grown and was now a hulking 20' tall beast of muscle, her minuscule head squeezed impotently between her ridiculous shoulders. The infirmary nuns had just used up the last nutrient fluids and stared at the woman in horror. Lucy looked into Theresa's eyes and saw what she was feeling. She said:

"Okay, make a hole in the wall. We're going out. Get more nutrient! Now!"

With a resounding boom, the wall came down and Theresa stomped out, trailing tanks of nutrient behind her. Lucy climbed on her friend's back and directed her towards the approaching hordes. With a guttural howl, Theresa threw herself at them, rending the demon troopers apart with her sheer strength. Meanwhile, Lucy tried to defend her slave from any assailants who tried to surround the bestial warrior nun.

Theresa, or rather the beast she had become, howled in anger, smashing the demon soldiers into the cracked concrete of the city. They fast approached the enemy's main force. The demons mounted a stalwart defense, but the relentless assault of the enormous, still growing woman was unstoppable. As they fell back, the airship concentrated its fire on the giant below. Theresa screamed in outrage and started climbing a nearby building to close the distance between her and the ship.

However, she soon realized that she was out of reach. Theresa howled furiously, grabbed the surprised Lucy and threw her at the zeppelin. Lucy felt the air whistle by as she soared into the crimson sky. She landed on the ship's main platform and quickly dispatched a few surprised gunners.

Meanwhile, the demons had recovered and began shelling the giant woman's location. Explosions rocked the ruined city, but the now slowly

settling huge musclebound woman still advanced on the enemy position. Throwing a nearby car at a gun position, she swatted a few flanking demons before finally crashing down the center. At this moment, the demons fled. They ran to the city gates, the goliath nun in hot pursuit.

On the airship, Lucy was doing the best she could as a one-woman army. She sliced through the approaching demon guards, making her way to the main deck. As she kicked open the door, she stood there, sweating, bloodied and angry. The ship's captain, a large and overweight demon with huge, forward-spiraling horns stared at her, pulled out his gun and fired at her. She dodged as he aimed, taking cover behind one of the tables and quickly throwing it at the officer. With a jerk of his left hand, he blocked the piece of furniture and fired at her again.

However, before he could aim precisely, the airship shook as one of the demon army's trucks smashed against the front window. Below, Theresa was battling against several vehicles that were meant to protect the marching army. Lucy exploited the opening, charged her foe and ejected him through the splintered glass. The demon landed headfirst in the ground, his body remaining still yet erect in the blasted sand.

Lucy set the dirigible's controls to crash, grabbed a line and jumped out of the slowly descending machine. She dropped down close to her friend, who had just picked up a cobbled together AFV and thrown it into the others. Above them, the zeppelin was slowly approaching. Lucy shouted over the din of battle:

"Theresa! Come over here, we leave!"

The beast her slave had become turned around, stared at her in bestial ferocity and ran towards her, knuckling along like a muscle-bloated

gorilla. However, just as the pair was to be reunited, another shout rang out across the battlefield:

"LUCRETIA!"

Out of the howling blaze and the fog of war, a creature emerged. It was tall, slightly taller than Lucy but of course much shorter than Theresa. The creature bore every sign of being female, but the eight eyes in her face, arranged in a circle on her front and blinking in unison, as well as her sharp-fanged maw suggested that this was a demon.

The female creature approached. Her long, muscular legs were weirdly angled, making her walk on her feet's balls. She was athletic in the best sense of the word, not even remotely as muscular as Lucy, but wiry, with hard, fast muscles. Her six arms bore weapons of all sorts, whips, chains, blades and clubs. She wore a skintight suit of leather, showing of her ample cleavage and the numerous piercings that decorated her body. Also, her head was decorated with a plethora of intertwining, chaotic horns, grown into a bizarre, organic structure.

Finally, she was surrounded by an aura of scarlet flames that raged around her, creating a flare of demonic power. Smiling a toothy grin, she said:

"I am Asturath! You have challenged me, you will die!"

Then, the airship crashed in their midst, detonating its gas in the process. Everything disappeared in the flames.

When Lucy recovered, all was ablaze around her. The screams of the dying, the booms of explosions, the thunder of the storm overhead, all blurred into a cacophony of destruction. Around her, the mist of the hydrogen explosion filled the air, moistening her tired skin. She staggered to her feet, finding Theresa's massive body lying unmoving nearby. She shook her head, trying to focus. Golden blood flowed from her wounds.

Then, from the fog, she heard Asturath scream. The creature was still alive and fast approaching. Before Lucy could react, the demon queen attacked her, slamming into her with all her might and letting her many weapons slash at her. Lucy stumbled as the fury of the diabolic antagonist was unleashed. Asturath howled:

"You will die, worthless scum. I am the demon queen, my will be done!"

Lucy was thrown back to the ground, her ears still ringing. She was unable to concentrate. Every time she managed to understand her situation, the demon's whip came down, slicing her thoughts.

Finally, she gave up. Asturath calmed down. She smiled amidst the wreckage, kicked her fallen foe to the ground and rolled her on her back. Lucy's huge breasts flopped aside. The demon woman grinned evilly and said:

"You will make a fine slave. A fine slave indeed."

Then, with a blow of her black steel mace, she sent her victim into unconsciousness.

When she awoke, Lucy was in pain. Her whole body was aching. She was suspended at her wrists, crucified above a chasm. Below, a huge creature was pacing the bone-covered floor. She stared into the

blackness around her, when a slit appeared in the curtain in front of her. The room slowly filled with light.

In front of her was a scene out of a nightmare. Strangely twisted demons, their faces torn and rearranged into grotesque shapes were held to similar crosses, the floor a network of steel beams. The creatures seemed to be in pain, the mutilations on their bodies easily visible. Fluids were dripping in and out of them. Occasionally, one of them collapsed. When this happened, hooded, diminutive servants unhooked the victims and threw them on the floor before mashing them through the grid below.

The monster gnashed its teeth hungrily and jumped up to reach the pieces of the victim.

Lucy followed the show for a while with disgust, when she was interrupted by a gentle cough.

"Good day to you, Sister Lucretia! How are we today?"

In front of her, a large spider-like creature had descended from the roof. It was a strange demon-spider hybrid, humanoid yet completely monstrous. Its many eyes flickered open and shut, its chitinous skin exuded an acrid stench. The more terrifying parts of its body were covered by its surgeon's frock. Lucy tried to speak. He interrupted her:

"Please, don't answer. It was just a figure of speech, you see. I am Asturath's own surgeon and she wants to know what you are made of when she awakes. As a result, I will have to cut you open. I hope you don't mind."

He laughed a cynical little laugh and motioned for one of the servants to bring his tools.

"Now, this will hurt a little, so feel free to scream. After all, I'm on a withdrawal. Your friend was oh so silent. Too bad for her."

Lucy was shocked. Theresa! What had this monster done?

The surgeon-monster slid its fingers over the large bumps of her abdominal muscles and grinned blissfully.

"You're quite the pretty one, my dear. It's a shame to destroy what must have been so much work to create."

With these words, he took one of the scalpels from the tablet offered to him by one of the hunched creatures and set its blade against her skin. Lucy bit her lips, holding back the urge to scream. Her muscles contracted in reflex, making the tightness of her bonds cut her skin. She gritted her teeth as he sank the blade in and slowly drew a line of golden blood across abdomen.

"Spreader.", he said in a matter-of-fact way. She felt nauseous. However, in this second, she realized that there was but one option for her to escape this. She concentrated, dominating herself in the same way she normally ruled her slaves. At this moment, she left her body for a moment, turning into a bizarre puppet to be manipulated by the power of her will.

Suddenly, its structure, its controls, its very being spread before her like a landscape. She felt calm, detached, in control. With perfect mastery of her self, she contracted and released her pectoral muscles, shuffling the implants around inside their pocket, moving them across the newly added tissue and placing them at the front of it. With a sudden contraction, she broke the shells, letting the blessed water leak into the pockets and directing it to her nipples.

The surgeon stopped as he heard the crack of the ruptures, looked at her in wonder and exploded into a shower of chitin and bile as the holy water struck him. He screamed in terror, fell to the ground and howled as his body collapsed.

The blessed water dripped from the smoking carcass of the demonic doctor and burnt the huge creature below. As Lucy strained against her bonds, the beast began pouncing about wildly, roaring with insane aggression. The hooded creatures fled, stumbled over the holes in the floor and were instantly attacked by the raging monster which jumped up and ripped off their limbs. So great was its strength that the impact warped the floor-grid, making the metal scream with strain. With a sharp crack, the structure broke, splinters of steel flying everywhere. Lucy contracted her burning muscles and, using the force tearing at the steel cross, she ripped it apart.

She fell to the ground, bleeding and gasping for air. She waited until the pain became manageable, then took a look at herself. She was bruised and wounded, her skin was cut and hung from her abdomen. She was on the verge of panicking. Her body had become a ruin. She clambered to her feet, looked for bandages to cover her wounds, saw them and walked towards them limping. Just as she was about to reach them, the monster from below attacked again, the floor erupted into splintered metal and she was thrown in the air. Grabbing the steel beam one of her arms had been bound to, she twisted in mid-air, her wounds showering the area in her strange golden blood and rammed the beam into the creatures head, killing it.

She stood back up, bandaged her wounds and stared in disbelief at her deflated breasts. Then, she recovered: Theresa! She had to save her!

She grabbed a few of the scalpels, covered her nakedness with a few rags and left the room as quickly as the pain allowed.

Lucy sneaked through the entrails of the fortress, finding various prison cells holding horrified and broken inmates, strangling several guards and slowly making her way upstairs. As she left the dungeons behind her, the place cleared up. After several minutes of walking around in confusion, she found a window. Clearly, the place wasn't a fortress in the classic sense, especially since the window was a huge, stained glass affair. As she looked out through a clear part of an apocalyptic representation of Asturath devouring the first-born children of humanity, she realized that the whole building was flying. She stared at the landscape slowly drifting by below.

She'd have to find a way to get off this too.

However, as the pain returned, Lucy remembered she still had to find Theresa and kill Asturath. The sounds from the lower floors suggested that the dead guards had been found and that she was about to be discovered. She quickened her steps, looking for an armory of sorts.

Pretty soon, she found herself hiding close to a large door marked with demonic script, guarded by two massive demon hulks. Each of the beasts was roughly 7' tall, burly and overweight, wearing plate armor and carrying spears. Taking them out with just a handful of scalpels would be hard under normal circumstances, right now, wounded, naked and disheveled as she was, it was almost impossible.

Still, what had to be done, had to be done.

Shutting of her mind, she ran forward, lobbed the first two scalpels at the eye-holes of the left guardian, blinding one of them. The pair

instantly fell into a defensive stance, but before they could ready themselves, she slid over the marble floor and cut the hamstrings of the other one. He promptly collapsed, finding a savage warrior woman on his chest, stabbing out his eyes with a bloody scalpel. The other one, still blinded from the surgical knife sticking in his eye-socket, tried to get an attack going, but the fury in front of him just grabbed the spear and with supreme effort that made her bandages tear, levered him to the ground.

He fell down himself, ramming the scalpel further in his skull. Slitting their throats, Lucy gasped for air as she tried to close the wound on her abdomen.

As she recovered, she entered the armory and emerged seconds later, wearing a fitting suit of plate armor including a helmet that covered her face and carrying a scythe-like weapon. She walked quickly to the next level, looking for a throne hall of some kind.

After what seemed an eternity of corridors and increasingly bizarre rooms, Lucy finally ended up in front of a massive door, huge enough to let a giant pass without as much as touching the frame. Nodding at the guards, she entered. This had to be the demon queen's lair.

She walked into a massive hall, decorated with ceremonial weapons, flags and banners of conquered and defeated nations and trophies of Asturath's exploits. The hall's ceiling was very high, the light filtering in through the stained glass windows. She walked past a procession of devoted servants. The room was filled with vapors reminding her of incense, the soft sounds of a choir could be heard. As she approached the center of the room, she saw Asturath.

The demon queen was lying on a huge divan, her crown of ebon horns glistening in the sunlight. She looked down on her admirers, apparently awakening from the daze of a powerful narcotic. One of the sycophants addressed her with devotion:

"O queen of queens, mistress of blood, demon lady of destruction! Are you well? Do you require any help?"

Asturath's eyes flickered once again, she shook her head and replied:

"Not at all. I feel elated. I assume the doctor was successful?"

"Indeed! It was a full success."

"Perfect. Where is he? I want to thank him. I would have expected him to be here when I wake. If you find him, have him lashed."

"Of course, mistress. However ..." The creature cowered. "There is a slight problem."

Her voice was ice.

"What?"

The servant hesitated:

"There has been an accident."

"An accident? Tell me now. Stop stalling or I'll have you gutted and served for dinner!"

Paling, the lesser demon replied:

"Sister Lucretia has escaped. She has killed the doctor and some of the guards."

The demon queen laughed shrilly.

"Excellent. I guess she'll be on her way here. Perfect. I think she might even be here by now. This time, nothing will stand in the way of our confrontation. I hope she isn't too weak. Let's see if the doctor's work was a worthy testament of his skill."

With these words, the six-armed demon moved a little sideways. The lower part of her body was revealed.

Through the slits of her helmet, Lucy could see the total horror of the doctor's work. The demon queen's legs had been removed. Instead, her body now ended in what Lucy recognized as Theresa's. Where her friend's head had been, Asturath's hips flowed into the shoulders. The monster's body was now akin to a centaur. She got on her four lower limbs, putting what had once been Theresa's hands and feet on the ground and stretching her six upper arms. From what had been Theresa's jugular notch, a massive vagina grew.

The bizarre obscenity took a few hesitant steps, then called for one of her servants to clothe her. What had once been Theresa's body was quickly covered in dark red leathers. The monster exclaimed:

"Where is Lucretia? I want her to meet the new me!"

Indeed, Lucy barely managed to control her urge to throw up and she stood there, gagging desperately under her helmet. What had this abomination done? She had to kill her. She had to avenge her friend. She grasped her scythe tighter and advanced.

Meanwhile, the demon queen was in a foul mood. Waiting for Lucy to show up was making her angry. She paced the room, then said:

"Is the oracle ready? Have you added the new one?"

The servants nodded.

"Bring it in, then! I'm waiting."

She made a tapping motion with her lower body's fingers.

Lucy slowly drifted forward, approaching the central part of the room. The servants bustled to the back, then returned with a crystal sphere. It was actually quite a complex device, trailing cables and wires. Lucy pushed some lackeys aside and saw the content of the sphere.

Inside the clear orb, Theresa's head was swimming in some kind of liquid. Several tubes protruded from it, connecting her to a device in the back. Asturath took the globe and said:

"Alas, poor nun! I knew her."

Then she laughed hysterically. Theresa's head opened its eyes and waited:

"Where is Sister Lucretia?"

The nun's eyes flickered, her thoughts racing. At last she said in unison with Lucy:

"RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU!"

Lifting her scythe, Lucy charged at the abomination. She pushed aside the various servants and boot-lickers, jumped up on the platform and struck her foe's abdomen. The massive demon-creature stared at the cut

in disbelief, reared up and smashed Lucy with both of her huge lower fists. The warrior nun barely escaped being crushed under the masses of her friend's hands. The demon woman did not wait for her to recover. Instead, she drew her weapons from a nearby rack and pounced at her, intending to impale her on her spear.

Lucy managed to divert the weapon and tried to circle her enemy, expecting her to be slow at turning around. Indeed, Asturath took some while to face her again, so Lucy found a few seconds to recover and make a plan. She looked at the monstrosity, thinking about a possible weak spot. The only thing she noticed was that the suture between the torso and the lower body still seemed weak. Getting there wouldn't be easy.

She ran around her enemy, once again stalling the confrontation. However, Asturath had enough.

"So you're a coward? Very well. You can die just as quick."

With these words, she covered herself in eldritch flames and threw them in a circle around her. The servants found their robes aflame and fled screaming, prompting their mistress to whoop with pleasure. Lucy was burnt too, her bandages singed, her skin scorched. She had to get on the beast's back. She expected a blind spot there.

Running to a nearby column, she called for Asturath, making the lumbering hulk charge her. Just as the monster was upon her, she climbed up the slick pillar and jumped from it. The ascension tore off her bandages, exposing her bleeding midsection. She struck at Asturath's face with a fistful of scalpels.

The demon's eight eyes glared furiously, but the monster just bent sideways, evading the attack. Lucy landed on the contorting, writhing muscles, readied her scythe and struck at the junction between torso and body. The weapon bit deep, but Asturath was unimpressed. Instead, she just twisted around, contorting her waist by 180 degrees and facing her assailant. Wielding two short steel whips in her lower pair of arms, she grabbed Lucy's arms and pulled her closer, her circular mouth gaping.

Lucy focused her strength on resisting her enemy's steely pull, then suddenly relaxed, throwing herself at the creature's maw. The moment her breast sank into her foe's mouth, she released a spray of nectar. The monster swallowed it in surprise, her strange, lipless mouth dripping with honey.

The massive amount made it act with lightning quickness. Eight eyes gaping, Asturath stared at Lucy's face as the released warrior nun smiled wickedly and started pummeling her face into a bloody clump.

As Lucy destroyed her foe's face, the growth process started, making Asturath's muscles swell and quiver. Soon, her arms were fighting for space in the cramped environment. She howled in pain as she literally tore herself apart. Finally, she threw herself on her own back, sending Lucy flying to the ground. For a moment, the warrior nun blacked out from the pain.

Asturath grabbed for the sphere, stared at it with a few of her remaining good eyes and said:

"I need to stop this. Find a way."

Once again, the eyes flickered and Theresa's head said:

"The antidote is the blood of angels."

Asturath stared at her and screamed in frustration. Meanwhile, Lucy got back up and staggered around looking for a weapon. The demon-queen's body became increasingly immobile by its relentless growth. She extended an ever-lengthening tongue from her lamprey-like mouth and licked up the blood spilled by Lucy. Instantly, the growth subsided. She gasped with relief, got back on her 'feet' and looked for her antagonist.

At the same time, Lucy had taken a sword from her enemy's own weapons rack. She advanced again on her, staggering from the blood-loss and the wounds. Asturath was bleeding just as badly, but she was still willing to fight. Besides, her bloated muscles had made her even stronger. The demonic woman attacked in full charge, jumping in the air to smash her foe with her full weight.

Lucy saw the monster's shadow eclipse the stained glass light. She realized that she wouldn't be able to evade this attack. Instead, she did the most awful thing she could do. Running forward, she jumped up herself, sinking into Asturath's now exposed vagina. The monster gasped, stopped where she landed, bent forward and clawed at herself, trying to get Lucy back out.

Then, just as sudden as she had fought, she stopped. Something had happened. Her body went limp, her eyes turned dull. Asturath collapsed. The blade of Lucy's sword shot out of her back, severing her upper body from the lower one. She emerged from the bleeding carcass, holding a strangely distorted piece of mother of pearl in her hand. She stared at it, wiped the blood from it and inserted it into her snatch.

Lucy felt a wave of energy wash over her. The blood and insanity around her, the wounds her body had taken, everything became distant and unclear. She felt a strange calm permeate her being. As she opened her eyes, she could see that her body was healing. Her skin was reattaching itself, her wounds disappeared.

Then, when she had fully recovered, the transformation began. It came as a surprise. Lucy had somehow expected that taking the demon's power in herself would make her more powerful, but the effect was strange. Somehow, she felt a growing pain in her sides. Her arms started to shake, her head began to pound. She touched the area below her armpits and wondered at what was happening. Something was swelling, growing, taking form under her skin. And then, suddenly, she screamed in pain. Within moments, a second pair of arms erupted below her normal one. As they built up, the muscles wrapped around them grew stronger and stronger until they reached the girth of the others.

Soon, she calmed down. Her body, a perfect weapon, was slowly adapting to its enemies. She looked down at her midsection and realized it was growing ever more muscular. When the process finally stopped, she took a look at herself in one of Asturath's many mirrors.

She was no longer even remotely human. Her body had become ever more massive, her large frame stuffed with muscles. Her deflated breasts hung from a swollen chest full of strength, lying on top of a bloated stomach with enormous abdominals. She couldn't help but touch her extreme body, her four hands exploring the ridges and mounts of her overmuscled physique. She was amazed at how nimble and

natural her new hands were. She used them instinctively as if she'd always had them.

The grumbling of destabilizing masonry awoke her from her daydream. She looked around, saw that the others had fled and began feeling the slow but ever quickening descent of the aerial fortress. She ran to Theresa's severed head and tore it free from its cables. The other woman looked at her through her glass pane. She said:

"You defeated her. I knew it. Mistress, you must listen to me. I was connected to the other minds of Asturath's slaves. I know all they know. I think with their minds. I can help you. You must save me. I will explain later."

"Good. How do I get off this place?"

The head in a jar shook, then she said:

"There's a landing strip on top of the fortress. Go up there, there are six, no, five planes left. Be quick."

Lucy ran. She climbed the stairs, pushed aside fleeing demon servants and reached the top platform. There, she jumped into one of the vehicles. She stared at the controls.

"How does this thing fly?"

Once again, the head shivered. Theresa's voice said:

"Connect me there and there. I'll fly you, mistress."

Lucy did as she was told. The machine sprung to life and took off, dumping several fugitives overboard. As they left the collapsing fortress, Lucy looked back. The whole construct was a massive cathedral,

suspended in the sky upside down. The building broke apart, pieces of masonry dropping into the wasteland below.

They flew away, avid to return to Barricada.

Sadly, the escape was short-lived. After a few seconds, a group of similar planes appeared behind them and, seeking revenge for their fallen mistress, opened fire. Bullets whizzed by, smoke started pouring from the machine, the ground roared closer. Even though the severed head aligned the machine's gun on their pursuers and managed to take two of them out, the damage was done. Within seconds, the plane went into a spin and eventually crashed into a rocky outcrop.

Spitting out dirt, Lucy emerged from the machine's wreckage. She reached into the broken hull and pulled Theresa's head from the debris. The head stared at her in confusion. Above them, one of the planes turned around and descended in a strafing run. Lucy ran.

She evaded the attack, took cover behind the nearby boulders and fled towards a ridge that cut the plain in half. As she ran, she finally realized that the ridge was more than a mere wall of earth. Instead, she suddenly saw that the horizon ended with this. Below her, a very deep chasm opened, a thin line of blue suggesting a river or creek. Still, it was too late to stop and she jumped.

Spreading her top pair of arms, she dove with perfect poise. When the water approached, she took a very elegant header. In this moment, she hoped and begged that the water would be deep and it was.

She smashed through the surface, the world bursting into a stream of bubbles. For a few seconds, she might have lost consciousness. When she recovered, she swam on underwater, losing her pursuers.

A few minutes later, she emerged from the water. She was still dazed from the impact, her pale skin swelling up with bruises. She slowly climbed out of the riverbed and looked around. Lucy was at the foot of the gorge. The water was speeding by, the sides of the canyon were nearly vertical. No easy escape from here. She decided to look for some shelter. After all, she was still naked, wet and freezing.

She looked around and suddenly saw a cave entrance. It had been carved to look like the head of a demon. As she inspected it more closely, she realized it was abandoned. Indeed, the dust inside was half an inch thick. This place was a ruin. Still, it would offer her some protection from the wind roaring through the gorge. She held Theresa's head closer and stepped inside, her eyes slowly adapting to the darkness.

After a few yards inside, she found out that this place had been furnished with quite a few amenities. In it, she found a very dusty chamber with a cot, some robes and a few canned provisions. The people who had set up this place had even prepared some now useless guns. She found a knife she could use after a little searching.

She lit a fire in the simple fireplace and checked, whether the smoke would be drawn off. She was relieved when it disappeared through the chimney.

After checking on her wounds and eating something, she finally had the time to recover. Only then did she realize that her body had once again changed.

She touched the fingers on her four hands, running them through in a strange thumb twiddling motion. Once she was done, she stared at Theresa's head in its fishbowl. She asked:

"What happened?"

Theresa gave her a blank stare as her eyes flickered. After a few seconds, she stopped, then said with an indifferent voice:

"My head was cut off. She took my body. I was connected to this machine and joined to the minds of all her other enemies. I now know everything they knew."

Lucy took the head in her four hands and said regretfully:

"I'm so sorry I came too late. I was unconscious."

"I know. You couldn't do anything. It's okay."

"No. It's not. It's horrible. So am I. I've finally turned into a monster."

Once again, Theresa's eyes quivered and she said:

"Yes. But don't worry. It was the right thing to do. You'd have died without this. I would have lost you."

"I don't understand."

"You are my mistress. Even before this, I was at your mercy. Now, it is total. Absolute. This is how I want it to be."

Lucy stared at her friend's disembodied head. She continued:

"I have seen the minds of the many. You are the peace bringer. You are the angel of death. You are the one who will destroy the demons and

free humanity."

"Me?"

"You. I will stay with you until the end."

Lucy slowly put down the sphere and took her head in her many hands. She sobbed.

"What now?"

After a while, the head said in a soothing voice:

"We'll have to find a way out of here and return to Barricada. As soon as we're there, we'll be able to recover."

Lucy calmed down and said:

"You're right. I'm starting to lose it. I need to focus on getting back."

She picked up the clothes and fashioned a garb for her. Then, she took the knife and built a torch. Lighting it, she descended deeper into the cave.

Soon, she realized that this place was part of a vast network of aimless tunnels that occasionally just ended, forcing her to backtrack. It seemed that some sections had collapsed, others hadn't been finished. She occasionally found some signs of bloodshed, apparently, demons had slaughtered the inhabitants. All of this seemed strangely familiar.

Eventually, she reached a massive steel door. It was well-constructed and appeared to be very robust. The whole thing was locked from the inside.

She examined it more closely and finally found a plate in the wall next to it. As she lifted it off, she found a small alcove, roughly four inches high. Inside was a small machine with a needle on top of it. The needle was sealed in plastic. As she removed the cover, the thing sprang to life and beeped. A flickering light went on and a disembodied voice said:

"Prepare for genetic key."

Hesitating, Lucy pressed her finger on the needle. There was another beep, something sprang to life in the depths of the vault. Then, the door opened slowly.

Lucy stared into the darkness before her. Beyond the light of the torch, something moved. She held the torch high with her upper left, held the sphere in her lower right and readied the knife. She was still amazed at how natural her movements were. She advanced, noting that the floor was devoid of dust. The place was deserted, but clean. She continued until she reached a series of doors. The corridor went on, leading to a large hall. She went in, looked around and shouted:

"Hello? Is there anybody out there? Hello?"

Her booming voice echoed back at her. She felt uneasy. Suddenly, the head sprang to life and said:

"There are lifeforms close by. They are approaching."

Lucy strained her eyes against the gloom and then she saw them. A whole group of humans emerged into the hall. They were of all races,

but always sickly pale and clearly scared by the monstrous creature that had entered their lair. Lucy looked at them and said:

"I am a friend. My name is Lucretia. I am a sister of the order and a servant of the One."

The mob hesitated. The words clearly meant something to them. They lowered their clubs and waited. After a while, the group opened and a wizened old man came forward. He asked in a failing voice:

"Lucretia? I cannot see you, my eyes have failed me, but are you Ishmael's daughter?"

When she heard her father's name from the ancient man's throat, she shivered all over. How could he know him?

She replied:

"I am. Who are you?"

"My name is Matthew. I was your father's teacher before the fall. What has become of him?"

"He's dead. He died defending me. The demons killed him."

"I see. This is bad. On the other hand, it was expected. I told him that leaving this bunker would be his end. I was right. Good."

He nodded. She asked:

"What is this place?"

The old man sat down and motioned her to do likewise.

"It's a safe house we set up in case something would happen. We hadn't expected demons. A nuclear war was more along our plans. Still, it served well. We lived down here since the Fall of Humanity. This is the third generation."

He made a sweeping gesture. The people stared at the giant woman in terror.

"Ishmael was a strange one. I had known him before the apocalypse. Unlike me, he was always afraid of changes. When the end came, he withdrew deeper into the bunker and refused to talk to us. Meanwhile, we others did what we could to repopulate and maintain our knowledge. Until now, the demons haven't found our base and I guess they won't."

Lucy looked around and gazed at the pallid men and women around her. She asked:

"Why did he leave then?"

"After a while, he escaped from his stupor. It must have been the realization that his fears had been correct that made him calm down. For me, it had just been a scientific eventuality." With a smirk, he added: "After all, I much more expected a nuclear war than a demon incursion of all things. Honestly, even now, it sounds so ridiculous. Demons! Whatever!" He laughed a little, then continued: "In the end, he decided to go out and explore. I was against it, of course, but you know how it is. You can't refuse things forever. So out he went."

"And then?"

"Well, he returned. He had a prisoner with him. A demon, no less. We took our time and questioned it. It took forever, but in the end, it spilled its guts. It was only then that we understood that an infernal incursion was the problem. Until then, we still thought it was a military conflict

amongst humans. After a while, we became used to the demon. After all, it was friendly and everything. If they're alone, they're quite human in their ways. Also, I have a theory that you should help me test: Is it true that there are several tiers of demons and that the lower ones are dominated by their, might I say, 'betters'?"

Lucy nodded:

"That's correct. Without the demon lords, they quickly become disorganized."

"Excellent. Thank you. This completes an important part of my studies."

He started scribbling words on a notepad.

After a while of watching him work, Lucy asked:

"And what happened then?"

"He left. Otherwise he wouldn't have been your father, would he?"

"Yes. But how and why?"

"He freed the demon and left with it. I don't know why. After all, we had learned what we wanted to know from it and I was getting ready to dissect it. Well, too bad."

"He took the demon with him? Why?"

"I don't know. I guess he liked it. Like a pet? Anyway, you're here now and the computer system has recognized your genetic code. You're welcome to stay."

Lucy shook her head:

"I'm sorry, I can't stay. I have to return to Barricada. But you can come with me, if you want. It's much better on the outside."

The old man smiled and said:

"No, no. You have to stay. You seem like a strong woman, very fertile. I'm sorry I can't see you all too well, but with all this ... volume, you must be good at bearing children. We need children, you know?"

"What?"

"We have to beat the demons at their own game. Overpopulate them. Destroy them with the masses of our progeny. That's all we've been doing here for decades now. It will work, if you help."

One of the pale people approached and whispered a few words to the old man. His expression changed and he said:

"I'm just being told that you have become a half-breed demon bastard. That's bad, but not a problem. After all, some of your kids are likely to be human enough anyway. All this demon stuff will be able to be bred out, don't you think."

With these words, he made a sign to the mass of strange people. With a sudden bout of rage, they charged Lucy, brandishing ropes and chains to bind her. Lucy lifted her fists and prepared to defend herself. Within seconds, a huge brawl ensued. Lucy's fists smashed her deathly pale assailants into the ground, only to find them replaced by another wave.

She struggled against them, but they slowly but certainly ground her down. Understanding what was going to happen, Theresa's head shouted to her friend:

"Throw me over there, I'll take control."

Lucy threw her friend's severed skull over to the control board and sunk all four fists into the hordes around her, throwing them back again. She bit one of the attacker's ears off and spit it out high. Theresa's globe extended a few cable tendrils and quickly took control of the computer system. As Lucy head-butted another enemy, Theresa turned on the defense mechanisms, flooding the room with irritant gas. Lucy ran forward, eyes red from the agent, grabbed Theresa, and ran deeper into the complex. As she sprinted through identical corridors, Theresa directed her to another exit.

She sprinted up some stairs, throwing her pursuers over the aisle. When she finally reached the door, she heard the panting of her foes. She struggled to wrench it open, when she heard the old man shout:

"Do not flee! There is no place in the world for the likes of you. With us, you can be a part of society, somehow like a human being. Outside, you're neither human nor demon. Stay, and you won't be alone. Think about it!"

Lucy spat, pulled open the door and fled.

As she ran, the old man looked at her fleeing shape with whitened eyes. He said:

"My children, we'll have to get her back. Too bad. I really wanted to stay here. However, if we managed to breed her into our line, we'll have the means to destroy the demon brood. Follow her!"

After what seemed like forever, Lucy stopped running. She fell to the ground, gasping for air. She laid down for a while, waiting for her to

recover. Finally, she got back up and spat out the bitterness in her mouth. The hulking four-armed woman picked up her slave's head and said:

"I can't believe how crazy this guy was."

If Theresa could have, she would have nodded. Instead, she said:

"Agreed. He knew your father, though. I wonder what became of the demon?"

"Honestly, I don't know and I don't care. You know me well, but I must say that it is time for a break. I really need to get back to civilization."

Theresa replied:

"Definitely. I'll need a little help too."

"Do you happen to know where we are?"

"I can find out when it's night."

"Perfect. Then we'll stay here and wait for sundown."

They just sat there for hours, in the pale and cold desert, waiting silently. Neither of them had anything to say. After a while, Lucy fell asleep. Theresa woke her up as the sun went down. Lucy awoke from a weird mess of a dream, involving her father, Asturath, the underground bunker and the darkness between the stars.

When she was awake, Theresa said:

"I have calculated our position. There should be a settlement thirty miles to the east."

Lucy turned her until she said 'this way' and started walking.

"Thank you."

As she walked, Lucy stared up at the sky. It was full of stars, there was no moon. However, she could see the strange phenomenon that had appeared before the demons had invaded. Amidst the stars, there was a large area, probably circular, which held no stars at all. Half dreaming, she said:

"I wonder what's up there ..."

There was no answer.

In the dark of the night, Lucy finally arrived at the fortified town Theresa had predicted. It was encircled by a wall of scrap metal and broken concrete. Its gates were closed. Lucy had to wait for the morning and finally caught up with the rest of her sleep.

When she awoke, she arranged her clothes so that people wouldn't see her additional arms and carefully hid Theresa's head in the folds of her garb. Then, she went to the gates. They were open, which she found surprising. She stepped through and walked over the main road. She was hungry as hell. As she approached the tavern, she was cut short by a group of men on riding beasts. The creatures were strange, scaled giant ostriches, with beaks full of teeth. The riders were well-armed and were currently addressing a group of people on their way to the store.

The leader had just asked:

"Where are you going, dirt?"

The young man, a pale, skinny farmer, his face tattooed with a slave mark that was slowly fading looked up at the rider and replied:

"I'm just going to the shop and by some stuff."

"Stuff? You heard that, guys? He's going to buy stuff."

There was a ripple of laughter. The rider leaned down and continued:

"Well, my friend, stuff isn't going to be all that important today. Not for a little freak like you. Although, you're right, stuff might get interesting."

He turned to his partners:

"What do you say? Let's stuff the little fucker. What do you think? We could arrange him in a fancy pose, with the bear you shot earlier, Joe."

Joe, one of the members of the group, replied:

"Sounds like a great idea. I know just the thing. Poor little orphan's going to get his place in history."

Lucy still stood there, waiting for the riders to clear the path. As they continued abusing the youth, she finally interrupted the scene by abruptly lifting the leader from his animal and throwing him down to the ground. With a crash, he landed in the dirt. The beast, surprised at its rider's departure, squawked loudly in confusion. The other riders turned to Lucy and drew their weapons.

Lucy stared down six revolver barrels. One of the men wanted to say something threatening, but instead of letting him finish, Lucy just smashed her right fists into the still confused flightless bird and sent the 500-pound beast tumbling into its fellow's legs. She used the following chaos to quickly demolish her enemies. One of the riders got back up from under his thrashing mount, managed to aim his gun at her and found himself unable to get a mark since she just slapped his hand aside. It felt like being hit by a steel rod. He howled in pain as his revolver dropped to the ground.

When Lucy was done destroying the gang, the few of them who weren't unconscious limped away. Lucy walked over to the young man, suddenly

noticing that the entire town was watching. She stared at them, unsure of what would happen next.

Then, the crowd erupted into cheers.

Minutes later, Lucy was sitting in the tavern, enjoying enormous amounts of food and drink. Apparently, she had unintentionally rid the town of the resident gang of evildoers. Furthermore, when she explained that she was a woman of the Order, the residents nodded but clearly had no idea. However, they were willing to place themselves under her protection. Lucy accepted.

There was a bit of confusion later on, when Lucy accidentally revealed her special shape, but apparently, the townspeople were somehow accustomed to it. When she asked, the barkeeper replied:

"We get all sorts around here."

He smiled.

Lucy stared in horror as he revealed the monstrous fangs that lined his jaw. The creature was a demon after all. As she looked around, getting ready to fight, she realized that the regulars in the tavern were demons too. There they were, enjoying their drinks, minding their own business and, well, being fiends. As she gazed around wild-eyed, the barkeeper said:

"Relax, you're among your own people here. Ever since someone killed Baal Zabuth, we've been free. Most of us have been thralls all their life and are just learning to get along. It's the same for you. You'll be fine."

"You're demons? All of you?"

"Sure!" The young man from before replied. "Thanks again. Those guys are pretty nasty. They set up the town and have spent the last few months breaking our backs. Honestly, not being a thrall is great, but being ordered around by a bunch of humans is the pits."

The barkeeper said:

"On the other hand, we're being left alone. And now that we have a champion of our own, we'll finally be left alone." He smiled at Lucy and gave her the 'thumbs up'.

Lucy stared at her drink. She held her head with her top arms while she clung to the bar with the lower pair. What had she gotten into. The young man continued:

"Where'd you learn to fight, anyway? I mean, I've seen a bunch of drones in my life, but you're much more powerful. Also, you look different. Like a demon lady, you know?"

Lucy shut her eyes. She was flabbergasted. There she was, at a bar in the middle of nowhere, talking to a bunch of demon yokels who were expecting her to protect them from their human masters. She had no idea what to do. The people, if people they were, were courteous, albeit a little odd and clearly trusted her. The revelation of the strange underground dwellers had also made her doubt in humanity's qualities.

Finally, she said:

"I need some rest. Do you have a place for me to sleep? Nothing fancy."

"Of course."

The room didn't turn out to be fancy. It was comfortable, though. There was a bed, a table and a chair and Lucy could lock the door from the inside. When she finally had her privacy, she put Theresa's head on the table and stripped out of the rags she was wearing. Just as she was done, there was a knock at the door.

She went over and opened it a little. There was the barkeeper's chubby demon wife, a pair of pitch black wrought horns on her head, her long, split nose making her look like a goat. She asked:

"Do you need anything? My husband told me you were tired. We can get you a bath and some fresh clothes if you want."

Lucy waited for a while, still looking down on the strange shape in front of her. Finally, she said:

"A bath would be perfect. Also, I need some clothes. Do you have someone who can make them?"

"Why, of course. I'll tell my husband to get a tub up here. If you want, I can take you measurements and tailor an outfit for you. I'm good at this." She smiled and made a wide motion. "I made those clothes myself."

Her outfit, although rather plain, was well-made and adapted to her shape. The strange, hobbling gait her legs gave her was easily visible but uninhibited.

Lucy thanked her and sent her on her way. She sat down on the bed. She was beginning to cave. Those people were nice to her. They genuinely appreciated her help and were kind enough to respect her without her needing to coerce them.

After a while, the husband carried in the tub, filling it with rather clean and warm water. When he was done, he left. Lucy climbed into the tub and watched as the water grew dark from the grime. She felt relaxed. Her skin returned to its white pallor and her muscles eased. She rubbed off the dirt from her body. As she worked her way over her massive body, she finally accepted the bizarre shape she now had. She was astonished at the mass of her body, the tremendously powerful muscles and the ridiculously large breasts. Inside herself, she still felt the scrawny body she had had before transformations. She wondered what she would say to herself if she saw her now. She'd probably be scared shitless. Still, her body was now clean. She got up, dried off her skin and marveled as the tattoos burst into ephemeral flames once again, displaying the sacred texts she was covered with. The fire was cold and otherworldly. She wondered at it silently. At last, the tiredness of the last days caught up with her. She dropped on the mattress, making the bed wince.

Eventually, she fell asleep.

The morning after, Lucy awoke completely rested. She smiled at the sun shining in through the window, marveled at the diffuse sounds of the people and animals outside. She stretched, got up and turned to Theresa. The head still lay where she had left it. Its eyes were closed. Lucy laid her hand on it. With a twitch, the head returned to life. It said:

"Good morning, mistress. I trust you slept well."

"Absolutely. I've never been this rested in my life. How about you?"

"I do not sleep anymore. I wait and I think."

Lucy wondered what.

"I'm exploring the thoughts of the minds I have been linked to. They are like the books of a library or the halls of a museum. I travel through their consciousnesses which are in me at the same time."

Her mistress was clearly confused by the thought and left it at that.

Anyway, her pondering was interrupted by a knock at the door. Lucy opened it a little and asked:

"Who's there?"

Outside, the goat-woman was standing, smiling in the most disturbing way. She said:

"There are people downstairs who want to talk to you. They are from the city council."

"The city council?"

"The people in charge for the daily routine. They are like us. No filthy humans."

Lucy gave her a weird look. The woman continued:

"I've seen your tattoos. Its despicable. To cover you in such awful signs. No wonder the skin's still burning. It's a shame."

She pulled up her sleeve and showed her a sigil that had been burnt into her skin. It was a holy symbol and still flickered as if alive.

"I made you some clothes. I hope they fit."

She handed Lucy a bundle of cloth and continued:

"Will you be seeing them? They're waiting for an answer."

Lucy nodded:

"I'll come down in a minute."

When Lucy came down to the bar room, the whole place was full of people. She looked at them and felt a pang of disgust. All of them were demons. There were all kinds of monsters: tall and gangly ones, huge burly creatures, horns, hooves and claws. Some were even feathered. As she descended the stairs, they turned their eyes on her. Lucy had Theresa's head with her, but concealed it in the folds of her dress. The innkeeper's wife had created a garment of rough cloth, covering her ample bosom and her dramatic waist. It went down below her knees but let her shoulders free, allowing her to easily move her four arms. It was clear that the demon woman had had difficulties in fitting the required four sleeves and had finally resigned herself to this solution.

All in all, the gown was simple but allowed for surprisingly easy movement. Lucy had taken the opportunity and removed all the piercings and body jewelry, given them a good and thorough cleaning and replaced them. She hoped the saintly design of the various pieces wouldn't make them despise her. She was unsure why, but she found these demons to be strangely trustworthy. She reached the end of the stairs and said:

"Here I am! What do you want?"

The demons stared at her huge size. She wasn't as tall and muscular as the bigger demons in the back, but they seemed more akin to laborers than to warriors. All in all, she radiated an aura of elegance in killing. One of the demons stepped forward, his face was birdlike, his shoulders covered in large scales growing from his neck and said:

"I am Harashat. I am one of the elders of this town. You have defeated some of our oppressors but more are coming. Will you protect us?"

Lucy considered the question for a while and nodded:

"Of course. I might need your help, though."

"Everything. Of course. We are very thankful for this. Please protect us."

"I will."

At this moment, the door flew open. The demons whirled around and stared at the intruder. It was a large man in a dusty suit, a heavy revolver hanging from his waist. He wore a duster and a rather dirty hat. He walked in, the spurs on his boots clinking. The demons made room for him. He stepped over to the bar, knocked on it and was quickly served a glass of liquor. He turned to the audience and pushed back his hat, revealing a weathered face with a scruffy beard. He took a sip and put the glass back.

"Can't say you vermin manage to make good liquor. This tastes like piss."

He looked around and asked:

"Was I interrupting something?"

The demons shook their heads and looked distraught.

"Excellent then. Why don't you all go back to work?"

He suddenly saw Lucy:

"And who might you be? You're new to this shithole."

Lucy gave him a grim stare.

"I see. You must be the demon bitch that beat up Joe yesterday. Took us quite some time to get him talking. He's furious, you know?"

He placed his hand on his gun's grip and continued:

"I guess it's time for you to come with me and apologize."

Lucy didn't move. He waited for a few seconds, then repeated his request. Once again, the pale woman stood still. He approached her and said:

"Come on, don't make it harder for yourself. Pretty demon bitches have it easier, so don't make me make you ugly."

He pulled out his gun and pushed her gown to the side, revealing her swollen breast. He looked at the tattoos and said:

"Well, what do you know, you've been a slave before. This won't be new to you then ..."

Lucy whirled around, pushed his gun aside with her lower left hand, grabbed him with her top pair, lifted him from his feet and pounded his stomach with her remaining fist. The man was so surprised, he threw up a little, however, his aggressor didn't stop. Instead, she wrenched the gun from his hand, put him into a bear hug and squeezed until he turned blue. He struggled to free himself, but she had now switched arms and held his flailing hands in her top pair. Before he lost consciousness, she stopped and let him go limp. She dragged him out in the street and said:

"Get your friends here at sundown if you don't want me to make an example of you."

She gave him a good kick to the stomach, breaking a few ribs along the way. The man scrambled to his feet and ran away.

As the sun went down, the streets became deserted. People gathered in their homes, straining to see what was going to happen. Lucy walked out in the emptiness. She had strapped several ammunition belts to her, parting her over-sized breasts. She had a total of four revolvers at the ready and stood there, her scalp covered by a piece of fabric twisted into

a makeshift headdress. She had put Theresa's head into a net and attached it to her like a backpack. In this way, she had someone who would watch her back in case her enemies would try anything funny. She waited.

The sun slowly descended below the horizon, its last rays glowing behind the mountains. The whole scenery was basking in an aura of deep, blood red. Then, her foes appeared. They came in two groups. The first one was being led by a tall man with a duster and a flat hat, the second one by the man she had beaten up earlier. He was still uneasy on his feet. However, this group was reinforced by a huge man carrying what might be described as a cannon.

They took up position opposite her, reaching for their weapons. The leader stepped forward and said:

"Well then, that is one fine warrior the demon shit-faces found themselves. Fine by me. Listen up, lady: If you don't want to die, there's always room with us. Why be a fool and die for these weaklings when you can be their mistress?"

Lucy smirked and replied:

"I thought you came here to fight and not to chatter."

"Very well then. But be aware that you won't get an easy death. We'll take you alive and we'll make you wish you could return to hell!"

Lucy kept her arms hanging relaxed.

"Can we get it on?"

Just as the leader reached for his gun and the other warriors readied their weapons, Lucy drew all four revolvers at once and laid down a barrage of bullets from her six-guns. At the same time, she sprinted to the left, running between two houses. The other fighters shot at her, but quite a few of them were thrown to the ground, their heads blown asunder by her bullets. As they recovered, they ran after her, following the muscular fugitive as fast as they could. However, as they emerged in the next street, they couldn't see her.

Above them, Lucy discretely reloaded her revolvers. The foes below took cover and looked around, trying to get a glimpse of her. Nothing. She returned all too suddenly. With a perfect back-flip, she landed in their midst and emptied her barrels into the waiting enemies. Then, she started to run to safety. However, the second group had seen her. A hail of bullets destroyed the nearby wall. She was hit on the shoulder and in the leg. Then, the huge man lowered his cannon at her.

The canon roared.

Lucy bent backwards, her damaged leg wobbling. Her huge calves hardened as the ball passed over her, burning the skin on her abs. She remained in the position, supporting herself on her lower pair of hands and fired her revolvers at the large man's knees. He collapsed as his legs exploded into shards of bone and blood. The other gunmen had recovered from the blast and charged her. Lucy did a kip-up, landed on her feet, almost collapsed from the pain and stumbled around the corner. She could hear the assailants shout orders. They were going to surround her. She needed a plan fast.

When the gunmen had finished moving around the house and had managed to flank her, they charged all guns blazing. However, they

found the place they had expected her to be in empty.

"Damn it! Where is she?"

"Can you see her?"

"Nope. She must be around here, though."

Meanwhile, Lucy suppressed the urge to scream in pain. She had forced herself under one of the houses. The tight space had crushed and torn her skin, she was bleeding. However, the remaining fighters were still on the lookout for her.

Lucy held her breath. Outside, one of the gunmen asked:

"So no one of you saw her leave?"

"Nope."

"She must still be around, then."

The muscular woman pushed on under the house, ripping her skin. Suddenly, she heard:

"Look at this. That's ... blood. It's golden."

"Must be the freak demon's."

"She's under the house!"

"Quick!"

She heard the men enter the house as some clambered below the floor. One of them shouted:

"There she ..."

His voice trailed off as Lucy kicked his face in. The ones above shouted:

"She must be down there. Shoot the floor."

Above her, gunshots went off, the bullets pierced the floorboards. Lucy was hit in the chest. The bullet stuck in her left breast. She remained calm as the guy with a broken face wailed on. Then, she concentrated. She managed to get rid of the pain for a second, set herself up on all sixes and then, with supreme effort, smashed through the floor in a cascade of wood, nails, blood and bruised flesh.

The men were thrown down. She jumped on top of the first one, demolished his head with a blow of her fist, stomped the next and threw a third one into the hole she had created. The others saw this, stared at the goliath woman covered in her own blood and clearly ready to dish out more punishment and fled.

Lucy threw up. She was bleeding profusely, every wound hurting as hell. Her clothes were torn, her skin was bruised and swelling. The places where she had been hurt took a golden and black color. She stumbled out and saw the remaining warriors flee. She wiped a piece of vomit from her chin and relaxed.

She walked out, found Theresa's head and saw the villagers dispose of the remaining gunmen. Then, she sat down and breathed deeply. Only after a while did she recover. The villagers had assembled around her, bringing one of them, apparently a doctor, with them. The demon ordered them to bring a stretcher and had her brought to his surgery.

He sent everybody out and tended to her wounds, extracting the bullets and disinfecting the many bruises and cuts. The doctor was a tall and thin creature, with a beak-like snout and black tufts of hair. He looked vaguely vulture-like. When he was done, he said as he washed his hands:

"Well, you'll make it. Thank you for helping us. It isn't usual for humans to be this accommodating in their taste of friends."

She looked at him with fear in her eyes. He continued:

"Yes. Of course. I know you are human. It isn't difficult to see: Demons lay eggs. You probably won't." He smiled, if that was at all possible: "But don't worry. I won't tell a thing. It doesn't matter whether a cat is black or white as long as it catches mice. It is better to judge people by their acts."

"Thank you. I'm sorry for deceiving everyone, but it was the first time in a long time I was welcome and treated as an equal."

"I understand. That's fine by me. Also, you do have some demon in you. Several, actually."

She gasped.

"That's okay. After all, you are the Liberator, aren't you? Your reputation precedes you. You have killed two of the demon lords and people expect you to rid them of the other two eventually."

"That was the plan."

"Then it's perfect. You should be back in shape in a few days."

"Thank you."

"Also, I extracted these from your breasts." He held up two broken bags. "They were a give-away of your human origin too. I'll destroy them since they're broken anyway."

"Good. Thank you for all your help. However, I'd like to rest for now."

"Fine ..."

Before he could finish, she had already fallen asleep.

When she had recovered, Lucy took up the duties she had been given by the villagers. She went on patrol, broke up fights between demons and

humans and took care of maintaining the piece. Normally, disagreements could be ended by merely looming over the participants, but sometimes, rougher measures were necessary.

Her hosts provided her with a fitting and robust wardrobe that withstood the dirt and the wear and tear of her duties. Lucy also set up a gym for herself, returning to a regular training schedule after the exhaustion of permanent combat in the last weeks. She found her training sessions to be very enjoyable, even calming to her still troubled mind. She spent hours pondering her situation. She was a human among demons, but a demon to the humans. Somehow, she thought she had to choose a side, but she couldn't. Living with the demons, she realized that they just had their own simple lives and that the marauding hordes of monstrous warriors were of no concern to them. Instead, they farmed, they worked, they raised their children.

What irritated her even more was that the demons began to see her as a kind of patron saint. It became customary for the demon females to bring their offspring to her to have them blessed. Even though she tried to refuse them, they insisted, eventually even bringing small gifts which she donated to the village common fund.

Still, life at the demon village was a good one. Although she trained with unheard of intensity, Lucy became accustomed to the good life. She put on a little weight, let her hair grow out and went to the demons' celebrations. She wouldn't dance or sing with them, but she enjoyed the companionship, the discussions, the socializing. One evening, she even managed to drink too much, becoming intimate with one of the less bestial demons. She was quite sure that nothing had happened, but she awoke well-rested and relaxed.

As always, the good things seldom last.

There had been rumors at first. The regulars at the bar muttered under their breath. Occasionally, demons would venture into the close-by human settlement, ambling about and looking for trouble. If trouble was found, fights would break out, the humans would gather their able men and try to expulse the assailants. A few days later, a posse of human warriors would turn up and open fire on the demons' temple. Every time, Lucy was a little too late. The demons trusted her to some extent, but they wouldn't involve her in the petty disputes.

When Lucy asked them what the trouble was, the demons would change subjects, get up or have some other important thing to do. In the same way, paying a visit to the slowly growing human compound yielded little to nothing. When she arrived, the guards at the gate readied their weapons and challenged her:

"Halt, demon! What do you want?"

Lucy had come without weapons. She lifted her four hands and replied:

"I want to talk to your leader."

"What about?"

"About security. We've had trouble. I want to make it stop."

"Okay. We'll ask."

A few minutes later, Lucy sat on a chair wincing under her weight. Her interlocutor was a rather pudgy woman in bright red robes with black details. She wore the traditional face-paint of her tribe and smoked a hookah. Lucy said:

"Peace upon this house. My name is Lucretia. I came to talk to you about the events of the last weeks."

"My name is Rania. You are welcome, demon. We humans appreciate the fact that you tried to resolve the disputes we had with your people." Her voice sounded a tad insincere.

Lucy asked:

"Do you have any idea why the demons come here looking for trouble?"

"Besides the fact that they have invaded our world? No idea."

"Of course. Still, things had calmed down. Now, they put everybody's lives in jeopardy. When I ask them, they tell me nothing."

"Nothing? Fascinating. Ah, yes, you are the half-blood, aren't you? The other demons don't trust you and rightly so. After all, you are here."

"Half-blood?" Lucy smirked. "You could say that. However, I still need to stop this. What do the demons say?"

The woman smiled grimly and said:

"Not much. They say we take their children. We do not. They still go around, looking for traces."

"Their children? I understand."

"Also, we are willing to accept that these filthy beasts, no offense, live here, but we do not want them near our homes. Is that clear? Be aware that peace is fragile."

"I see. I will look into it."

"Do that. Good bye."

"Good bye."

That evening, Lucy went to the tavern, waited until everybody was there and then raised her voice:

"Okay. Everybody, listen up! Today, I went to the human elder and talked to her. She told me that some of you have gone to their compound looking for lost children. The humans don't feel responsible for this and want to be left alone. If you want, I can go and look for the people you are missing. You can trust me on this, I won't rest until this is resolved. If you do, please find me and tell me what happened. I'm at my home if you want to talk to me. Got it? Fine!"

Lucy left.

A few minutes later, somebody knocked at the door. She got up and opened the door. Outside stood a group of seven demons and looked quite nervous. She let them in and asked them to tell her about the situation. The demons' stories were all quite similar. They had had children a few months ago. All of them told the same story. They came home and found them gone. There was no trace, no signs of who had taken them. After a while, the story was that humans had taken them. So they went and took a look at the human settlement, finding out what they could. So far, no proof had turned up, but most of the humans had reacted with hostility and if you are looking for trouble, you'll find it.

Lucy considered the facts and said:

"So far, there's no way to be sure that the people from the settlement did it, isn't it?"

The guests mumbled their approval.

"I guess this means that we can't be sure of that and that we shouldn't put our fragile peace in jeopardy."

Once again, approval.

"The best way to resolve this, is to keep calm and I'll handle the situation. In this way, we'll be able to do our best to recover your children without putting our lives and homes at risk. Is that okay with you?"

The demons nodded skeptically. They agreed, then they left.

When they were gone, Lucy turned to Theresa and said:

"We'll have to find the children quick, otherwise there's going to be a massacre."

Lucy asked Theresa to set up a perimeter. Using various ancient pieces of video equipment they scavenged from the nearby ruins, they created a system of cameras, microphones and other detecting devices which they finally relayed to a central hub in Lucy's home. Lucy connected Theresa's head to it and waited. After a few seconds of eye-flickering, Theresa was on-line. She looked at her mistress and said:

"I see everything."

"Excellent. Time to set up the bait."

Lucy went over to the tavern and walked over to the innkeeper's wife. The shorter woman stared at her in fear. They went to the back room without a word. Inside, Lucy said:

"We need your help. If you don't help us, there's going to be another war."

"I know. What can I do?"

"We need a bait to catch the child-thief."

The goat-woman put her hand to her mouth and said:

"No. Please. You can't mean that!"

Lucy looked at her severely.

"I know it is hard, but you are the only one I can trust. If you don't help us, no one will. Besides, I will be there, watching. Everything will be fine."

"I'm sorry. But if you had children, you wouldn't put them at risk either, would you?"

Lucy turned away.

"What I'm asking you is help in making this world safe again. There is a risk, of course, but you must be aware that the risk is just as great that it will happen anyway! After all, do you think you can prevent the thief to attack you. None of the others were able to hold him off!"

The goat-faced woman hesitated. Finally, she said:

"You're right. And in this way, I can be certain you will watch over him."

"Thank you. Trust me, I will keep him safe!"

"I hope it for your sake."

That night, Lucy set up her watch. The goat-woman was to leave her child alone at home, walk around visibly in the township and make it clear to all potential kidnapers that her kid was there for the taking. As she walked through the streets and alleys of the town, Lucy could see her friend's terrified expression under a mask of outer calmness.

The ex-warrior nun waited in the darkness, her slave's severed head resting beside her. Theresa monitored the town permanently, waiting for the kidnapper to strike. Minutes turned into hours. The demon-woman

was anxious as she feigned happiness with her friends. Then, something stirred outside her home. Lucy was instantly attentive.

A shadowy figure approached the building, climbed in through a window and emerged seconds later with the sleeping child. Lucy waited for her to walk away. She followed her quarry from the rooftops, skipping over the narrow streets to keep her around. Theresa switched from cable node to cable node, always keeping an electronic eye out on the kidnapper. They followed her through the maze of buildings until she reached the human compound.

Moving along the wall, she finally found a hidden entrance and slid inside. Lucy cursed under her breath. It had happened too fast for her to react. She had no choice but to follow her quarry. With a quick movement, she descended from the roof and sprinted across the opening, evading any sentries that might be on guard. The entrance proved to be very tight and she barely managed to squeeze in. Inside, it was dark and musty. She continued along the wall, now inside the fortresses' defenses.

Lucy crept on, careful not to draw any attention to her. However, she must have been seen since she suddenly found herself face to face with a steel portcullis that had just descended. Above, she heard a voice, clearly human:

"So this is what you mean when you wish to maintain peace?"

The human elder was grinning down at her through an opening on top of her. Behind her, another grid crashed down, sealing her in. Lucy

replied:

"The thief. You need to find him. He went in just before me!"

"Ah yes, of course. The mysterious kidnapper. You demons are a weird bunch. Always good at fighting when you're strong and making excuses and lying when the tables are turned. There was no one. There will be no one. You're going to die."

"You're making a mistake!"

"I made a mistake when I even spoke to you. Pour down the beasties."

Behind her, two militiamen carried a large basket. They tipped it and removed the cover. Lucy could hear the screams and growls of the rat-hyenas inside.

As the beasts fell down, their anger turned into blood-curling frenzy. Their twin maws gnashing, they dropped down on Lucy. The warrior-woman tried to grab one of the beasts' throats, but found herself stuck in the crowded trap she had fallen in. Instead, the beast bit her hand. Lucy gritted her teeth, grabbed it with her lower right and sank her fingers into the beast's skull as the others tore at her flesh. She managed to suppress the searing pain and broke open the creature's head. She took out Theresa's head and said:

"Find the thief while I take care of this."

With these words, she jammed the dangling cables into one of the creature's brains. It jerked madly as Theresa took over. The beast gnashed its teeth, then bit into its other head, ensuring Theresa's control. Finally, it squeezed through the grid's spaces and ran.

Now, Lucy had time to take care of the rabid pests assaulting her.

She stretched her arms, grabbed two opposite bars and pulled herself up in a cross-like pose. Using her lower pair of arms, she twisted the beasts' necks and quickly ended their assault. Lowering herself back down, she took a deep breath. She could hear the humans scramble for their weapons. Shouts could be heard: "Kill the demons!" "They've attacked us!" "Revenge!"

She had fallen into a trap in every possible way. The humans would now descend on the demon settlement and both would annihilate each other. She had to catch the one responsible as quickly as possible. She tore out the grid that held her prisoner and escaped into the human compound. She was aware that she was bleeding and sore, that the humans would be able to follow her trail easily, but she hoped that she would be able to distract them long enough to find some time.

She looked for Theresa. The head was nowhere to be found. Then, she saw something lying in the street. It was the rat-hyena's other head. It gazed eerily to the sewage dump. Lucy followed what she took as a sign, the human guards following her. Behind her, the screams were getting louder. She reached the lake of sewage and suddenly saw something glitter. Squinting, she saw Theresa's head on one of the makeshift barges floating on the morass.

Her chasers readied their guns and prepared to fire. She hesitated for a second, then dove down into the cloggy mess. With a few powerful strokes, she moved her powerful body through the sludge, her eyes streaming from the stink. The guards fired at her, but missed their mark.

She swam on, finally reaching the boat she was looking for. At the shore, the guards clambered aboard a boat and began rowing over the refuse.

Lucy pulled herself on the drifting barge and took Theresa's head. She was reeking with the smell of feces and garbage. Theresa, in her globe, ignored the stench. Instead, she said:

"The kidnapper is on one of the larger barges. The one that's drifting downriver."

Lucy looked around and suddenly saw the ship she was looking for. It was much larger than the others, a merchant's vessel that had drifted up the almost dried up riverbed that led from the settlement. She spat out something that had found its way into her mouth with disgust and said:

"I need a way to keep them occupied while I find the child."

Theresa blinked and said:

"No problem. Move me over there to the boat controls."

Lucy swam away to the riverboat, occasionally hearing the guards' screams as the boat's dredger bucket controlled by Theresa's head came down on the pursuing barge, sinking it. The guards struggled to stay afloat. Others at the shore climbed into boats and drove to the rescue. The distraction was a success.

As she approached her target, she found the water to become slightly clearer. The riverbed was just deep enough to provide a channel for the ship. By the time she reached it, the worst filth had washed away. She threaded water for a while, then jumped up and pulled herself aboard. Only then did she realize that she was naked and unarmed. Also, she was still bleeding slightly, leaving a trail of golden blood behind her. Hearing someone approach, she hid in a pathway on the ship.

The whole ship was quite large and had two floors built on top of it. It was also well-guarded, the demons on watch armed to the teeth. They carried modern rifles as well as serious armor. Clearly, this ship was more than expected. Lucy evaded the guards as quickly as she could and snuck inside. As she entered the ship itself, she was astonished by the luxury. The floor was carpeted in deep red, the walls were painted in ivory. Golden ornaments hung from the walls. She stepped through the exquisite corridors, her body reeking of putrefaction, her wounds dripping. Suddenly, a door was flung open and a pair of masked demons entered, locked in lustful embrace. They only cared for each other, the larger one, his head hung with massive bull's horns, sinking his forked tongue into the mouth of his snout-faced partner. Lucy retreated, then tried one of the doors. Finding it unlocked, she stepped inside.

The room was a private boudoir, covered in velvet and featuring a large divan. She quickly checked that it was abandoned, locked the door and tended to her wounds. She washed herself as fast as she could, then masked the stench with some heavy fragrance. She put on a heavy, blood red robe and a rather excessive headpiece made of three intertwined tiaras and took a ceremonial dagger she found, hiding it in the folds of the suit. Then, she headed back out.

Following the tunes in the air, she soon discovered the main hall. It was a large chamber, once again excessive in its luxury. Several tables were set up, a group of naked human slaves played strangely dissonant music on their bizarre instruments. The demons were enjoying some kind of card game. At the smaller tables, the stakes appeared to be low and the games meant to be enjoyed. The larger table, however, hosted a much more concentrated crowd.

In the center of the attention sat a single demon, clearly a lord of his kind. He wore a regal, purple robe that covered most of his body, including a high collar that hid the lower part of his face. Out of his head grew the roots of some blackened nightmare tree, eternally creaking in

an unfeeling wind. On this chaotic mass of living wood, a single crown was perched, hanging lopsided from one of the roots. The rest of the ebon tangle was decorated with eyeballs pierced and hung on reddish strings. Occasionally, the eyeballs turned as if animated by some spirit and looked about. The demon's face was just as gnarled as the roots that grew out of it. On his lips rested a long cigarette holder.

His many-fingered hands flickered over the table as he drew another card, laid it down and announced to the crowd.

"The hanging man. It seems that you, my dear countess, have lost."

The addressed demon-woman, a masked creature with a large tress of horns winding down her back gasped.

"Oh no! But, but, I had ... I had ..."

"Indeed, you had. But not anymore. Do not worry, your son will make a good servant. I will look after him. After all, I have his mother's eyes."

He laughed insanely, the crowd joining in merrily as the woman was led from the table by two large gentledemons in armor. He added:

"Prepare them quick. I wish to wear them for tomorrow's reception. They'll be the clou."

He looked around and noticed Lucy, standing there. He motioned and said:

"Ah, a newcomer. Do you have time for a little game among friends?"

Lucy stared at him. In the background, the musicians increased their volume to drown out the demon-woman's screams. He made a sign with his eight-fingered hand:

"Come closer. I won't bite."

She stepped closer. The many suspended eyes turned to her.

"I see. You are the demon-killer." The other guests gasped. "Haven't you heard, my dear friends. This is Lucretia, the demon-killer who became a demon herself. She was the law in the settlement over there." He made a tentative gesture. Lucy sat down and said:

"I am the law of the village."

"What village?" He burst out laughing. "If I'm correct, your precious wards should be massacring each other by now. And the best is, when they're done, I will release their children to bury their parents, starting the cycle anew. You will see, it always works, without fail."

Lucy laid both hands on the table and said:

"Release them now or I will kill you."

"I don't think so. You'd be dead before you even got up. I am no fool. I'm a monster, granted, but then, who isn't nowadays?" The hangers-on laughed courteously. "However, I much enjoy the occasional game, as you may have realized." He took a drag at his cigarette and continued: "I challenge you: defeat me at this game and I will release the children, no harm done. Fail, and I will present my next beloved with a beautiful garb made of your skin." The crowd applauded their host's excellent taste. "So, are you willing to take the risk? Be quick, the clock is running."

The demon-lord smiled wickedly and nodded to the croupier. The naked creature took the cards, shuffled them and let his master cut them. Then, he quickly distributed the cards. Lucy stared at them in open confusion. Her opponent maintained his smile and arranged his cards with his long, spindly fingers.

"You seem surprised. Are you unfamiliar with this game? That's bad, because I don't think you have time to learn it now."

Lucy looked at the cards, wondering at what they meant. There were numbers and symbols alright, as well as odd drawings of demons.

"I'm waiting, my dear. Do something."

She hesitated. Somewhere, in the background, she could hear the noise of Theresa's battle die down. Time was running out.

All of a sudden, she felt a slight caress on her side. Clearly, one of the onlookers had touched her. She wanted to teach him a lesson, but then she realized that the person was forming a symbol on her skin. She looked at the cards and recognized it. Maybe this unexpected help would be what she needed. She took the card and placed it on the table. Her opponent seemed impressed.

"An interesting opening. Fine."

He played his own card. The croupier nodded, giving the spectators a sign that Lucy's decision had been correct. He looked at her. Once again, the mysterious helper suggested another card to be played. Lucy acted accordingly and once again, was victorious.

Without much understanding, she played the game, trusting her assistant to lead her through the alien game. She could see that her opponent's expression became ever grimmer. She allowed herself to smile sheepishly. Soon, the game was nearing its end.

"Lucretia, you must be a natural. I have rarely seen someone play with such exquisite skill, especially since you had slight difficulties in the beginning, hadn't you?"

She just smiled and said:

"I'm just getting the hang of it. Maybe it isn't your day."

"Well, my dear, I guess it is time. Time to raise the stakes."

He made a sign to the croupier. The spectators looked at each other, mumbling hushed words of confusion and admiration. Clearly, this last action had dramatically upped the ante. She could hear one of the demons tell its companions that this action made the move decisive. Her next play would be the final one. She waited for her hidden helper. Nothing. The crowd grew uneasy. Apparently, he or she was hesitating, the situation had to be complicated.

Then, when she had almost given up hope, she felt the touch once again. The sign was given, she took the card and prepared to lay it down. However, in this second, she saw a faint glint of emotion in the perfect poker face of her opponent. Using her lower arm, she laid it gently on the caressing finger. Wood.

With a twist of the wrist, she tore her enemy's finger, making his eyes swell, but causing no further reaction.

She grinned, looked at the cards and chose one at random.

The card came down. Her enemy's eyes widened. The crowd fell absolutely silent. She turned around, looking into the disembodied eyes of her precursor that a valet held on a silver platter. She could just see the faint expression of guilt. The demon-lord had watched her hand all the time.

"I win."

"But ..."

"I win." She closed her fist tighter, breaking off pieces of bark from her host's fingers. He yelped. The croupier nodded.

"Perfect then. The children. Now."

The fiend just clenched his teeth and replied:

"You are a woman of many surprises. You can have the children, but I have a proposition: How about you join me? You are a demon after all."

She rolled her eyes.

"Do not waste my time, I have a fight to prevent." She rose, pulling up his mangled fingers. "Honour your pact or die."

He grinned mischievously.

"Honor. You humans have such a weird perception of reality. Do you believe I care about this bizarre hamlet of yours? Let's be straight: There will be no peace between us until one wipes the other out, and guess who this is going to be."

She crushed his fingers, stretched her arm and grabbed one of his forearms.

"Stop toying with me or I will tear off your arm and beat you to death with it."

He turned to his audience.

"A threat. Do you hear it? A human dares threaten me! Me! Don't you know who I am? I am Aesma Deva, the Master of Wrath and Hatred, the despot and beguiler. I am not your run-of-the-mill devil. Whatever. You have just signed your own death warrant!"

With these words, he rose, throwing off his wooden garb. Underneath the oaken skin, a brightly shining second body appeared. Aesma Deva revealed his true form. His skin was shining brightly from within, his face gentle and beautiful, the elegance of his visage driving tears into the eyes of the onlookers. He smiled gently, his voice a melodious song of imminent death:

"Lucretia. You have come all this way to die, and now you will."

Suddenly, four enormous pearly-white wings sprouted from his back, illuminating the room in golden light. The demons recoiled, screamed, scrambled for the door. He flicked his tongue over his sensuous lips and drew a sword from a scabbard a hooded servant gave him. Breathing over the blade, he let it burst into flame and attacked.

With a sudden flèche, he struck across the table. Lucy bent over backwards, the sword passing through her cleavage. She landed on her four hands and rolled back, leaving her clothes lying on the ground. She twisted around, stood back up, grabbed a pike from the hands of a stunned guard and threw it at the angelic assailant. With a simple flick of his wrist, he split the weapon's shaft, making it burst into flame. It burnt to a crisp within seconds. He laughed shrilly.

Lucy ran through the ensuing chaos, evaded the screaming demons who tried to get out and scrambled for a sword. When she finally found one, the demon was on her. His sword flashed with furious speed, driving her across the room. Behind her, the musicians, who were forced to continue playing, being bound to their places, tried to wriggle free. She slashed her sword over their bonds, evading another one of his strikes by a hair. He laughed and shouted:

"Even now, as your doom is upon you, do you try to free your people? You are mad!"

With a gesture, he ordered the freed slaves to attack her. Lucy stared in horror as their insane faces approached.

"You are mad, and you are naive. Do you believe that I would leave creatures next to me who are not completely mine?"

Lucy looked around her and jumped straight up. Her massive body flew over the descending servants. She hooked her legs in the lamp above her, flexed her abdominals and swung on, crossing over to the next lamp with lightning quickness.

As she had expected, her opponent took some time to turn due to the amount of room he needed to move, so she was behind him. She grabbed a candlestick-holder and rammed it into his back. However, just as the improvised weapon was about to connect, something insane happened. With a rippling motion, the demon inverted himself, his face and arms twisting through his back. He grinned like a maniac and parried the melting weapon and howled with laughter:

"Your cheap parlor tricks are to no avail!"

The demon roared and charged. His sword flashed. Lucy tried to fend it off with her blade, but the assault was relentless. She was driven back, to the door, outside. Behind her, the noise of Theresa's battle had died down. The attack on the demon town was imminent. Or so it seemed. She dodged, stepped aside and moved out on the lower deck of the ship. Then, she heard the voice of the soldiers behind her say:

"Give up. Put your hands up."

Aesma Deva stepped through the door grinning:

"Gotcha."

Lucy slowly lifted her hands. The fight was over. The demon stepped over and said:

"You will make a fine addition to my menagerie. I'll cut up your vocal chords so all you'll be able to do is to scream. Then, I'm going to cut your mind until you're nothing more than a filthy animal, but I'll leave your mind alive so you can still understand what is happening to you. You'll love it!"

She stared at him in open hostility, her mind racing, looking for a solution to her predicament. Maybe the best would be to just attack him and hope to be killed by him. Maybe wound him or even kill him. At least hurt his pride.

"I know what you're thinking, but your death is not an option. Trust me, I have excellent doctors. They may not be as creative as Asturath's but they will be able make you last."

For a second, she considered begging him for a swift death, but she gritted her teeth and awaited her end.

What happened next was very confusing. The first thing that happened was that a huge number of fighters swarmed the deck and began shooting at the demon soldiers. The second thing was, of course, that the demon soldiers took cover, fired their guns at their surprising attackers and a full-scale firefight exploded all over the ship. Thirdly, Lucy used the confusion and jumped overboard, making a weird discovery on her way underwater. And finally, Aesma Deva shook his fist impotently and tore up the horribly pale fighter that had dared attack him with his bayonet. His frustration vented, he jumped up and flew high in order to spot Lucy swimming underwater.

However, she wasn't there. Instead, a massive dark shape was approaching the ship from under the surface. He looked down, confused at the size of the thing. Unsure of what to do, he flew back down, decapitating a few attackers along the way. The sound of chopped-off

heads brought a slight smile to his lips. It was frustrating, but still gratifying in its own way.

Then, the ship lurched aside on an undersea wave and the submarine machine emerged. Lucy stood there, naked, the black water flowing down her muscular body, playing along the crevices of her muscles. Under her, an insane amalgamation of cars, excavators, boats and cranes appeared, its many shears, shovels, drills and torches roaring with aggression. Amidst the mass of machinery, Theresa's head appeared, smiling with detachment.

He howled in frustration as the mechanical abomination clambered on the deck, swiveling it and causing some of his guards to fall down into the stream. Lucy grinned madly and said:

"I'm back. How about finishing what we started?" Turning down, she said: "Theresa. Would you mind handing me a weapon?"

From the depths of the machine came an affirmative growl and a scythe was extended from the steel ravel. Lucy took it, twisted it in her hand and added: "Do you have some kind of armor there as well?"

Seconds later, her body was encased in a rather tight plate armor made of rusted steel and wire. It looked cobbled together but still functional. "Thank you. Now, let's see to the third of our demon lords, shall we?"

Lucy jumped over on the upper deck of the ship and attacked her foe. Using the scythe's curved shape, she feinted to one side, forcing her opponent to side-step on the uneven ground, and sliced at his wings. A spurt of blood and some torn feathers were her reward. Recovering, Aesma Deva readied his sword and struck at the unexpected attacker. His sword skidded over the shoulder armor, splitting it slightly and

causing it to heat up. Lucy ignored the strike and pressed on, letting her scythe turn quickly. The demon tried to evade it, but at this moment, the ship lurched again, making him lose his balance. Another cut appeared on his right thigh. He spat and decided to keep his distance. Flaring his wings, he jumped up and tried to fly off.

Lucy sprinted at him, leaped after him and grabbed his leg. He howled with rage but beat his wings, lifting her up with him. Meanwhile, she climbed further up, parrying his desperate sword strikes with her armored forearm. He tried to shake her, but the iron grip of her four hands was impossible to overcome. Higher and higher they rose, the ship below them becoming akin to a toy. She climbed on, eventually grabbing his sword arm and crushing it with two of her hands. He screamed in horror as she broke his bones, his hand going limp. The flame-blade fell down, extinguishing as it dropped.

Finally, Lucy had managed to climb on him, hugging him into a triple nelson. Her two pairs of arms fixed his arms and two of the wings, her legs locked his. He was caught in a rack high above the ground. He twisted and turned, trying to switch his body back and forth to escape her iron grip, but it was too late. The resounding crack as his spine flew apart was heard even far away. His body wrecked, Aesma Deva twisted around one last time and looked into his killer's face with a wry smile.

"I see. I shouldn't have toyed with a prey such as you. Too bad. Well, you live and learn."

Through gritted teeth, she replied:

"You won't."

Then they started to fall.

She could hear the air roaring around her as she started to accelerate. Below her, the ship's engine burst into flames illuminating the area. Aesma Deva howled as he died. Lucy realized that falling from this height would kill her. Spreading her arms, she tried to slow down the fall, but it became clear to her that her seconds were numbered. Then, she understood that there was a very remote chance for her to survive. She grabbed the equally falling demon lord, broke open his chest and started fumbling for the demon's core. Beneath her, the shapes of screaming warriors could already be discerned.

She extracted a long, thin object from the falling carcass and quickly inserted it in her nostril, directing it into her respiratory tract. She suddenly felt a growing tingling all over her body. The water was now very close, imminent death was upon her.

Then, there was a huge splash. The fighters on the ship were either thrown to the deck or overboard. A fountain of water exploded upwards, spreading mist in the air as the demon lord's body exploded. From the fog and spray, a large, looming shape appeared. Lucy twisted her body, spread her wings, lifted herself up and rose in the air, elated by the sudden sensation of total lightness. Both the demon guards and the pale attackers stood there transfixed by her supernatural body.

She landed on the now wrecked ship, spread her wings and shouted:

"To all you demons and fools! Leave this place now or die! I am Lucretia and I have killed greater foes than you will ever be!"

The warriors fled. Within minutes, only the groans of the wounded could be heard.

Lucy stepped down to Theresa and asked:

"How are you?"

Her slightly mechanical voice replied:

"I am fine. Amalgamating this body has made me feel alive in a way I have long missed."

"It is a little cumbersome, though."

"You should be the last to tell me about the virtues of a compact physique."

A little later, Lucy and Theresa returned to the shore with the ship and the children. They were scared, first of their captors, then of their liberators. When the whole ordeal finally ended and the parents could embrace their progeny once more, both humans and demons were at peace.

Lucy had chosen to cover her body in one of the elegant robes of her defeated enemy, leaving gaps to allow her to fold her giant wings behind her. Any physiologist would be driven insane by the bizarre complexity of her back's muscles, but this new shape felt natural and becoming to her. With her long flowing golden hair, her featureless eyes and her absurd height of 6'9", Lucy was a superhuman vision to behold. Her overmuscled frame and her four arms suggested power beyond that of any mortal. As she joined the celebrating villagers, she flew on a low house nearby, its structure wincing from her weight and said with a thundering voice that commanded everybody's attention:

"I have brought your children back and I have proven that the rumors were false. Do not trust your fear. Trust your judgement. After all, as you

can see with me, we are not so different."

The crowd was silent in acknowledgement. After a while, their stoicism turned into distrustful glances at their neighbors. At last, the goat-woman tavern owner stepped forward and offered the human elder a hand. With endless hesitation, the older woman took the hand and shook it gently. There was a silent agreement in the gesture, then everybody returned to their own groups. However, their steps became smaller and then, finally, they turned around, and Lucy could see faint gestures of approval amongst the erstwhile foes.

After this night, Lucy wrapped up her things and left the village. She bade the people goodbye, telling them that she would go to fight the final demon lord and eventually return. Then, she left, walking into the sundown. She would return to Barricada, ready everything and then finish this.

After the pair left, several pale-skinned soldiers clambered on the riverside, clearly shaken by the intensity of the combat. Their leader emptied the water from his boots and said:

"Has anybody seen where they went? Father still needs the woman."

His helped freed himself of a bunch of sea-weed and replied:

"Don't know, sir. I guess they walked off to the next town."

"Okay. Let's find some transport and find them. Faster, faster, we haven't got all day!"

Meanwhile, Lucy and Theresa had walked through the night for a while, Theresa's light shining and illuminating their path. When they finally chose to rest, Lucy spread her wings, admiring the feathers and the span. She ruffled them a little, then jumped up, flapping them and ascending in the air. She glided around, soaring and descending in ecstasy. She was elated. When she landed, she took up the head and said:

"Wow! This is great. You can't imagine how this feels ..."

"That's true."

"Sorry. I'll take you with me next. But imagine: This is the first time this whole demon-business is actually nice and fun. I love it."

"Good for you. Shall we?"

"Sure!"

Lucy took the sphere, sprinted, spread her wings and rose with impressive speed, her powerful muscles pumping. Below her, the dark earth disappeared. The stars above her sparkled and she screamed in elation. Being a monster is fine if you can feel the freedom it brings.

A few days later, Lucy and Theresa arrived at Barricada. During her absence, the city had been rebuilt, its new style oriented much closer to the religious order's wishes and beliefs. Lucy still wore the red robe she had taken at the ship and exposed her bizarre shape without shame. On their way to the city, they had met some wanderers who had been intimidated and had usually them all along. Still, she was surprised when the guardian nuns, wearing veils and armor, raised their weapons and challenged her:

"Halt, demon-spawn. This is Barricada. Your kin is not tolerated here. Retreat or die!"

Lucy looked around, almost expecting a demon army to have shown up behind her, but only slowly realized that she was the demon in question.

She looked down at the well-trained warrior women who still were quite a bit shorter than her and way less massive and said:

"You are mistaken. I am Sister Lucretia and I have returned from the slaying of Asturath and Aesma Deva. I just wish to rest here for a while."

"No chance, demon. Your lies are every bit as bizarre as you are!"

Lucy looked at Theresa, then sighed, threw off the robe, spread her wings and let her tattoos burst into flame, her piercings shining brightly. With a loud, thundering voice, she answered:

"Listen, you insolent fool! I am Sister Lucretia! I will not allow you to hold me back. Move aside or face the consequences!"

The guardians fell to their knees and the gate was opened.

Lucy strode into the cathedral, a large temple building that was currently being constructed in the heart of the city. Masons and workers stopped, the nuns that helped them fell to their knees. As she stepped forward, the elder clergy stumbled in, surprised of seeing her. Lucy noted that their aging bodies had become more wiry and muscular since the last time she had been there. She wondered what had happened. Her confusion was total when Sister Helen appeared.

The once lithe and thin thief had grown tremendously in size. She walked in with a powerful swagger, her over-sized shoulders swaying as she came in. Her nun's habit was designed to allow her a maximum of freedom of movement, her powerful muscles stretching the material with every move. Her trunk-like neck gave the once waifish woman a

look of calm power. When she saw the giant woman that had entered the cathedral, she shouted a greeting and ran to her, embracing the four-armed warrior goddess. Lucy bent down and planted a kiss on her friend's front. Then, she addressed the whole audience:

"Greetings to you all! I am very happy to return and I bring good news. Of the four demon masters, only one is left alive. Soon, our world will be rid of them and we will be free again!"

The people in the cathedral cheered. Lucy smiled as the glee swayed the builders and the nuns alike. When they had calmed down, she thanked everybody for their work on the cathedral building and called the leaders together to talk. There was much to be discussed.

They met in the back of the cathedral, in the elder nuns' home. While a few nuns took her measurements for a new habit and suit of armor to accommodate her now superhuman body, she explained what she had learned on her travels. She explained that the demons were just as diverse as humans and that an alliance with the freed demons might prove to be fruitful. Also, she explained her idea to train some of the senior and more able nuns as traveling justices to provide the people with a guaranteed way to settle their disputes peacefully. After all, an unified people would best be able to hold back the remaining demon lord's armies and the numerous lesser warlords of all kinds that still plagued the countryside.

Once she was done, she sat down, awaiting her new clothes and learning what had happened since her departure. After the assault had been repelled, the city had to be rebuilt. However, the noble houses had instantly reclaimed their position, requiring quite a bit of persuasion on behalf of the nuns. In order to gather the necessary strength, Helen had

gone on Lucretia's pilgrimage to the mountains. There, she had received the nectar of strength. As Helen explained how she got her now-athletic body, Lucy could feel her happiness with her transformation.

Hearing of Theresa's fate, the hermit had refused to give her the source itself, but had offered to provide her with some of the nectar. The elder nuns had taken the chance and had used it, giving themselves the dry and wiry bodies they had now.

Finally, they had sent messengers to the fortress Lucy had originally come from to get their expertise, but for now, they had remained silent. Lucy made a mental note of returning there to take a look at what was going on there.

When all the talking was done, Lucy retired to her quarters. She threw off the robe, took a bath and dropped on the bed, stretching herself gladly. Meanwhile, Theresa had herself carried into the depths of the cathedral-fortress to take a look at the various systems they had recovered from before the Fall. She was quite sure to find some interesting stuff. All in all, Lucy was happy with how it had turned out. She wondered what she would do once the last demon lord had been defeated. She had no idea.

As she dozed off, she heard a faint sound at the door. She got up, folding her wings in front of her to cover her nakedness and opened the door. She asked:

"Who is it?"

It was Helen. The younger nun stood there, wearing a simple robe. She opened it and said:

"It's me. You won't believe how much I missed you."

Lucy was surprised, she hadn't realized that Helen had in any way desired her. The shorter woman continued:

"When you came here, you were with Theresa. I didn't want to interfere. But now that Theresa is ... what she is ... I think I might be with you."

Lucy looked at the athletic woman with her small, pert breasts and licked her lips. Her old, conditioned reflexes of domination and control returned.

"Come in."

Lucy lay on the bed, pulling Helen on top of her. Even though the shorter woman was magnificently muscular, she was still small and boyish when compared to her extremely massive counterpart. Lucy gently caressed her partner's muscles, enjoying the swell of her biceps. She said:

"I like what John has done to you. It fits you nicely, makes you a little more assertive. No more twisting and turning."

Helen nodded and grabbed the other woman's tits, kneading them gently.

"Boy, those are nice."

Lucy gave her a scornful look.

"Who allowed you to touch them? No one? Thought so."

Helen removed her hands quickly and made consoling gestures.

"I'm sorry, I didn't know ..."

"You better be sorry. Down you go."

With a short gesture, she sent Helen to her crotch. Almost immediately, Helen started licking her. Lucy moaned and twisted blissfully.

"You're good. Don't stop. Don't ..."

She inhaled sharply, pressing her monstrous legs together, squeezing Helen's head between her thighs. The other woman made strange, gargling noises as the air was squeezed from her lungs. The asphyxiation made her wild, forcing her to finger herself.

When Helen came, Lucy released her gently, dropping the purple-faced woman to the floor. As she caught her breath, Lucy stepped over her and said:

"That was beautiful. You are excused."

Helen got up, gave the lying woman a confused look, but left:

"Goodbye mistress."

Lucy dropped back on the mattress and relaxed. Dominating this woman was easy. She could make her obey, even break her, without much trouble. The question was: Was it worthwhile? Was this way of life something she wanted or just something she accepted? After all, when she lived with the demons, she had been different.

Facing these questions, she looked forward to returning to the origin of her transformation.

After a little while, she started fingering herself, looking for some instrument to allow her to come. Eventually, she stepped out, sneaked into the kitchen as discretely as she could and returned with a cucumber she proceeded to thoroughly mangle with her muscular cunt. After cleaning herself up, she slept for a while, dreaming of John. Maybe she should pay him a visit soon.

The next weeks were spent setting up the basics for her traveling justices concept. Although the other elder nuns were rather unhappy with the idea of treating demons like humans, Lucy's overwhelming power forced them to bow. Using Theresa's help, she created a set of rules and concepts to train the judges and to guarantee the necessary support in the field.

At the same time, she continued increasing her mastery of Helen. Soon, the younger woman was completely under her control. Every night, Helen would join her in bed, lick her until she came and be rewarded with the blissful oblivion of her mistress' crushing thighs. At the same time, Lucy found her situation increasingly awkward. While she was aware that this was what was expected of her, she longed for the uncomplicated life amongst the demons. She was growing increasingly unsure about whether this was the way it should be and decided to talk to her old mistress. Maybe she'd be able to understand her feelings when she had the opportunity to clear this.

When the weapon smiths and armorers had finished the promised suit of plate and the weapons she needed, she gathered her belongings and set out back to her ancient monastery.

Lucy walked for days, taking her time to catch up with old acquaintances. The citizens of the growing settlement of Lucretetown, headed by Tonya and Jason, welcomed her with open arms. She was pleased to see that the city was developing and had become a peaceful haven for the refugees of the various battles that had been fought. She took her time and explained her idea of wandering judges. The pair was quite fascinated by the idea and agreed to send some of their most gifted youngsters to Barricada to be educated as soon as everything was

ready. Helen, who had never left Barricada except on her pilgrimage was astonished by the friendliness and the hospitality of their hosts.

She was also surprised by the fact that Lucy's demeanor changed completely as soon as she left the order behind. There she was, a monstrous mixture of human and demon, flashing golden eyes, muscles as huge as basketballs, four arms and wings, joking like any other human, laughing with her huge voice, smiling and grinning.

Later at night, she climbed onto Lucy's bed and on her mistress' body and said:

"Mistress, I have a question."

"Go ahead."

"Why are you so different here?"

"Different?"

"You are open, friendly and smiling. Back in Barricada, you are always serious, domineering and terrifying. What's up?"

"You are aware that you are way out of line here, my dear Helen."

She nodded frightfully.

"Lick me and I'll explain."

Helen took the plunge, working on her mistress' pierced clitoris and labia.

"To you and the other members of the order, I am a living saint. I am a warrior of faith and I cannot aspire to be anything more." She paused to bite her lips. "However, I have seen much more than any of you and I believe that I am on the verge of understanding something about the nature of my being." She took a deep breath. "As long as you are who

you are and I am who I am, we can only live together in this way. Do you understand?"

There was mumbling approval and Lucy came, squeezing her slaves face with her monstrous thighs.

A few days later, they eventually reached the hidden monastery. It took them a little time to find the entrance, which meant that by the time they knocked on the gate, all the members of the order were aware of their approach. Their response was understandable if a little harsh. They were threatened by a full force of warrior nuns with rifles and guns:

"Greetings, demon spawn. You knocked on the wrong door!"

For a second, Helen and Lucy hesitated, shocked by the matter-of-fact aggression. Once again, Lucy had forgotten what she had become.

It took a few minutes of calm explaining until everything was cleared up and they were safely inside the walls of the fortress. The nuns were now quite hospitable and Lucy was given the floor and told of her adventures. The listeners fell silent as she told of Theresa's sacrifice and were thrilled by her description of her fights and victories over the demon lords. Her tales of the demon people and their lives met a certain skepticism and quiet disapproval, suggesting that these nuns were quite unhappy with the way Lucy had dealt with her new friends.

In the end, however, they were amazed by her story and the initial hostility had disappeared. After the story, Lucy was given her old quarters and, when they turned out to be too small and crowded, she set up a home for herself in one of the courtyards.

Lucy's stay at the source of her transformation turned out to be difficult. The three sisters originally responsible for her changes were there, but seemed to evade her mostly. Sister Alexandra watched her from afar, training the new recruits, but preferring to maintain her distance to her masterpiece.

Sister Theodosia, however, was much more talkative:

"So, you grew up. How is it up there? Sorry. I guess you get that all the time."

Lucy lifted her eyebrow and waited for her to calm down. However, this wasn't to be expected for some time.

"Did the demon cores give you the arms and wings? Yes? Awesome. Can I try to sketch your back? It must be really complicated to make all the muscles work. Also, what happened to the implants? Did they burst? I'm really sorry about that. I can make some new ones and insert them whenever you have the time."

In the end, Lucy let her sketch her back and answered all the questions truthfully. She gave some of her blood, had all kinds of tests performed on her and made the surgeon very happy. For the moment, she decided not to get new implants, but seeing how powerful their effect had been, she kept them in mind. She found Theodosia's company to be tiring and strange, especially since the sister didn't manage to detach herself from the scientific perspective and the morbid curiosity with which she tried to uncover the way in which her 'client' functioned.

All the time, the isolated dwelling of the nameless sister lurked below the threshold of her memory. She was aware that she had to see her teacher, but she was somehow afraid of her. For days, she skulked close to it, always hesitating and unsure.

Meanwhile, Helen had made some friends in the monastery and enjoyed the admiration her body and her knowledge provided her. She easily defeated the various challengers and soon established herself as the benchmark and idol of the warrior nuns. At the same time, she remained with Lucy, serving her as best as she could.

However, the elder nuns were whispering among themselves. On one hand, they were very glad that Lucy had become such a powerful warrior and had rid the world of the demon lords, on the other hand, they sensed that she was reaching hubris.

They found her sympathies for the demon spawn outrageous and irritating and her changed, inhuman physique sinful. Eventually, they approached Helen and tried to find out whether she had been corrupted by the demonic nun.

"Sister Helen, you have spent several months with Sister Lucretia. She spoke to you of her ideas. What do you think of them?"

Helen reached for a cup of wine and replied:

"Understand me, I really love her. She is my idol and my inspiration and everything I aspire to be. However, I don't care about her religious views. Our relationship is different. Besides, the dogma I follow is set up by the order, not by any individual."

The elder nuns smiled. They were quite glad that the young nun had fitting opinions. They continued their questioning and soon established that she was sympathetic towards her mistress as a person, but that she didn't care much for the order's dogma after all. Her thieving past and her ruthlessness had led her to refuse too complex ideas and too tight rules. After all, this was a time of war and not one of debate.

Eventually, as the cups were drained, one of the elder nuns said:

"You called Lucretia your inspiration. Is she what you strive to become?"

"Not quite ...". By this time, Helen's cheeks were red from the wine and she looked groggily at the veiled faces in front of her. "I'd love to be as powerful as she is. This is why I went on the pilgrimage. To be some half-demon ... I don't think I'd need that."

The elders nodded amongst themselves. The speaker said:

"We see. How would you feel if we were to offer you an opportunity to become her equal?"

"I'd very much like that. I love her, you know. I really love her. She's just way beyond me. I have no way to ever reach her."

"We might have a way."

"Fine. Count me in." With these words, the muscular nun fell head first on the table.

The nuns got up one after another and one of them said:

"Excellent. She will be our answer if the first one proves to be beyond our control."

In the evening, Lucy finally conquered her fear. She followed the trail to the solitary hut, walking silently and carefully. After an eternity of walking through the dark valleys of the hidden monastery, she reached the dirty space in front of the broken hovel. She planted herself on her feet and said:

"My teacher, I have returned. I have questions burning in me and I need you to help me."

At first, the hut stayed silent. Nothing happened. Only the wind made the covers of the entrance shiver. Lucy waited. Nothing. Then, after what seemed an eternity, she heard a moan which slowly shifted into mumbling speech. Finally, words were formed from the mutterings.

"Lucretia? Is it you?"

The voice was weak and broken. She wondered what had happened and stepped closer. She pulled the cover aside and stared into the darkness. The hut had always been disheveled, even when Lucy had been responsible for keeping it clean, but now it was just a broken mess. She asked:

"What happened? Where are you?"

The nun gasped, then said with a trembling voice:

"No light. No light. Please! Go away!"

Lucy walked closer, hearing her teacher beg for the darkness, but she said:

"I need to speak to you. Why can't we have light?"

"There is no light for me. Please. My body, everything, it is terrifying. Oh, please, I beg you, no light!"

The hulking nun stepped closer, knelt down and put her arms and wings around the whimpering, shriveled woman. Her body was cold to the touch, her skin rough and broken. Lucy caressed her gently, making soothing noises to calm her down. Slowly, the woman's fear went away and she laid her head on Lucy's massive shoulder. Finally, the panic was gone and only sobbing and sniveling remained. At last, Lucy said:

"There will be no light. But please, tell me: What did you do to me? Why can't I relate to the humans anymore? I can't bear the way I'm treating them anymore."

The woman replied with a weak voice:

"Lucretia, when you came here, we saw what potential you had. You would be the warrior that would destroy the demons and throw off the chains they bound us in. All we had to do was unleash your power. But we knew it would not be enough to just train you. We thought it would be best to rebuild you. To reinforce your body, your spirit, your soul. However, we overdid it. In our zeal, we made you so strong and so powerful that we twisted you. I should have stopped before this happened, but I was afraid ..."

"Afraid of what?"

"Afraid of unleashing what was in you."

"What is in me? What are you talking about?"

"Lucretia, when you came to our door, I recognized you. I saw what lurked in you and I wanted you to control it. And here I am, wrong on all counts."

She caressed the feathers of Lucy's wings and continued:

"You became what I wanted you not to, but it was necessary."

Lucy stared at the darkness in total confusion. She asked:

"You recognized me? From when?"

"From your childhood. I am your mother. I knew what was in you, because I knew what is in me."

And with these words, she lit a single candle and revealed the truth.

Amidst the rags and tattered robes lay a twisted and broken creature. Her legs were misshapen and wounded, yet still easily recognizable as goat-like. Her body was emaciated and diseased. Even though there was a human aspect to it, it was clear that this was a demon. Even her face, which seemed humanoid, had a certain bestial quality to it. However, all the menace that such a visage would have had had disappeared. Instead, she was just a meek, haggard creature, tired and ready for death.

"Look at me," she said, "see who you are. I am a demon. I hid myself with the nuns since they decided to keep me as a prize and an object of their studies. They gave me shelter to learn about the demon lords and

their ilk. When you came, they thought up the idea of the living saint. They decided to turn you into a weapon."

She took a deep breath and had to pause for a few seconds. Lucy waited with baited breath. Finally, the creature continued:

"When I saw who they had chosen, I volunteered to teach you. They said yes since they thought that I was long broken. And indeed, I was. However, this was my chance to hide your nature from yourself. In this way, they would make you strong and allow you to survive. Now, they are afraid of you. Be careful. They are aware of what you are."

Lucy stared at the bizarre creature in front of her. Hidden under her robes, she had never suspected that the nun concealed such a terrible secret. The fact that she was a half-breed herself made her afraid of herself. She asked:

"But why did you do this to me? I would have known I'd have to hide my nature if you had told me."

"You can't trust yourself. It has to be innate. If you fake it, it will come out. You have to feel it."

"Why? I can no longer be with humans, I can't accept to be a demon. What should I do?"

"I only meant to protect you. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry ..."

The creature started to sob, shaking with despair. Finally, Lucy knelt down, took the frail woman in her arms and held her as the tears rolled down her cheeks.

Since Helen's drunken admittance that she was ready to challenge her mistress, the other nuns had realized that Lucy was going to take the demon's side. They had found out about this secret only after Lucy had departed and had taken out their frustration on her. They kept her as a prisoner, unsure of what to do with her. On one hand, they were interested in her demonic ways and to use her as a way to understand their enemies. On the other hand, she was a demon and keeping such a creature close could spell doom to the entire monastery. In the end, they cut her tendons, barely fed her and held her in the isolated hut she had chosen for herself in the first place.

Occasional questionings and beatings aside, they just left her on her own, ignoring her as good as they could, seeing her as a reminder of their own naivety.

Lucretia's return made everything complicated. After all, the now half-demonic nun was an important asset for their cause, but she was also difficult to understand and very powerful. As a result, they had begun to prepare a way of dealing with her as soon as she had returned. Helen's ambition would prove to be the fuel of their attempt to undo their error. At the same time, a new and improved warrior nun without demonic components might be a cleaner way of dealing with the remaining demon lord.

Seeing how Lucretia had absorbed their power it was clear that anybody able to defeat her would be able to easily beat Belul, wherever she might be hidden.

As a result, the next morning found Helen awake and confused but willing to undergo the transformation the nuns had promised her.

On the next day, Lucy made plans to bring her mother away from the monastery. She had to get her to recover and to escape from the stronghold without too much attention. After all, she was quite sure that the nuns would be quite ready to kill her in order to prevent their secret from getting out. She took some supplies from the pantry, hiding them in her quarters. Also, she researched in the archives of the monastery in order to find a safe escape route. All the while, she stayed as close to her mother as she could. She wanted to prevent the nuns from doing anything unexpected.

With all this going on, Lucy forgot about Helen. She hadn't seen her in days. Even though she hardly attended the services and didn't take her meals together with the other inhabitants, she probably would have met her companion on the way. However, Helen was in an altogether different place at the time.

Deep below the monastery, in the catacombs and the vestiges of a forgotten civilization, Sister Theodosia asked Helen to lay down on the large steel slab.

"Thank you for helping us. Since you already received the nectar of strength, we don't have as much to do as we had with Lucretia. However, we have developed a few things to help you defeat the demons."

"What things?"

Theodosia smiled and said:

"We have managed to combine the nectar of strength with the water of purity, which burns the demons. It makes you stronger, and also makes your skin and your blood mortal to their touch. Should a demon manage to lay its hand on you, it would suffer horribly. It might even die."

"This sounds like just what I need to even the odds."

"Exactly. Also, there may be some properties to be gained by working it directly in your skin. We'll see. So, are you ready?"

Helen nodded:

"Absolutely."

Seconds later, she was asleep and the nuns worked on her body, slowly transforming it from her already improved physique to superhuman.

Some days later, Lucy was getting ready to leave. She had everything prepared and had moved her mother to a large chest she kept in her courtyard. The demon accepted the hiding place quickly, preferring the confines of the chest to the isolation of her hut. Lucy was still unsure whether she should leave quietly or in the open. A secret escape might reduce the interruptions but would cause some questions to come up. On the other hand, she sensed that overstaying her welcome might have dire consequences. Also, she wondered what had become of Helen. She had searched for her, but hadn't found her anywhere in the fortress. However, the whole compound was a maze and it was quite easy to miss one another. Still, she was worried.

In the concrete depths of the monastery, Helen stirred. The nuns, who had all been waiting for this got up and gathered around her. Sister Theodosia looked at the younger woman's face and asked:

"How do you feel?"

"Strange ... I feel as if I returned from far."

"You do. But rejoice. The procedures were successful. Let's see if we can make you sit up."

The nuns joined forces to make her get up. They struggled with the naked woman's weight. Finally, Helen sensed that her strength returned and slowly got up. She was still a bit wobbly, but with the help of the other women, she finally stood.

She was surprised by the change of perspective. She was now a good seven feet tall and she stared down on a tremendously muscular body. She lifted her arms, which seemed both heavy and strong to her, and saw that they were covered with writings. She had seen them on Lucretia, but with her, they were denser, there were more of them, and they were pearly white under her tanned skin. Two of the nuns brought a mirror and she was able to see the extent of the changes. The writing covered her entire body, her face, her lips, even her eyes. It was arranged in a way to create flowing lines all over her, each coil slightly elevated like a half-inch-sinew. Several cardinal points of her body were decorated with holy jewelry just like she had seen on Lucretia.

She took a few steps, then she was back and ready. She turned to her creators and said:

"Excellent. Now I rival Lucretia. I will show her what I can do."

The four-armed warrior nun was done with her preparations. She packed her things and left. She had given up on her original idea of trying to talk sense into the other nuns. After all, she was now aware that they regarded her as a necessary evil, one they preferred not to

keep in their midst. Running now was sure to hurt her prestige amongst the order's members, but on the other hand she had realized that the organization was far from being as innocent or even helpful as she had initially believed.

Destroying the final demon lady was necessary to break her hold on the demon populace and she hoped that the liberation of the demons and the end of their threat would resolve the order's issues, opening a path to a peaceful future. Most of all, she just wanted to live peacefully as the bastard child she was.

Lucy had discovered the tunnels she was now walking through when she was looking for Helen. They were dank, wet and drafty. Sometimes, she came across faded signs that directed the reader to some blind spot. She held the chest cradled to her body with her lower arms, using her upper pair to light the way. The constant draft suggested that this place had an exit and the dust meant that the nuns knew nothing of it. Her mother asked:

"Where are we?"

"We are in the tunnels below the monastery. There must be an exit around here somewhere. It's not long anymore."

"Great. Where do we go when we're out?"

"Not sure for now. Maybe to the demon village I stayed at for a while. Those were nice people. I guess they could take care of you."

"This sounds nice. Living amongst ourselves."

Lucy frowned. What was this about?

Just as she was about to reply, Lucy heard voices and footsteps ahead. Motioning her mother to be silent, she waited, trying to discern who was there. The voices grew clearer and she suddenly recognized Helen. However, her voice seemed to be deeper, stronger. She sneaked closer, reaching a tunnel that was lit by various cobbled-together lamps. There was a group of nuns walking back towards the monastery's courts. As far as Lucy understood, they were all quite eager to meet her.

Amongst them, an enormous person marched, moving slowly so as not to overtake the others. The woman was hugely muscular and almost two feet taller than her companions. Then Lucy recognized Helen's voice. The giant was her lover.

She stepped into the light, hiding the chest before this and telling her mother to flee if anything should go wrong. Lucy stood there and challenged the group:

"What are you up to? Helen, what happened to you?"

The nuns stopped abruptly. As one woman, they spun around and stared at the intruder. Helen was the first to recover:

"Lucretia! So nice to see you. What happened to me? Can't you see? I am now your equal. Aren't you proud?"

Lucy stared at the monstrous woman, her gaze switching to Sister Theodosia. She stepped forward towards the nun, which promptly hid behind Helen.

"You madwoman! Why did you do this to her? Couldn't you just have left her?"

The nun grinned and gave Helen a sly look. The taller warrior woman replied:

"Leave me? Why? Look at me! I am finally strong enough. Together, we can destroy the demons and bring peace to the world. The Order will end the demons' tyranny."

Lucy gave her companion a blank stare. She shook her head and said:

"I am really sorry I dragged you into all this. I should have seen it long ago. You have become a warrior of their faith, but you should have stayed the free woman you were."

Helen clenched her teeth in anger. She hissed:

"What are you saying? I did this for you! I wanted ..."

"You were a thief once. You did what you wanted before, why do you let them deform you?"

"Deform? Look at you!"

Lucy nodded and said:

"I'm sorry, but this seems to be my true form. I plea for your forgiveness, I did not want to deceive you, but I only recently found out. I am half demon myself."

Helen looked around in confusion, anger seeping up in her.

"Half demon? But ... How?"

Suddenly, Sister Theodosia interrupted:

"She's a traitor and a monster. Fight her! Now!"

Helen screamed and attacked. She leaped forward, slammed her fist into Lucy's chest and threw the other colossal woman back. Lucy stumbled for a second, shook herself and readied herself, holding her four arms up and preparing her wings to confuse her assailant. Helen continued her attack, following her first punch up with a flurry of attacks. Lucy managed to block most of them, but her former friend's strength drove her back. Also, every punch that hit left a slight mark on her skin. It was no bruise, but rather a burn.

Confused, she looked down on her forearms for a second, retreating in order to get out of the larger woman's range. This proved to be difficult as she continued relentlessly, hammering at Lucy's body as quickly as she could. She realized that Helen's fists had to be blessed in such a way that the demonic blood in her veins rebelled. Slowly, the pain started to creep in, making it harder and harder to defend herself.

Lucy realized that continuing in this way would end in disaster. She understood that fleeing was no longer an option. She'd have to leave her mother here. At the same time, attacking the giant woman was almost impossible. She somehow had to get inside the other's reach and land a few telling blows, maybe a window would open up.

Meanwhile, Helen was breathing through her teeth sharply. She was enjoying her power to the fullest, hammering away at her teacher. She could feel the admiration of the other nuns, the gratefulness, she could smell Lucretia's fear. With a quick sidestep, she overcame her mistress' cover, ducking down to the left, she sank her hammer-like fist into Lucretia's obliques. The shorter fighter exhaled abruptly as the fist left a scorching mark on her skin.

Lucy extended her wings to the back and felt the wall behind her. That last blow had thrown her off-balance, retreating further was impossible. She had to hit her opponent full on. For a second, she eased her cover on her chest, inviting Helen to strike a telling blow. She read the massive nun correctly as her freight-train-caliber fist roared at her moments later. Lucy blocked the attack as good as she could, but suddenly reached up with her lower arm pair and grabbed the fast approaching forearm. She stepped forward, turning along as fast as she could and rolling into Helen's defense. She sent both of her right fists at Helen's left elbow and smashed it as good as she could.

The taller fighter grabbed Lucy's face and squeezed it, burning her in the process. Lucy gritted her teeth as she felt her skin burn, trying to clench Helen's arm and throw her. She struggled against her opponent's superior weight, realized that it was pointless and just swatted Helen's face with one of her wings. For a second, the surprised titan relaxed her grip and Lucy stepped behind the monstrous warrior nun.

Helen tried to recover and turn towards her enemy, but Lucy took her into a nelson with her upper arms, struggling to control her. Helen laughed at her futile efforts and just flexed her back muscles, forcing Lucy to release her grip. With a double elbow strike to the chest, she sent Lucy sprawling. She immediately followed up, turning to face her fallen mentor. Grinning happily, she kicked Lucy in the face and threw her against the wall. The once-proud warrior collapsed, clearly outmatched.

Helen continued her rampage, impervious to Lucy's pain.

As the relentless hammering on her face and body continued, Lucy tried to shield herself with her arms and wings. She tried to reach a clear thought. Every new blow made her ache more, her skin was rupturing and dying at the hands of her pupil. Clearly, her attacks were aimed at her demonic being, circumventing any defense she might have. Suddenly, she had a bizarre idea. It was every bit as suicidal as staying here and continuing to let it happen, but it felt positively insane. Lucy looked down at her chest, shielding her head and neck with her upper arms. She saw that the skin had exploded off her muscles, unveiling her flesh and bones below it. Every further blow would further rip her up, until she would finally collapse.

In desperation, she slipped her lower hand under her skin, gasping in pain as another blow demolished her shoulder. She pulled out a small, kite-shaped sliver roughly four inches long. It pulsed as she removed it and she could feel that every part of her body rebelled as she tore out her own demonic core. Whether her destroyed body was now transforming or not was impossible to see, but she rolled on her back, exposing her open, bleeding chest to the insane attacker that had once been her student.

Helen stopped. She had won. The once proud traitor was now destroyed. She smiled to herself. Defeating this one meant she could take on anybody. The last demon lady was doomed. The woman she had once admired gasped. She spat out a large lump of golden flesh and blood, then whispered something. Helen grinned and turned to the other nuns. Some of them had turned rather pale at the look of their erstwhile companion, but Sister Theodosia nodded approvingly.

Helen winked at her and bent down to listen for Lucretia's last words.

"Go ahead. Tell your last lie."

Lucy looked at the massively muscled woman bending down and grinning smugly. She still held the demon core in her hand, but concealed it behind her fingers. When Helen was close enough to hear it, she said:

"No lie. If I could, I would have loved you."

With these words, she rammed the demon core into Helen's eye.

The attack was so sudden that Helen couldn't even blink. The sliver entered her orbit and instantly began to heat up from the water of purity. The huge woman tried to grab it, but her hands just swelled and burst as she tried to touch it. Howling in pain, she felt that her head was going to explode. The other nuns stared at her in horror, Sister Theodosia fleeing immediately as her creation collapsed. Lucy clambered on all fours, leaving the screaming mess behind her. She barely managed to get up, but escaped into the shadows as quickly as she could.

When they finally reached the daylight, Lucy opened the chest and lifted her mother out. She lay down for a while, resting and hoping her body would be able to recover. After a while, the bleeding stopped and the demonic power in her had managed to keep her alive. However, it was clear that she needed medical help. Sadly, there was no town or other

settlement anywhere nearby and neither of the two women was in any shape to travel.

Together, they managed to clean Lucy's wounds and bandage them using what little supplies she had gathered. When they were done, the situation was just as grim, but at least, the pain was manageable. She was quite sure that it would return by nightfall and that they had to move away from the monastery since the nuns would hunt them soon enough. Still, the whole problem was moot since they weren't going anywhere.

Lucy dragged herself over to the chest and lay against it. She smiled at her mother and said:

"Well, it's nice we could clear this up. I would really have loved learning about all this before, but it wasn't meant to be."

Her mother looked at her in despair and replied:

"Can't we run? We have to get away."

"I'm really sorry, but I can't and neither can you. So, when all is said and done, we'll just have to wait for them to come and kill us."

"You can't be serious."

"I am, absolutely. Besides, I doubt that Helen will be very happy to meet me ever again if she survived it. I just hope we'll get a quick death."

Her mother fell silent. Lucy put her arm around her and smiled:

"Don't worry. We did what we could. That should be enough."

They waited in silent for a while. Sometimes, Lucy winced in pain. After about an hour, there were noises coming from the monastery walls and soon, a group of warrior nuns appeared. They had spotted them and approached quickly. Lucy tried to get up, but collapsed back on the ground.

The women approached quickly, readying their weapons. Seconds later, they had the two women surrounded. One of them stepped forward and said:

"You didn't get far, then."

Lucy nodded:

"Yes. Sorry. It's not for trying."

"Will you come with us peacefully?"

"I don't think I could in any other way."

"Well, then ..."

She stepped forward, preparing a chain to bind the former living saint.

This is when her face was torn aside, showing a gaping hole. Her companions were struck down just as quick under a hail of fire coming from a nearby outcrop. When they were all dead or dying, a person in a bright blue cloak and cowl approached them. She held an automatic gun, using it to quickly dispatch the few resisting enemies. She stepped over to Lucy and her mother and said:

"Want a ride?"

The vehicle in question was a ramshackle contraption built from junk parts and other pieces of ancient cars. The woman climbed on top, showing her guests a covered bench under a tarpaulin. The whole machine groaned as Lucy climbed on board. She hauled her mother on the car, leaving the chest where it was. The driving woman pulled a lever, twisted a few knobs and the machine emitted a loud belching sound before slowly starting to roll. Behind them, the nuns approached, preparing to charge.

Lucy shouted:

"Go on! Start! They're almost there!"

The other one replied:

"I'm doing what I can. It's built from scratch and doesn't always do what it's meant to."

Finally, with a groaning noise, the machine sped up and they sped away from the pursuing mob.

After a while, Lucy turned to the driver and asked:

"So? Who are you? Why'd you help us?"

"Just so. I was passing by, saw the fortress or whatever it is and thought: Hey, why not wait until someone comes out and needs help escaping from murderous nuns?"

"What?"

"No, of course not. I'm shitting you." She held out her hand. "I'm Belul. I was looking for you, Lucretia."

"Belul? As in the Queen of Lust and Joy, the seducer and defeater?"

"Yep. That's me. The title is a bit over the top and was more of an accident, but yes. That's who I am."

"But you're a demon lady. Why do you drive around in this junk and why do you help us?"

"As I said before, the name is a bit over the top. It was more of an in-joke when I came up with it. You on the other hand are every bit as awesome as I was told you'd be. Only that I would have expected you to be less ground up."

Lucy's mother interjected:

"You should have seen the other girl."

"Of course. So ... Where do you want to go? I got plenty of time."

Lucy replied:

"Do you know the settlement with demons and humans? It's not too far away. Could we go there?"

"Sure. Why not?"

She revved the engine and drove over a nearby dune.

The following ride seemed like an eternity for Lucy. For most of the way, she managed to suppress the pain and keep calm, but occasionally, she had to vent her frustration. Belul was hard to disturb from her task. She appeared to be fully absorbed by the driving. When the car had to stop for refueling, the demon woman struggled with the jerrycans and grit her teeth as good as she could. Lucy wanted to help her, but she was aware that it would be best for her to just wait.

At the same time, she realized that tearing out her own demon core had triggered some change. She began to feel a slight tingling that slowly grew into an all-body itch. She stared at her mother, who was still quite delirious from the stress and their driver, who was very busy. She knew she just had to bear with it silently, but it was quite difficult. She just concentrated on the dry and featureless landscape and tried to take her mind off the growing pain.

Something wasn't right.

When they finally reached the settlement, the people of the town were alarmed. They immediately summoned the doctor, who began to work on Lucy's wounds, trying to fix the situation as good as possible. At the same time, the ladies of the town took care of Lucy's mother, who was still devastated by the strain of her flight and her daughter's trouble. Making soothing noises, the goat-demons made her lie down and brought her food and drink, trying to calm her.

When the doctor was finished, he stepped up to the mother and spent some time explaining that Lucy would make it. After all, she was a tough woman. After hearing this, the demon woman finally calmed down. The doctor took another look at her and found her unharmed by the recent events, but weakened and, sadly, crippled from the nuns' treatment. There was nothing he could do, so he let her have a good night of sleep.

Lucy slept through the next two days. The villagers guarded their walls anxiously since Belul had told them that the nuns might follow. When the massive warrior woman finally got up, she was greeted by the

doctor, her mother and the demon queen. It was a weird sight. After her mother had checked she was okay, the doctor finally said:

"Well, you look better. The scars are a bit ugly for now, but I guess they'll eventually heal. You were quite on the edge of death. It's a wonder you held out until you reached this place."

Lucy answered slowly and weakly:

"It was hard, but I have so much to do."

She tried to get up, but the doctor held her back. He said:

"Wait a few days, then we'll see."

"But ..."

Her mother interrupted:

"No, please. Stay here, everything will be fine."

"I need to ..."

The doctor added:

"You need to recover. We'll see about the rest later on." He hesitated for a second. "Also ... Do you happen to know what happened to your core?"

She gave him a confused look.

"Core?"

The doctor pointed to his chest and said:

"The demon core. It's over the heart. Yours is missing."

"I tore it out. I had to. It's ... in a friend's ... in a lost friend's eye. Is it bad?"

He laid his hand on her arm calmly and replied:

"Well, yes. The core makes you what you are. If you lose it, you cease to be a demon. You fall apart. Also, the other demon cores in your body will try to take over."

Lucy lowered her gaze. She asked weakly:

"How much time have I got?"

"I don't know. Not long. I'm sorry."

Her mother stared at the doctor in desperation. Belul looked at the scene with detachment. She found it hard to believe. Eventually, she said:

"You could always try and get it back, couldn't you?"

The doctor scowled:

"That's not how this works."

"It's worth a try. Get well soon, we'll try to get everything right."

With these words, she kissed Lucy's cheek and walked out.

Lucy recovered quickly as was her nature. Still, she was left with a few unsightly scars and the constant tingling feeling of her missing core. When she finally got back up, the people of the village were relieved. During her stay at the infirmary, there was always someone from town around, sometimes even humans from their compound. The visitors had brought flowers and small presents and every attempt to make them stop this by the doctor was met by a stern look from the guest.

Once she was back up, Lucy took the time to thank the people of the village and to recover fully. Soon, she was training hard again,

suppressing the increasing pain inside her by adding the strain and exasperation of her martial preparations. Her mother usually sat beside her as good as she could. Some of the people of the village had offered to carry her around in palanquin of sorts despite her protests. The carriers insisted. She tried to reduce the tremendous torture Lucy forced upon herself, urging her to take care of herself, but Lucy just said:

"I need to be ready. Helen will come for me, just as I need to take care of her. She has something I need."

As she was there, lifting large balls of concrete, Belul approached and sat down with Lucy's mother. The crippled woman stared at the demon lady in disgust. Belul had removed the blue cloak and cowl and now wore a simple pair of wide three-quarters trousers and a bandeau over her breasts. The demon was quite short compared to Lucy, only 5'8". She had weird, blueish eyes with two oval pupils in them and a skin of golden bronze. Her nose was hook-like and her mouth filled with razor-sharp teeth like those of a shark. She had a large shock of white hair and a cascading mane falling down her narrow shoulders. Her hair was parted by several rows of ever diminishing ring-shaped bumps growing out of her head's sides. Whenever she became exited, either from anger, enjoyment or lust, a set of black spikes appeared from the centers of these rings, giving her head the appearance of a very blonde and bronzed sea urchin. The rest of her body was rather human, except that she walked on the pads of her feet like a cat and that she had only three fingers and toes. Lucy had her seen nude once, however, and had been very surprised to see the plethora of sexual organs her trousers concealed. Perhaps her nickname wasn't chosen as wrongly as she said.

Belul watched the training behemoth woman for a while, then said:

"Wow. I've never seen anything like this."

Lucy grunted as she put down the concrete ball with incredible slowness, her hugely muscled arms quivering with effort. As she slowly lifted it back up again, the demon woman continued:

"I really like what you did with this place. The humans, the demons, they're all so peaceful. I mean, I know it's a wary peace and I think they'd be at each other's throat if anything went wrong, but still, good work."

Lucy's mother interrupted:

"Would you mind staying calm? She needs to concentrate."

Belul rolled her eyes.

"I'm sorry."

Lucy finally lowered the ball and turned to the watchers:

"Let her, mother."

She shook her arms and legs, trying to ease her muscles after the strain. Belul got up and said:

"Do you mind?"

She put her hand on one of the overgrown muscles and pressed and caressed it slowly and gently. Lucy twisted with relief and stretched.

"Thank you. That's much better."

She dried off the sweat from her body, Belul helping her with the parts of her body she couldn't easily reach, than they sat down.

Lucy said:

"Thank you again for rescuing us. Now, please, tell me: If you are a demon lady, why did you help us?"

Belul smiled and replied:

"Well, you are a demon yourself, at least a part of you, and your mother is a complete one. We've got to stick together, don't we?"

"Of course, but you must know who I am and what I did."

"Yes, yes. But we have a common foe and I always found the others quite boring. I mean, think about it. If you had superb demonic power, what would be your first choice to make your favorite pastime? Grossing people out? Beating everybody up? Annoy everybody and try to become the world's greatest liar? I don't know about you, but being able to fuck everything and everybody and enjoying the sensual pleasures of life seems a little more mature, don't you think?"

Lucy listened to her and asked:

"Wait a moment. So you say this was a choice?"

"In a way. I don't know what happened, but here I am, the most fuckable being on this planet. And now that you killed the others and took their cores, you are probably the most powerful mortal around. You did it. Yay."

"Me?"

"Of course. Who else? If you accepted your demonic powers, you'd be able to blow whoever did that to you to kingdom come. Which we missed, by the way."

"Kingdom come?"

Belul looked at her with amusement.

"As far as I know and heard from various 'experts' I spent some time with, everything should have become perfect before we appeared. Apparently, this didn't happen, so we are all stuck here together. Some prophecy went wrong or got misunderstood. Still, since you destroyed the demon lords you fought, you are now the supreme demon lady. You could kill me too, if you wanted, and take my core, but I assure you, I'm much better to have around. I'll show you when your mother isn't there, or, if both of you want to, when she is ..."

Meanwhile, the nuns of the monastery arrived at Barricada. After a pompous greeting and a lot of ceremony, the leaders of the Order assembled in the council chamber. They sat down and talks began. It was clear that something had to be done about Lucretia. The aging mistress of the Order in Barricada began:

"Sisters, we cannot tolerate this woman's treachery. It isn't time to look for guilt amongst ourselves, we don't have the time. She has great support among the demons and even some humans are siding with her. If we attack her in one fell swoop, we might be able to destroy her."

One of the lesser nuns lifted her arm and spoke:

"But we have to be careful: If we attack her right now, the demons might see her as some kind of martyr and unite. Since the demon lords' fall, they have been very quiet and easy to take care of. A more subtle approach would be better."

Another of the nuns started to speak in reply as the doors were thrown open: The sisters gasped in shock as Helen strode in. The left half of her face was horribly disfigured from the demon core stuck in it. The skin around it had quickly grown, closing off what remained of her destroyed eye and pulling up her mouth into a twisted half-grin. She stood there, seven feet tall and built like a tank, wearing full plate armor and a very long sword at her side. The nuns could see that the demon skin was

slowly growing down her neck, twisting her throat and giving her a weird voice, both shrill and growling at the same time. She said:

"Enough of your pointless bickering. We must destroy her now while we have the chance. We know where she is and she is weak right now. Killing her won't make the demons rise up, it will deprive them of their only leader and once the remains of the demon lords are destroyed, they will fall apart and we will be able to kill them all at last."

The nun who had tried to speak before said:

"But we don't have an army large enough to take on the demons. After all, we are good fighters, but we are few and far between."

Helen stepped over to her, lowered her disfigured face to the nun's and replied:

"You want an army? I have an army. Don't you trust me?"

The nun shook in panic and the smell of urine filled the room. Helen grinned and said:

"Thank the lord that we don't need to rely on your courage, my dear." She turned to the rest: "Come with me and see our army!"

Helen led them outside to a balcony that overlooked the city's main plaza and made a sweeping gesture: Below them, they could see a huge army of pallid soldiers, with ancient rifles and armor. Some of them rode in the age-old war machines from before the Fall, each one carefully maintained over the years. There were tanks and transporters, all of them manned by the pale humans from the vaults. As the nuns stared at the magnificent force before them, Helen turned back to them and said:

"Behold what is at our disposal. I had the pleasure of meeting their leader some time ago and he has been willing to help us for only a few favors."

Matthew, the old man of the vault, was carried in by several of his servants. He stood, then bowed down with all the courtesy of an ancient gentleman. He said:

"Greetings, my dear ladies of the frock. My name is Matthew and I was happy to encounter Sister Helen on her way to Barricada. I heard you have trouble with Lucretia, my apprentice's twisted daughter. Her actions are despicable, and as any good master should, I take responsibility for her failings. I am very glad to be able to assist you in purging her treachery and corruption. Consider me your ally."

The nuns looked at the army below, clearly uneasy about the situation. Finally, one of the eldest said:

"We thank you for your kind offer. But tell us, what do you want in return?"

He smiled and replied:

"Ah, young lady, an excellent question! As you may know, my people managed to escape the chaos of the Fall and to maintain our purity facing the corruption of the demon invasion. You seem to have done the same. Here's my request. Request? No. Maybe I should put it this way: It is a favor we all need. If we humans are to recover this world, we will need children as diverse as possible." He paused for a breath and a cough. "As you can hear, I am old and I doubt that I will play a great role in our future, but I wish to leave this world in good shape. My troops are at your command if yours are ready to give their all for humanity!"

The nuns looked at each other and finally replied:

"Your request is sensible. We'll see what we can do to fulfill it. Now ... to war!"

At the same time, one of the novice nuns was sneaking as quietly as possible through the corridors of the main monastery of Barricada. She was quite careful not to alert any of her colleagues, doing her best to hide the thing she had taken from the abbess' room. Removing it had been quite easy since she had been assigned to clean the room and take care of the elder nun's laundry. However, neither was it easy to get it out of the cloister, nor was it a thing. Well, it was difficult to say.

When she had started working in the private rooms, she had immediately seen the disembodied head in a glass sphere in the bedroom. She had found the trophy to be disgusting and wondered what kind of demon this had been to look so human. However, when she dusted it, the head had suddenly awoken and stared at her. She almost fell on her bottom as the thing spoke and said that she was Sister Theresa. Philippa, the novice, had been quite surprised that this thing was actually one of the nuns.

Interestingly enough, the glass-jar nun was quite knowledgeable on the affairs of the convent and was quite thankful for the conversation Philippa offered. Theresa seemed to be amused by the young nun's ideas, troubles and challenges, but she usually had an useful piece of advice for her. As a result, they soon formed a kind of secret friendship. Theresa asked her to keep their relationship hidden and usually feigned to sleep when the elder nun was home. Sometimes, the nun tried to wake the floating head, but Theresa quietly ignored her. Clearly, their relationship was tense.

When Philippa had heard that the nuns from the other monastery came to hold a council of war against the traitor Lucretia, she had a row with Theresa. For some reason, Theresa sided with the renegade. Philippa couldn't quite put her finger on it, but as soon as she saw Sister Helen and her pale companions, she understood Theresa's aversion.

On the day of the meeting, Theresa suddenly told her to help her escape. At first, Philippa had been scared stiff, but then, she had accepted. Now that she was sneaking through the interminable corridors of the cobbled-together fortress, she was deadly afraid. Every second, she expected to be challenged.

The young nun finally emerged from the maze, at last daring to catch her breath. Once, she had to just look inconspicuous as the senior warrior women had marched by, another time, she had to hide in the shadows and wait for a friend of hers to return to her room, but now, she was ready to leave. It felt weird. Just like many others, she was an orphan and had never known anything else other than the monastery. She crossed the courtyard and heard the head say:

"Excellent. Now, let's move to the garage."

Philippa entered the low building. It was a large, rather messy hall in which the nuns charged with the logistics kept the cobbled-together cars and lorries. The overall impression was one of strange machines stacked together and welded into contraptions by people who drove on the power of faith more than on the certainty of industrial production. Each one of the machines was a work of art, usually the product of years of tinkering. The nuns here tended to be a bit touchy about people "borrowing" their stuff. And by "touchy", they meant murderous.

She took all her courage together and climbed on one of the cars, released the brakes and started as she had been shown. The engine belched and started to rumble, the machine slowly rolling out of the garage. Behind her, the surprised mechanics shouted and tried to stop her, screaming hate and murder.

She revved the engine and raced out in the courtyard, steering it to the gates. The guards were surprised but unable to shut them in time and she was outside, in the streets of Barricada. Sadly for her automobile adventure, the streets of the city are far from wide and rather crowded, so she hollered at the pedestrians while the head connected itself to the car, steering it across the angry populace. Behind her, the engineers spurred their machines and gave chase.

In the end, Belul proved herself to be right. Regardless of what Lucy thought about trust and love, the demon woman managed to make her feel at ease. She had a calm and easygoing way of dealing with the troubles of life, considering most of them a manageable nuisance. When something went wrong, she just smiled, thought about it for a second and if she couldn't come up with a solution, she just forgot about it. Also, Lucy was surprised to find out that her partner's crotch concealed every imaginable sexual organ. It seemed that whatever the situation or taste, she had the right tool for the job.

Right at this moment, Lucy was lying on her bed, her wings spread out across the room, her lower arms massaging Belul's firm ass and her upper pair working on her partner's nice breasts. Her nether regions were being gently caressed by a massive array of tongues and knobs that seemed to work with all their might at her pleasure. Belul was sitting on top of her, enjoying herself with a blissful smile.

Lucy started chewing on her lower lip, a sure sign for Belul to increase the rhythm. As she roared closer and closer to orgasm, she slowly forgot the feeling of lack she had in her, the itching slowly becoming a tearing feeling.

She was about to come when there was a muffled bang and the earth started to shake. Belul looked at her mischievously and asked:

"Was that you?"

Lucy hesitated. The burning feeling in her increased to a sharp pain. She winced:

"No ..."

She could feel people outside running around. Just as she was about to get up, the door flew open and one of the demons stared at her. He lost his train of thought for a while, gazing upon the pair in front of him. His mouth opened slowly. Belul snickered.

Lucy raised an eyebrow and asked:

"What is it?"

"We're being attacked. There's something coming!"

Lucy looked at her partner and slowly pulled her away from her. The demon's eyes went wide as Belul's 'tools' disappeared back into her crotch, leaving only a cluster of clitorises. She grinned at him and walked past the confused farm boy, caressing his shoulder gently and whispering in his ear:

"I was almost done. You owe me a go."

Meanwhile, Lucy got up and shut her eyes as the pain became overwhelming. She gritted her teeth and slowly got back up. It took a while for her to recover. She shook her head, trying to get rid of the feeling of disruption. When she finally had it back under control, she

grabbed her robe and followed the courier downstairs. Below, the villagers had gathered, trying to stay calm. One of them said:

"There's been an explosion in the town square. Somebody's attacking."

The blacksmith added:

"I sent some of my boys to take a look at it. They should be back soon."

The owner of the bar added:

"Let's hope it's not those dreadful nuns!" She waited for a second, then added sheepishly: "No offence, madam."

Lucy looked at her and replied:

"None taken." She turned to the crowd and said: "Okay. Calm down everybody. Whatever is happening will probably take a little time to take full effect, so get the children to safety and get your weapons. Shut the gates and tell the humans to shut theirs. Everybody else, try to secure your houses as good as you can. I have a bad feeling about this."

"You stupid asshole!" The nun had wrenched open the tank's top hatch and screamed at the gunner inside. "You could have said something! Or you could just not have done this! Stupid jerkass!"

Around her, the other nuns were recovering. When the machine had fired its gun, they had been thrown off, some of them had actually been hurt by the venting gases. The gunner shouted back:

"Fuck you! What are you doing on top of it anyway?"

"We were told to ride on it so we get there quicker! Do you have a commander down there?"

From the depths of the vehicle, a voice could be heard:

"I'm coming. Murray, get out, I'll tell the lady to fuck off!"

The commander clambered out and punched the arguing nun in the face, sending her flying from the still running vehicle. It was standing there, blocking the path the others were expected to take. In front of the tank, the others had stopped, opening their hatches and looking out. Behind them, more nuns were clambering down from the vehicles and readied themselves for a brawl.

Pretty soon, the various groups were ready to switch to a full-scale melee.

The whole situation was about to degenerate, when a shadow suddenly loomed over the fighters. Helen had walked down the column, ready to see what was holding up operations. She stepped over to the most obvious troublemakers and wordlessly tore off their heads. She shook a little as the demonic growth inside her quivered, but turned around and walked back to the head of the column.

The enemies stared at each other then quickly returned to their vehicles. They left the bodies to rot, just hoping they could leave quick enough.

As the column regrouped, they did not see the speeding car rolling by, driven by a young nun with flying veil, assisted by a severed head in a jar. They had just lost their pursuers in the canyons and were now on their way to the village where Theresa expected to meet Lucy. Philippa was still confused by the events, but clung to the steering wheel with all her strength, unwilling to think about the treason she might just have committed. The car rocked on the dusty ground, sending merciless blows against the driver.

As they went by the gap through which the armored vehicles were threading, Philippa gave a scared shout:

"Oh my God! Look at how many there are!"

The severed head just replied quietly:

"Don't worry. We'll turn their strength against them eventually. Drive on quickly or it will be too late."

Meanwhile, the village was abuzz with people working to fortify their houses and hide their possessions. The children had already been evacuated and now Lucy led the workers through the necessary fortifications. Trenches were dug, barricades erected. Soon, the village had become a real stronghold, humans and demons working together in unison. As Lucy gave a few workers a helping hand, she heard Belul say:

"The end is coming and you know it."

Lucy gave the bar a last push and the builders fixed it as good as they could. She turned around and looked at Belul:

"I know that the war has to end. That's all."

"That's not what I mean. You lost your demon core, so you will be torn apart. Physically."

Lucy stared at her. She continued:

"Each of the demon lords will struggle for control over your body. Since they are roughly of equal strength, your body will be torn asunder. You're dying and soon."

Lucy swallowed. She stepped away from the construction and led the demon woman aside.

"Can you help me?"

"Of course. However, this means that you'll have to take my core. I'll help you from within yourself. It won't last long, but it might be enough

to end this."

"But you'll die ..."

"Absolutely. However, I think that it is better to die and save a world than live on and become bored. You're a good screw, Lucretia, and I don't think I'll find someone else in your league."

As night fell, Helen's troops settled down. Machines were being refueled, food was cooked, people were in a somber mood. Tomorrow, the attack would take place. The nuns spent their evening praying for victory, the pale ones ate and gambled. After a while, the leaders ordered their troops to get ready for a short address. After a little muttering from the pales, they eventually assembled.

Helen climbed on top of one of the tanks and looked around, marveling at the size of her army. She waited for a moment, then started:

"Sisters! Keepers of humanity! Comrades in arms! It is time to end the heresy and treachery of demonkind. As we crush the demons and kill their traitor allies, we lay down the foundation of a new world. A world where we will prosper and live free from fear and death at the hands of our foes. Tomorrow, they will be in our hands, tomorrow, their blood will quench our sacred ground's thirst. Some of us may die, some of us may fall, but fear not. If you give your life for the salvation of the human race, you will be saved. You will not die. No, you shall be granted eternal life!"

She twitched for a second as the demon skin swelled, slowly creating a row of small horns around her blasted eye. She shook her head for a second, then continued:

"This fight is necessary, but it is also the crowning glory of humanity's efforts. This is the last battle on Earth. Our struggle ends and salvation is

at hand. As we strike down the demon filth, our honor is vindicated and their blood will cleanse the wounds they brought upon us. Let God lead our arms as we raze them to the ground! Long live humanity eternal! Death to the demon staining! Kill every last one of them!"

The crowd roared in approval, guns were fired, weapons were shaken and everybody was merry for a little killing in the morning.

This night, the guards at the village gates spotted a small vehicle approaching quickly over the desert sand. As they challenged the driver, she turned out to be a rather short nun accompanied by a severed head in a bowl. After a few words, they called Lucy, who quickly came and was very happy to see her companion again.

"Theresa! Oh my God, how are you? How did you get here?"

The head replied:

"I'm fine. This here is Philippa, an initiate that was kind enough to trust me. Please treat her as a guest of honor and do everything to ensure her safety."

Lucy nodded and told one of the guards:

"Take her to my quarters, give her something to eat and drink and set up a bodyguard for her. She is a guest, so treat her as such. You answer to me for her safety."

"Yes, mistress."

"Excellent. Philippa, this is Brom. He may look ... impressive, but he is a gentle soul at heart and a very good cook. Just tell him what you want and he'll get it for you. Enjoy."

She turned to Theresa, but had to stop for a second as another cramp made her hesitate. The head looked at her skeptically.

"What's up? Is there a problem?"

"I'm fine. Tomorrow, everything will be okay."

"This is just what I wanted to talk about with you. There's one massive army in the hills and it's going to flatten this place in no time. Honestly, I don't think you stand a chance."

"I'm aware of this, but if you could give my people more precise information, we might be able to do something about this."

"Of course. It will be a pleasure. Also, I might have an idea to even the odds a little. There was a scrapyard in the vicinity, wasn't there?"

The night was filled with the noise of hard work, of drunken singing and of dark thoughts and despair. Yet, when the sun rose in the east, bathing the blasted plains in its grayish-golden light, the defenders rose to their stations, preparing for the onslaught. At the same time, the tank drivers revved their engines, filling the air with the roar of burning petrol.

Helen climbed on one of the command vehicles, pushing her muscle-bloated legs into the cupola. She turned to the rest of her army, rising the enormous gun she had had manufactured to fit her huge frame and shouted:

"Let's kill them! Death to the demons!"

Her words were taken up by the amassed troops and the plains resounded with the battle cry.

The tanks lurched forward, slow at first, but rapidly gaining momentum as the troops advanced behind them. As they descended in the plains, they fanned out to form a spearhead and halted, readying their guns and training them on the village gates.

Inside the fortifications, the defenders stared at the sea of black and white that had gathered in front of their home. The demon warriors, with their shotguns, axes and machetes realized that this fight was going to take a turn to the worst. Then, the guns fired. The ground shook. The screeching of the shells filled the air, drowned out by the crash of their detonation. The gates exploded into a flurry of shrapnel, showering the defenders with burning debris. Several of the horned demons that had guarded the gate lay dead, their bodies torn apart by the explosions.

Helen screamed for the gunners to reload. Meanwhile, the troops caught up with the tanks. Once the cannons were reloaded, another salvo demolished the guard tower and the outer wall of the village. There was a gaping breach in the town's fortification. Helen smiled and ordered:

"One more, then we go in. This isn't fun." She turned to the troops: "Get ready to charge once this volley hits. No quarter!"

As the next shells struck the village buildings, Lucy left Theresa in the scrapyard and returned to the wall or what remained of it. Rubble lay strewn all around, the screams of the dying filled the air. Lucy gathered her weapons and said:

"They're going to charge now. Keep calm and concentrate on the plan."

The older demon warriors next to her looked at her grimly and clenched the petrol-filled bottles to their sides, before disappearing in the wreckage of the blasted walls. Lucy rolled her back muscles, spread her wings and looked at Belul, who had just walked over.

"You should go. This isn't going to end well."

"I know. That's why I'll stay. You might need me at the end."

With a roar, the tank wedge advanced on the wrecked entrance of the village. Behind the machines, the nuns clenched their weapons and followed.

However, just as they hit the gates, one of the massive machines keeled over, crashing into a pit next to the gate. Out of the rubble, the demon veterans ran out, some of them falling in the withering fire of the tank's machine gun, but finally managing to throw their fire-bombs on the tanks cupola. The burning liquid flowed down into the compartment, forcing the crew to bail out, but finding themselves facing the young demons' fire. At this moment, the following tank rammed the first one, tipping it on its back and setting off an explosion inside that threw the burning carcasses of its crew and assailants down the village's main street. The wreckage blocked the gate further, forcing the following tanks to maneuver around it.

Seeing the complicated dance the tank drivers tried to perform, Helen howled in frustration and climbed out of the cupola. She took her gun and laid down a hail of fire on the young guards. Those that weren't killed fled as fast as they could. She gritted her teeth as the smaller horns on her torn face fused into a large one, swelling up to form a massive bull's horn growing out of her face.

She stepped over to the second tank, gripped its top with her bare hands and strained against it. The insane rage in her fueled her demonic parasite and she could feel that the core lent her its strength. As she slowly lifted up the machine, flipping it on the other one, her muscles swelled and grew madly, lacing cord after cord of demonic flesh over her human ones. The sigils of purity tried to burn off the diabolic growth, but the core just added more and more of it. As the tanks crashed down

into the pit, she turned back to her followers. She screamed, her voice distorted by the demonic parasite:

"Kill them all! Kill them!"

Scared by their leader's appearance, the nuns recoiled at first but then advanced into the street, the tanks following them after a while. The houses seemed empty, the inhabitants appeared to have deserted their homes. Checking one building after the other, they soon concluded that this part of the town was empty.

Lucy watched them from her hiding place in the broken remains of the main tower. She could feel the remains of civilization stir beneath the town, but it would take some more time. She grabbed the shells she had taken out of one of the tanks' wreckage and kissed Belul. She said:

"See you later. We'll get them at the village square."

"Be careful."

"Never."

With these words, she took one shell in each one of her hands and threw herself from the building, unfolding her wings and gliding down towards the rear guard of the nuns. When they spotted her, it was already too late. With perfect precision, she dropped the munitions in their middle, blowing up several of her former comrades and cutting off their retreat as the remaining structures below the gates collapsed. They revealed a deep chasm that had only been closed up by rubble. The nuns opened fire, but Lucy just continued on, taking the direction of the main square.

Helen tore down one of the houses with her bare hands as one of the nuns came and told her about Lucretia's attack. She turned around, ripped the nun apart and ordered an attack on the square.

The remaining tanks crashed through the sad remains of the town, eventually reaching the large open area that was the plaza. Opposite the entrance was a large building, the town tavern. Behind it, the large scrap heap loomed, blocking out the sight of the human dwellings behind it.

The nuns advanced carefully in the square, ready for a surprise attack. They were nervous, unable to ascertain whether they were more afraid of the enemy or their own leader. Helen strode past them and just stood in the middle of the place, shouting for Lucy to come out.

"Lucretia! You weakling! Come here so I can kill you!"

There was no reaction. Helen pointed at the house in front of her.

"You there, tank man. Blow that house up!"

He quivered with fear and the plaza shook as the shell blasted it open, raining plaster and wood down on the nuns. Helen looked around, stepping over to the building. She shouted:

"Where are you, demon scum?"

Suddenly, there was a rumbling below and behind the building. Something was wrong. The noise grew louder. The building started to collapse. Helen grinned wickedly. Then, the building burst. It fell apart, its facade falling away. With a loud crash, the whole house crashed down, revealing a assembly of scrap metal. Helen looked at the metal juggernaut in front of her, which slowly revealed itself as a bizarre ten-limbed steel beast made of all kinds of spare parts and wrecks. In its

middle, Theresa's head rolled up in her sphere. The titanic construct pulled itself up and threw itself at the attacking force, its cable tendrils wrapping themselves around the tanks. Crushing some and incorporating others, Theresa made quick work of the remaining weapons. Helen grinned as she saw the machine's tremendous power. Turning to one of the nuns that was paralyzed by fear next to her, she said:

"That's the thing to rule the world with. Let's see what I can do."

The nun stared at her in total horror. Helen contracted her increasingly demonic physique and let the ever-growing red and black flesh expand. Her formerly bizarre body was now downright grotesque. Unnatural and impossible bands of muscle grew on her hardly natural ones. Spikes and horns grew out of her skin. Her still human half-face was pressed down against her expanding pectorals as her shoulders spread wider and wider and her traps overtook her head, forcing her spine into an unnatural bend. Although the holy tattoos on her body made her insane with pain, she gritted her teeth and just propelled herself up on the metal behemoth in front of her.

Theresa saw the ball of insane fury approach with lightning speed and tried to throw a tank in her way, but the goliath ex-nun just smashed right through it, sending torn metal spiraling to the ground.

Lucy had expected her foe to be held up by Theresa's intervention and had only just recovered from an even worse seizure, so she came too late. She could only just see that the demonic, horned beast Helen had become broke open the sphere, crushing Theresa's head into pulp with her bare hand and sticking her own head into the orb's connectors.

Lucy stared in horror as the demonic nun-hulk inserted her face into the system and splintered off the rest of the glass. The hellish creeping skin wrapped itself over the cables that had linked Theresa to the monstrous metallic contraption she had controlled. Helen's muscles expanded in all direction, growing over the cables and steel girders, quickly twining themselves around this metal skeleton. The metal juggernaut lost a few elements along the way, but after a few seconds, it pulled itself together. Lucy's rival laughed insanely as her colossal demon body stood up, its shape bristling with weapons of all sorts. Atop the massive, yet strangely squat body was a bizarre metal and flesh construction resembling Helen's face. Out of this thing's front, Helen's torso emerged, still covered in spikes and muscles. The only thing that still vaguely resembled her human form was the remaining human half of her face that was up there, watching the tiny world below her with amusement.

Helen's demon body stretched, its steel components groaning before being reinforced by even thicker slabs of muscle. The behemoth muscle woman thundered:

"This is absolute power!"

With a swipe of her hand, she sent Lucy and two close-by buildings flying through the air. She smiled at the human compound next to her, then fired all the guns inside her body at it. The houses exploded into a cloud of fire. She turned back to Lucy, couldn't find her for a second and amused herself by firing another volley. Within seconds, most of the village had disappeared in a firestorm. She gloated, grabbing some of the fleeing nuns with her over-sized excavator fingers. She held them up and asked them:

"Join or die!"

The nuns held on to her for their dear life, the ground far away below them. One of them screamed "Never!" and was instantly flicked away, crashing down in a bloody pulp. She bent forward and asked them again:

"Your choice."

The nuns begged for their lives, so she was happy to oblige.

As Helen extended a set of syringe-tipped metal fingers from her overgrown lower face, the nuns tried to get away, but they found themselves caught between the hammer and the anvil. Just as the first one was struck by the needle, Lucy flew up to them, lifted her spear and threw it at Helen's torso. The weapon was about to strike true when the giant creature simply flicked it away with one of her many smaller limbs. Lucy flew closer, grabbed the nuns and carried them down as fast as she could. In response, Helen just peppered the air with shots, one of the exploding shells striking Lucy's wing.

The four-armed woman crashed more than landed, her charges fleeing as fast as they could. Helen gloated and lifted one massive foot to crush her. Meanwhile, the injected nun twisted and bent screaming. She soon was covered with the same reddish demon skin her mistress had and disappeared gladly into the depths of her body. Others would follow.

Lucy had to get away. Now. The shadow of Helen's sole hovered above her just as the three demon cores struggled to seize control. She got up on her knees just as the foot came down. She held against the demon woman's enormous weight with all four arms. Helen pushed on, gentle

at first, then harder and harder. Surprised at the unexpected resistance, she shifted her weight.

Below her, Lucy could feel her body struggle against itself, her joints creaking and her muscles bursting. The weight increased further, becoming harder and harder to bear. She gritted her teeth in despair as the cores tried to make her leave and give up.

Just as she was about to give in and accept defeat, she saw Belul walk to her. The demon woman seemed unfazed by the giant and the destruction all around. She stepped over to Lucy, entering the shadow of the enormous foot above her.

"Do you need help?"

Lucy stared at her in utter confusion and hissed between her teeth:

"Yes, please!"

"You will lose me if I help you. Are you okay with that?"

"Yes! I'm sorry!"

"Good then."

The enormous foot crushed her slowly into the ground, pushing her feet deeper in the sand. Belul looked at Lucy one last time, stepped forward and gave her a kiss on the cheek, then twisted herself inside out. With a slurping sound, her body rolled itself up upon itself, starting with her legs and thus spreading her cunt apart, her numerous sexual appendages growing outwards until most of her body was just an amorphous mass of flesh, shaped like every kind of pleasuring device. As her face disappeared, Lucy thought she could see a slight pang of regret. Then it was over. The slippery mass that had appeared slithered over to Lucy and entered her body.

Lucy was horrified with what happened. Still, she couldn't just stop resisting the pressure from above even though her strength was nearly spent. She could feel Belul's new form spread inside her body. It felt strange, like a sensation never experienced before. At the same time, she felt strangely invigorated. Then, Belul's core reached the others and everything stopped. Lucy could sense the surprise of her infiltrator in the same way as she was confused, but there it was. The grains of sand around her hung in the air, the beads of sweat waited. Everything was totally calm, there was no sound, no movement. Nothing.

Lucy realized she could move and looked around. Around her, the battle had stopped in mid-movement. She detached herself from Helen's enormous steel and flesh-covered foot and stepped away. She escaped its shadow, but before she could think of what to do next, she saw a glint in the corner of her eye. She turned around and was just able to shield her eyes as a brilliant flash of light filled her field of vision.

She could feel a strange entity close to her. Lucy looked around, but couldn't see. Everything was doused in blinding light. She tried to move, but soon found out that she was in a strange kind of weightlessness. Her movements were futile. Calling out, she was forced to accept that her voice didn't carry further than her jaw, making it ring numbly through her skull.

Then, she suddenly saw a shape approach her with roaring speed. As it came closer, it split into four and gave her a certain feeling of depth. The four elements spun around her, each one massive and confusingly shaped. Trying to make out what they were turned out to be futile. Every attempt to discern a structure in them was obliterated by their permanent and fluid change. However, she understood that these were

the demon cores she had carried in herself. They continued drifting around her slowly, mutating on.

Lucy felt the entity come closer and address her. It was no voice or face, just a feeling of proximity. She looked around, but it was pointless. The being had to be hidden behind the intense light all around her. Then, she saw another object drift into view. Just like the demon cores, it appeared to be enormous, but this one was completely stable. It wasn't easier to understand since it deconstructed itself into endless fractal structures. The thing spoke:

"Mortal. You have joined the four devastators and assembled their power. You have created balance in yourself."

Lucy was confused, but nodded.

"You have mended the rift in the world with your own being. The entity I speak for does not reject this."

Lucy's nod became slower. She asked:

"What entity?"

"The only there is. Behold: You must accomplish the final task that is your burden. You are require to end the trial your world has been subjected to."

"You mean defeat Helen? How can I? Without the cores, I am powerless, with them, I die."

"Then die."

Lucy could feel her body compact, her muscles contract and every end of her nerves burst into an explosion of pain. Instantly, her

consciousness ended.

As it collapsed, she could feel the moment stretch into an infinitely slow process of destruction. She realized that this was the end. Her demon self had been stolen, her human self distorted and destroyed. Her identity had been broken and rebuilt to the image of others. The absolute horror of this slowly crept into her understanding as she felt herself die. In this final moment, she saw that the time had come to end her subjugation. In the exact moment that her life ended, she howled her anger into the void and willed herself back into life.

She reappeared amongst the demon cores, extended her reforming arms and cradled them with the determination of someone who had just discovered that all power was only made of one's own certainty. The cores fell apart, draining into her quickly and drifted together into a new structure she created from her own self. Its shape was strange, as hard to determine as the cores had been before, but her essence was easily visible in it.

As she spun a new core for herself, the entity appeared to depart. However, Lucy stared in its direction and focused on it. Suddenly, the ambience changed. The feeling of calm supremacy grew weaker. Instead, the being hesitated. Lucy turned to it and saw across the blinding light. She said:

"Your trial made us what we are. It's your responsibility, not ours."

The enormous voice below her shouted:

"Blasphemy! It was your choice!"

"What choice were we given?"

"There was a choice in every decision you made."

"But the outcome was the same either way. Could this not have happened?"

The voice fell silent. She continued:

"What happens, happens because it has to."

"No! You could have turned back!"

"Our nature forbade it. Which we were created with!"

"Silence! Your words are lies! Demon spawn!"

Lucy stared at the being in shock, then understood the deceit and pierced it.

Helen lifted her foot and looked at its sole. She looked at the squashed remains of Lucy's body and grinned madly. She proceeded to scrape it off with her enormous, metal-and-flesh fingers. She held it up to her face and began picking it apart. Tearing off the arms and legs, she broke it up and gutted the body. She finally lifted it up and opened her maw, rolling out her tongue. With a blissful expression, she prepared to drop her foe's carcass into her mouth. Suddenly, she hesitated. There was a faint rift in the bloodied body. She closed one of her eyes and focused on the cleft. It seemed to extend. From it, a growing light started to emerge.

She was confused:

"What the ...?"

All of a sudden, the gash was torn open from the other side and Helen could see the enormous expanse of space stretch into infinity. She felt a pang of fear in the depths of her bizarre form. From the endless vastness of space, a beam of light approached with utmost velocity.

Her face changed from puzzlement to panic.

Something was coming!

With a roar like thunder and a crash like an earthquake, a stream of absolute radiance blasted out of the hole in reality and pierced Helen's body. It tore through her body as the carcass dropped to the ground and from the blinding light, a humanoid form emerged. Before Helen could react, the burning creature exploded through her abdomen, showering the area with twisted metal and scorched innards.

She tried to understand what was happening, the absorbed lesser nuns inside her torn body struggling to contain the destruction. The shining creature suddenly stopped, hovering in front of her. Helen stared at her assailant in confusion. She asked:

"Didn't I just kill you?"

At this very moment, Lucy was in absolute control of herself. She had created this body as a weapon and so it was. Her new shape was eight feet tall, perfectly muscled and ideally proportioned. Her face was human in shape, but was featureless except for a rudimentary mouth. Not that she needed it in any way. She had eight arms and just as many shining wings sprouting from her back. Around her, golden eyes orbited her majestic shape.

From her mouth came a voice of absolute control:

"You killed me, but not enough. Prepare to die!"

Helen recovered from her stupefaction and attacked. Destroying such a being shouldn't be too difficult for a creature as powerful as she was.

She launched her massive body at the intruder, firing her guns and missiles at her. Lucy evaded some of them, blasting others with searing rays of concentrated light from her eyes. She flew above her nemesis and raked her reddish flesh with her eye-beams.

Helen smashed through one of the buildings, screaming in frustration. She struck out at the golden insect buzzing around her, trying to grasp and crush her, but to no avail. She screamed at the minuscule nuns in her to reload and prepare to fire all her guns.

Meanwhile, Lucy flew a long curve and homed in on her archenemy. Summoning an enormous spear of pure light to her many hands, she went into a dive, picking up speed as she folded back her wings. Around her, flak shells exploded and rockets went wide. She saw Helen's chest appear in front of her, the shrapnel tearing at her angelic wings but unable to stop her relentless descent.

With a terrible crash, Lucy pierced Helen's armored chest and tore into the massive demon-nun's heart, exploding the muscle. There was an ear-shattering thunder crack and a fountain of dazzling light projected from the massive being's torn body.

The crimson bodied creature screamed, trying to contain her angelic attacker's advance. With a sucking sound and another gush of blood, Lucy emerged from her enemy's back and shattered her spine. The mountain-tall demon woman trembled and quaked. She crashed down in a fog of dust. Propping herself up on her arms, she howled for her attendants to fix her, but Lucy returned, striking her neck and breaking her foe's spine again. Helen collapsed to the floor, her head screaming in anger at her body's powerlessness.

With a sweep of her wings, Lucy assembled her eyes and focused to deliver the killing ray of holy light.

Helen snarled at her, roaring in impotent anger.

The blast hit her square in the face, exploding it in a shower of flesh and brains.

Lucy landed gently. As the thrill of battle subsided, her body transformed back into her original shape and she was once again a rather tall and athletic, but unmistakably human woman. She shuddered as her demon core rebuilt itself in her chest, this once foreign part of herself finally her own.

The few remaining nuns that hadn't been transformed returned to the scene of carnage and tried to tend to their wounded. Some of the local demons and humans came out and tried to help. The pale men who had escaped the destruction of their vehicles soon joined in and fires were put out and people saved. Lucy took a few clothes from the entrails of a nearby house and left. She had realized that the power she now held in herself was too great to be shared with her peers.

Instead, she decided to pay a visit to a few old friends and see what life would bring. Taking away the imbalance of power would force the people to find their way to peace. She was quite sure that it wouldn't go fast, but maybe the display of the horror of corruption to everybody's eyes would be enough.

As she left the city, she heard someone call her.

She turned around and saw some of the demons from the town, carrying her mother with them. She said:

"You're leaving?"

Lucy turned around and replied:

"I have to. This is all I can do. If I stay, everything will get worse. I wish you all the best."

"Me too. Be careful."

"There isn't much that could hurt me anymore."

"I know, but be careful. Solitude is dangerous."

"Don't worry, I'll see to it. I might come here for a visit once in a while."

Her mother nodded at her lie and added:

"Good luck!"

"Thank you." With an afterthought, Lucy added: "Bury the dead well and with honor. Some of them were friends to the end, all of them at some point."

"We'll do that."

Lucy blinked to hold her tears back and turned around and left.

And thus ends the story of Saint Lucretia or Lucy the Liberator as she is known amongst the demon-born. Of course, this account is only an incomplete chronicle, but these were the events that could be verified and compiled for sure. Now, as the years have passed and the decades have gone by, the memory is fading and the last who were alive to see her have passed on. Still, her memory lives on and with these words, her memory will be preserved. Life has changed since these fateful days of

war and human and demon live together, blended in freedom and respect. Of course, it isn't Paradise, but Paradise isn't for the living.

The cities are once again growing, new ideas are forming and a new golden age has come. Even though it can't be said that one person can shape history, in this case it might be possible that the actions of this single woman laid the foundation of our recovery.

It should be added that even today, there are legends and tales of people, both human and demon, who were in dire peril and were saved by a lone wanderer with tremendous powers. This solitary warrior woman is reported to be Lucretia. Of course, this is hardly verifiable, but the mere thought might plant a seed of hope in the heart of despair.

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