

I N T E R V I E W

SAINT SINNER

BY JHS ANDERSON

D E V I C I E S



# Demorians

LOST SOULS

The Official Clive Barker e-zine  
November 2002

# NOVEMBER 2002

## E-ZINE VOLUME 1 ISSUE 1

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## Q & A

with Clive Barker @  
Milwaukee WI 9  
10.6.02 Signing Tour

SIGNING TOUR PHOTOS

## CONTRIBUTORS CORNER

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING  
FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS ISSUE!

DEVICES © 2002 BY JHS ANDERSON

SCI-FI CHANNEL FOR SAINT SINNER

DAVID ARMSTRONG FOR COVER PHOTO OF CLIVE  
AND FOR SIGNING PHOTOS.

CARIN CAIRRAI FOR DAMNATION GAME ILLUSTRATION

VICTORIA INGHAM AT HARPERCOLLINS FOR ABARAT AD  
AND AD ART FOR THIS ISSUE OF DEMORIAMS LOST  
SOULS

AND SPECIAL THANKS GOES OUT TO CLIVE BARKER FOR  
ABARAT ILLUSTRATIONS AND HIS OFFICE STAFF FOR THE  
WORK THEY DO FOR KEEPING US UPDATED. THANKS  
GUYS!

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to the first issue of Demoriam's Lost Souls ezine. We finally made the step to total electronic printing via internet!

Let me take this time to address membership questions that I have been receiving and still do about joining Lost Souls.

### **When will I be able to join Lost Souls again?**

We did collect membership dues in the past. Now we do not. There is NO membership.

### **Why is there no membership?**

Membership in the past covered for the printing of the Lost Souls magazine and since 98% of our "past" membership is connected to the internet (we know this because of membership renewals done on-line.) So since 98% of our membership is on the internet, I thought it best to do the magazine as a pdf format. Plus I do not have to go through the bother of printing the magazine and finding a printer who is reliable and who can give me good printing rates and not having it cost me an arm and a leg to have the magazine printed in full color. And I do not have to worry about raising membership dues to cover the cost of printing.

### **Why ezine?**

Again - no printing costs.

I can have full color throughout and showcase Clive's art as it was meant to be seen in color and not in black & white. Plus contributors who submit their art & photo work to Demoriam can experience full color for their works as well.

However, if there are fans who would like this issue as a printed magazine that they can hold in their hands and add to their collections, and don't mind paying for the printing, either in a black & white format or in full color. Email me. Re: LS ezine.

Also if fans of Clive Barker would like to purchase a signed 8x10 photo of Clive which includes a Lost Souls membership button. The monies collected go to maintaining this site. We will have more of that later.

I would like to take this time to thank Craig our webmaster for all his help with this issue of Demoriam's Lost Souls. He may not know it, but he is a valued staff member of the Lost Souls team, who works very hard in keeping the website up and running. Thanks Craig. And speaking of websites. I'll be updating and finishing the Devotion section of Lost Souls. Hopefully by Nov. 30th everything will be up and running, now that this ezine is finished!

Well that's all for now. I hope that you'll enjoy the labor of the Lost Souls staff in bringing you the first issue of Demoriam's Lost Souls.

Best wishes from the Great Smoky Mountains!  
Deb Akiko Gordon



Clive Barker and Todd McFarlane have teamed up again to bring out a new line of Tortured Souls figures.

This line will not include a story as the 1st collection did, but the figures are still definitely worth having.

The new collection is called Tortured Souls 2 The Fallen and is due out later this year. Originally scheduled for a late October release date, the release of the figures has been delayed a bit due to the recent lockout of dock workers at West Coast ports.

A signing event with both Clive and Todd McFarlane was scheduled for October 26th at Meltdown Comics in Hollywood, but due to the same reason as the delay in release of the figures, the signing has been postponed so that there will be figures for Fans to have signed. More information about the new signing date will be on [clivebarker.com](http://clivebarker.com) as soon as we get it.

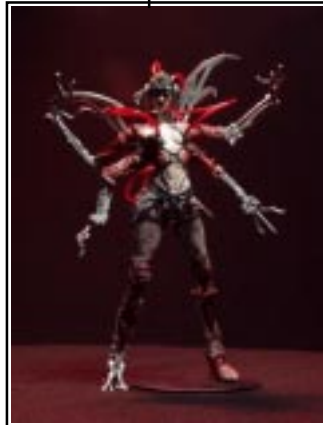


An angelic being of the new human becoming. Features surgically grafted wings controlled by biomechanical appendages and other modifications.





A female human up-graded with mechanical appendages and fed via tubing. A sort of woman/spider of the new becoming.



Zain is the face of human suffering. He's strapped, chained and, uh, hooked on the mechanical appendage that keeps him hanging.



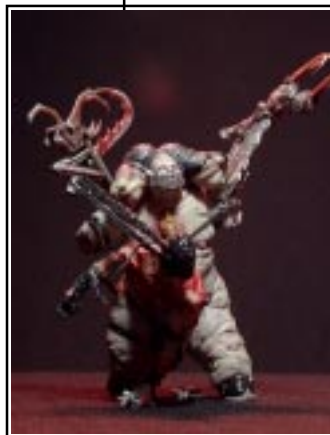
The ultimate sacrifice, crucified to the dark gods of science and technology for the good of all humanity in the process of the new becoming.



This grotesquely large mutation of man serves as a birthing/feeding agent for small demons and is mounted on a surgical slab.



The new shape of humanity? Out of many body parts comes one creation, a horrific Siamese twin of sorts, held together by sinew and straps.



# Checker Book Publishing

**CHECKER BOOK**

**PUBLISHING GROUP** has announced fall publication of Clive Barker's Tapping the Vein, an anthology of comicbook adaptations of Clive's short stories. The book collects nine stories, adapted to the comics medium by such stars as P. Craig Russell, Klaus Janson, John Bolton and Scott Hampton, among others.

All the anthologized stories come from Clive's bestselling 1980s short story collections, Books of Blood Vols. 1-3, and were adapted into comics for the Eclipse Comics five comic series Tapping the Vein in 1989 and 1990. Checker's publication of Tapping the Vein marks the first time the comics adaptations have been collected extensively in book form.

A limited edition (666 copies) will appear in a deluxe leatherbound (available only through comicbook retail accounts of Diamond Comics Distribution) in October 2002, followed by the paperback general release in November 2002.

The stories included in the anthology are:

Human Remains  
Pig Blood Blues  
Skins of the Fathers  
The Midnight Meat Train  
In the Hills, the Cities  
How Spoilers Bleed  
The Madonna  
Down, Satan  
Scape Goats

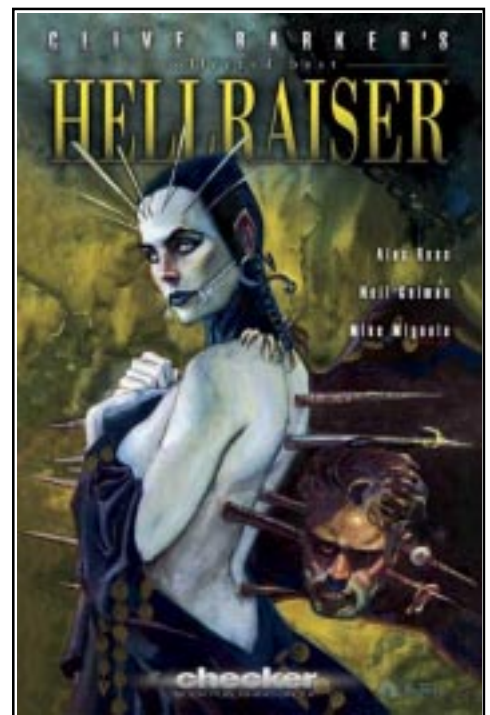
(ISBN 0-9710249-3-6, \$24.95, 268 pp. full color)

# Retaps A Vein



Earlier this year Checker Book Publishing Group released ***Hellraiser: Collected Best***

(ISBN 0-9710249-2-8, \$21.95, 232 pp. full color) a collection of 13 short stories originally published by Marvel Comics' Epic imprint from 1989-1994, Clive Barker's Hellraiser comic books, featuring stories from the best writers and artists in comics.



IN POPOLAC A KIND OF PEACE  
RIGIDLY INSTEAD OF A FREEDOM  
OF BEING THERE WAS A NUMBERS  
A SHEEP-LIKE ACCEPTANCE OF THE  
WORLD AS IT WAS.

LOCKED IN THEIR POSITIONS, STRAPPED  
ROPE AND HARNESSED TO EACH OTHER IN A  
LIVING SYSTEM THAT ALLOWED FOR NO SINGLE  
VOICE TO BE LOUDER THAN ANY OTHER, NOT  
ANY BACK TO LOUDER LESS THAN ITS NEIGHBORS  
THEY LET AN INSANE CONSENSUS REPLACE  
THE TRIANGULAR VOICE OF REASON.

THEY WERE CONVULSED  
INTO ONE MIND, ONE  
THOUGHT, ONE ANXIETY,  
THEY BECAME, IN THE  
SPACE OF A FEW  
MOMENTS, THE SINGLE  
MINDFUL BEAST FROSE  
IMAGE THEY HAD SO  
BRILLIANTLY RECREATED.

THE ILLUSION OF PETTY INDIVIDUALITY  
WAS SWIFT SWAY IN AN UNBENDING  
URLE TUNE OF COLLECTIVE  
FEELING—NOT A MAN'S PASSION,  
BUT A TELEPATHIC BURNING THAT  
ENVELOPED THE VOICES OF  
THOUSANDS INTO ONE SERENITY-  
URLE COMMAND.

AND THE VOICE SAID, GO!  
THE VOICE SAID, TAKE THE HORRIBLE  
EIGHT AND, WHERE I NEED  
NEVER SEE IT AGAIN.  
POPOLAC TURNED AWAY INTO  
THE HILLS, ITS LEGS TAKING  
STRIDES HALF A MILE LONG.



EACH MAN, WOMAN AND CHILD IN THAT  
SEETHING TOWER WAS SIGHTLESS. THEY SAW  
ONLY THROUGH THE EYES OF THE CITY. THEY  
WERE THOUGHTLESS, BUT TO THINK THE CITY'S  
THOUGHTS, AND THEY BELIEVED THEMSELVES  
DEAFENED IN THEIR LAZINESS,  
RELENTLESS STRENGTH, WAST AND MAP AND  
DEATHLESS.

“page from In the Hills, the Cities”

# CLIVE BARKER

*talks about*

# ABARAT





Q: ABARAT is a departure from the kind of writing you've become well known for. Where did the idea for it come from and what made you go in this direction?

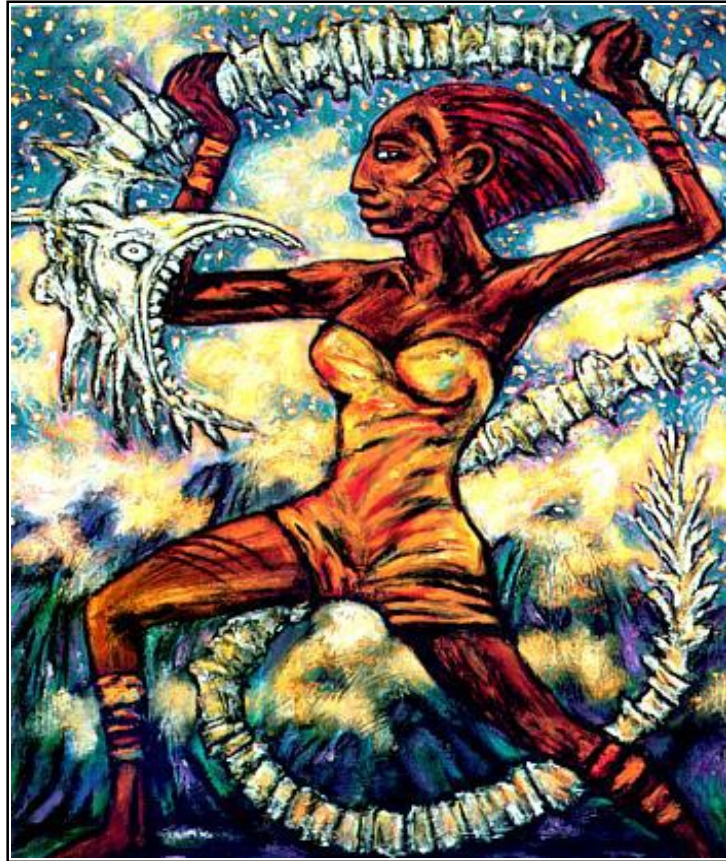
CB: As a kid I was a huge reader of what we would call now fantasy, though I don't think it was called fantasy back then. The Brits have traditionally been very successful purveyors of this kind of Literature: Obviously

CS Lewis, "Lord of the Rings," the "Hobbit," but also that bundle of Edwardian writers: Kenneth Graham, J.M. Barry, Lewis Carroll, were very influential. These were people who created alternative worlds where the rules were different-very different in some cases, crazy, surreal. I saw these stories, as ways to teach me how not to get trapped in a dull ordinary world. I took from a much earlier example of a fantasist, William Blake, a particular piece of advice. He said, "Make your own laws or be a slave to another man's" and I think that's what many of these books did-they made their own laws. Their worlds were places where their own laws pertained, miracles happened, and wonderment happened.

I put away in the back of my head the idea that I would one day do what CS Lewis and Tolkien had done, and create an entire world for a younger audience that could be revisited in a series of books. But I didn't know how or when I would do that. It turned out then, that this world which had been somewhat stymied in a literary form, found another way out. Michael Crichton has that line in Jurassic Park, "Life will find away," well dreams will find a way too. Imagination will find a way. And prevented from being fully realized in literary form, these fantasies started appearing on the Canvas. I was then just beginning

to paint in oils and without my consciously pursuing this, pictures began to appear which were not like anything I've painted before. It slowly dawned on me-and it was slow, it took me a couple of years really-that I was painting a world.

Q: How would you describe ABARAT to someone looking to recommend it to a young reader?



CB: It's a benign world by large. I mean, there are dark things in it but good triumphs very much over bad. Love triumphs very strongly over hate. It's a world where, I think, the dividing line between good and bad is very clear. The moral lessons,, though they are buried deeply in the text, are good ones. I think you can reasonably say that if Disney is going to invest in something, it's going to be something that reaches a very broad spectrum of audience.

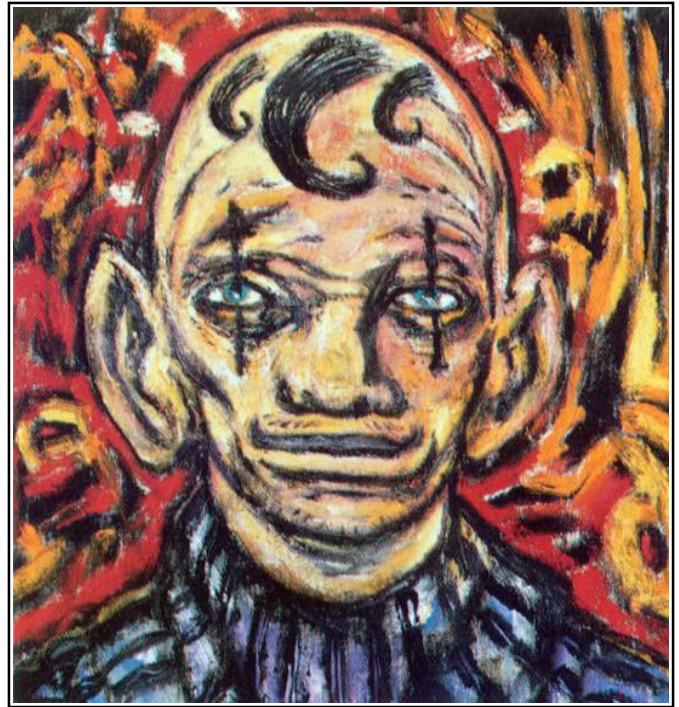
Q: What is your favorite island of ABARAT and why?

CB: I have to have two favorite islands. Odom's Spire which is the 25th hour, the time out of time is the first. It is the hub of

the wheel; the island that lies in the very center of all of this. What's great about the 25th island is that you could meet your self as a baby, or as an old man or an old woman. It's a place of magic and transformation. The other is Midnight, or Gorgossium, which is the home of Christopher Carrion who is one of the villains of the book. Carrion's world is a world of midnights. It is a world where all the halloweeny things that you expect to come around do exist. It's a world that pays homage to some of my favorite painters, Heironymus Bosch would be a good example, medieval painters who created extraordinary



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paintings of worlds.

Q: Which came first, the story in your mind, or the art?

CB: The art. I had been painting the art for two years before I even began to really seriously think about what the story would be. I didn't have a clue who would be the hero or heroine of this. I was just painting, and I took to heart a line from the Belgian painter Paul Klee who said that "drawing was taking a line for a walk." It was the idea that there was something playful about the making of images that I very much took to heart. I know nothing about color theory and I haven't ever taken lessons in oil painting. This is an innocent at work, to the extent that Clive Barker can be an innocent. I don't go to a canvas and think "this is what I'm putting on there." I go to a canvas with a brush with a color on it. And that one thing leads to another.

Q: Can you explain how Disney became involved with the project?

CB: My agent at ICM who is a visionary fellow, came and saw these paintings and I started to break down to him what the story was. He said, "this is the new STAR WARS," and I said "I don't know about that but I know that I would love to find a movie life for these characters." So we had 36 presentations to studios. It became very clear, very quickly, that there were two absolutely major players in all of this. Disney and Dreamworks. Showing those pictures at that time was one of the greatest experiences of my life. What was wonderful was having these folks come

into my house, instead of going to them. For the first time in my life they were coming to me. They were coming into my house and looking at the work. And when they came in through the door, instantly they got it. Harry Weinstein was extraordinarily articulate and wonderful. Mr. Katzenberg was remarkable. He sat on the floor with his legs crossed and said "tell me the story." It was really quite an exciting time in my life. I was showing myself as I really am, not the horror meister they had often invited into their ranks, but somebody who dreamt with his eyes open. I think they liked seeing that part of me, and I liked them seeing it.

Q: Are there any plans to tour the art?

CB: Yes. The first thing we will do is have a large exhibition in Los Angeles. We'll probably put up about 150 paintings. I'm going to make that exhibition as visitor friendly as I possibly can. Just really make it fun to go and view these pictures. It won't be one of those sterile exhibition spaces, it will be more theatrical.

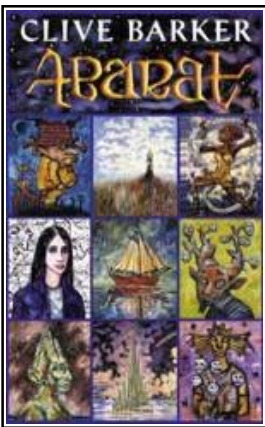
We also have 3 more books coming. I'm hoping we will be able to take these paintings to different places. The other thing I would like to do, is create a really beautiful on-line site, where the art will always be accessible.





# WINNERS

from our last contest won a copy of *Abarat*, an *Abarat* watch and a map of *Abarat*.



The winners were:

Thank you to everyone who entered and check the website for our next contest coming soon!

## Questions

from *Weaveworld*

1. What was seeking out and destroying the Seerkind that caused them to create the Weaveworld?
2. What was at the center of the Fugue?
3. What type animal did Cal raise?

from *The Great And Secret Show*

- 4a. Where did Randolph Ernest Jaffe work?
- 4b. In which state was it located?
- 5a. How many times in one's life does one visit Quiddity?
- 5b. When are those times?
6. What are the islands in Quiddity called?
7. Randolph Jaffe found a medallion of what group?
8. What is the name of the man Randolph Ernest Jaffe finds in the stone hut in the desert?
9. What event was the man in Trinity holding back in the Loop?
10. What substance caused Raul, Richard Fletcher and Randolph Jaffe to evolve?

**Damnation Game Answers:**  
 1-The Scourge 2- the Gyre 3- Racing Pigeons 4a- The Dead Letter Office  
 4b- Nebraska 5a- 2 or 3 times  
 5b- The first night you sleep out of the womb. The first night you lay  
 beside your true love. The last night of your life. 6- the Ephemeris 7- the  
 Shoal 8- Kisssoon 9- The detonation of the first atom-bomb. 10- the Nun-  
 cio

# Abarat Signing Tour Q&A

## Milwaukee, WI 10/6/2002

**Clive Barker:** Thank you for missing mass to come here. I have been doing a little Q&A at the beginning of these signings, because it's helped us to get any questions that people have about movies books or whatever out into the air, so that frankly, everybody doesn't repeat the same question when they come to see me. Like what's happened to the *Hellraiser* stuff, or "What? Walt Disney?" Whatever people are going to say. So the next 15 minutes is really an opportunity for us to just chat about anything that's on your mind about books, or movies, or television or whatever else. So let's just dig in to any thoughts you have.

**Question:** Since you are collaborating with Disney, what will be the movie format of *Abarat*?

**Clive Barker:** The first thing out of *Abarat*, as it were, will be a movie. There is some ambiguity as of yet if whether that will be a live action movie or an animated movie or a CGI mix of a movie. I don't think Disney quite knows yet. Or if they do know, they are not telling me.

They are also planning some television. Again I don't know what that will be. But the biggest thing in some ways to me, because it's the most exciting is the theme park. They had said to me with a bit of wonderfully Disneyesque casualness. "We'd like to put this into our theme park. We'd like *Abarat* to be part of our theme park. Actually we have an island you can use."

And I said "OK, where do I sign?"

Apparently they have some island which is, at present, unused where *Abarat* will be. So that's kind of fun. I think this will be an ongoing process. I'm going to make an *Abarat* book once every two years. The paperback of this book will come out this time next year in full colour. Which will again be nice to be able to have a full colour paper. Then, the following autumn, volume two and so on. I will do nothing until those books are finished. My commitment is that in six years time we will have the quartet finished and delivered. It's an object of great obsession for me right now.

**Question:** Will there be any stories or movies for the cenobites from the *Tortured Souls*?

**Clive Barker:** Oh yes. *Tortured Souls* just for anybody in the room who doesn't know, Todd McFarlane and myself produced six creatures, monstrous hellish creatures called *Tortured Souls* for Todd's toy line and they sold out in three weeks. And so we are doing another six on the 26th of October of this year. I sold them to Universal as a movie project last Halloween. I actually sent the toys to the heads of the studios on Halloween Day. I think Halloween was a Friday, and I said "Happy Halloween from Clive Barker would you like to make a movie?" And we ended up doing a deal with Universal by the evening. So yes, we are hopefully going to make a series of movies for these creatures.

**Question:** Are you going to follow the stories from the toys as a script for the movie?

No, the story in the toys we will think of as a kind of back history. Its ingredients, its epic back-story is violent. We will reference it but the story which we that I have written for the first movie is kind of localized and I think very scary.

**Question:** Can you say anything about *Saint Sinner*?

**Clive Barker:** *Saint Sinner* comes out on the 26th of October at 9 o'clock on the Sci Fi Channel. It's as tough and as scary a thing as the standards, rights, and practices of television will allow us to be. I am very proud of it. Patrick Tatopoulos, who did the special effects for *Independence Day* and *Godzilla*, did the effects for us. We have this wonderful new fellow called Christopher Lennertz, who did a wonderful score for us. A lot of very sexy fun people playing demons and monks. And it has two wonderful villainesses in it. I love writing about villainesses. There are two really bad ladies from hell in this one and so that's great. That will happen, as I say, on the 26th. We'll see, if people like it, then we'll certainly do a series

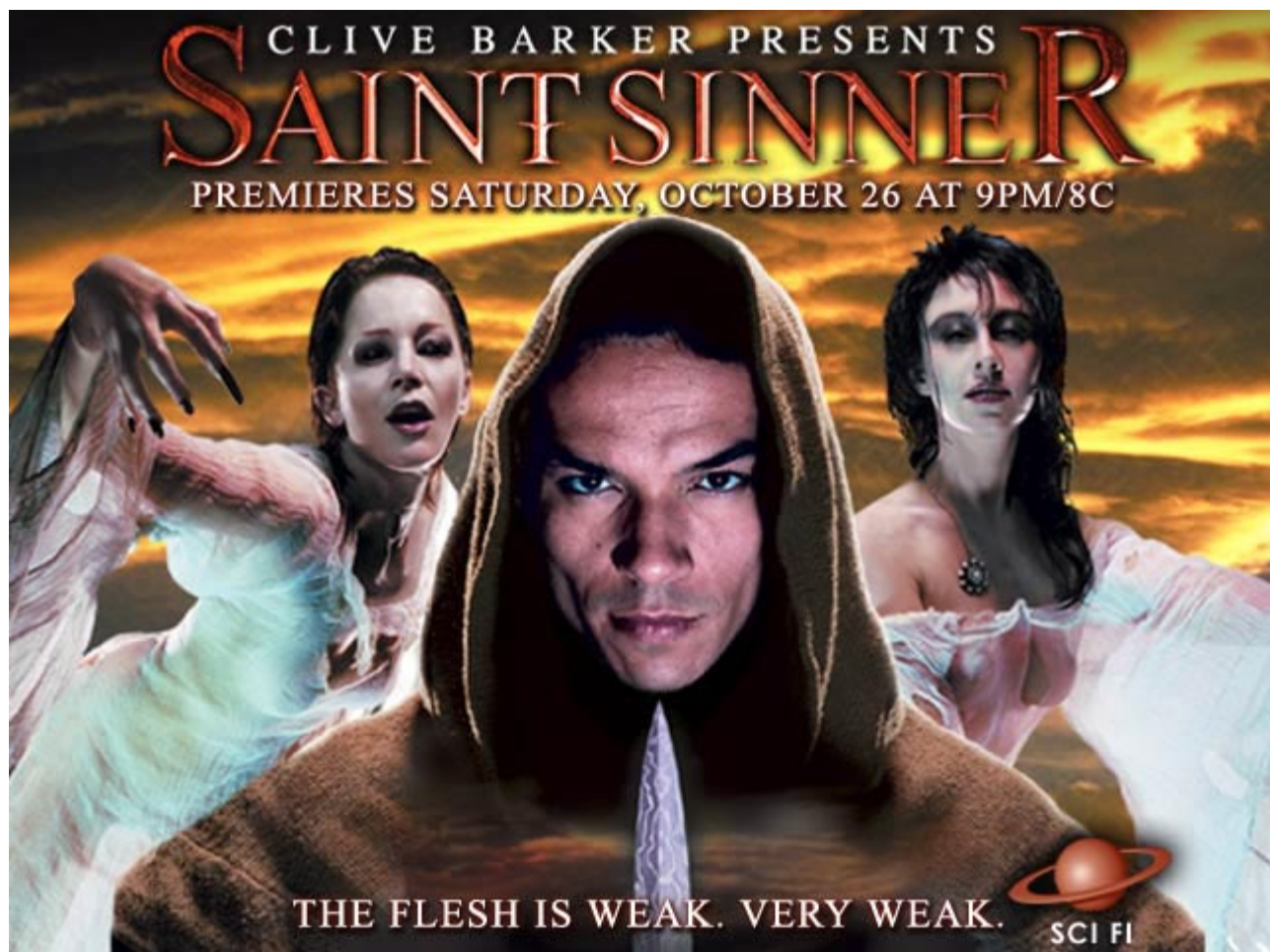
**Question:** Will we ever see a director's cut of *Nightbreed*?

**Clive Barker:** We will see a director's cut of *Nightbreed*. This becomes more and more likely because for the last 2 or 3 years, Fox who happens to have the material, 25 missing minutes, have claimed they could not find them. That they were somewhere in Fox's vaults and there wasn't a hope in hell of finding them.

Recently, and this is a very interesting thing that has happened in the advent of DVD's, a lot of people are putting their films back together again. There's a desire for people to rediscover material which was lopped off by its studio heads, very often in a very arbitrary fashion. What has appeared is a new form of bounty hunter, somebody who will go into these studio vaults and find the missing film. It's a great idea you know. You give me 10 percent of what the DVD makes and I will bring you your film dead or alive. So one of these fellows did that exact deal with me. He has said that he will go in, and he will find this material. So I am optimistic that it will actually be found. And once it is found we will do this.

**Question:** Will the novellas from *Tortured Souls* be released separately?

**Clive Barker:** At some point I will definitely publish the novellas from *Tortured Souls*. I feel a lot of stuff outstanding that has not yet been collected. There are a couple of stories called *Chilead*, which came in a book that was published called *Revelations*, which have not been collected. There are a few Harry D'Amour stories that have not been collected. I'd like at some point in the next six years while I'm concentrating on my



## **October 26<sup>th</sup> marked the premier of the SCI FI Channel's Saint Sinner.**

**If you're a fan of the Marvel comic don't expect  
to see a strict adaptation of the comic.  
Saint Sinner is more of an original idea  
from the mind of Clive Barker than an  
exact adaptation of the comic.**

**But you won't be disappointed.**

**For those of you without cable, Saint Sinner will be released  
later this year or early next year on DVD and VHS.**

**Clive Barker** talked with **SCI FI Wire** about the production of the **Saint Sinner** movie based on his Marvel/Epic comic of the same name. Clive spoke about the initial concept for the project, saying, “The notion was to create something that would be genuinely scary, but would also have a lot of style to it. I wanted to do something that would have a little metaphysics going for it as well.”

The movie features two villainesses, demons named Munkar and Nakir (played by actresses Mary Mara and Rebecca Harrell, respectively) who are followed into the present time by a monk, Brother Tomás (played by Greg Serano), who accidentally released them. The setup allows for some interesting possibilities. “The fun of that lies not only in the fact that the demons are appearing in our time, and that they therefore have to learn about what this world is really like,” Barker said, “But also that we have a chance to create two villainesses. When you get two Lady Macbeths, if you will, together, they can be some real fun.

“Even in the title, we’re playing with some pretty heavy ideas. And that very much fits with the novels I’ve written and the movies I’ve been involved in. ... Because the monsters are treated

very seriously, whether they are human monsters or inhuman monsters, they linger in people’s imaginations perhaps longer than if the tongue is in the cheek ... I think something that horror movies have always had to offer

audiences, particularly young audiences, has been this idea that you can tell these primal tales, which really have some authority to them as tales of good and evil...



“When [Tomás] speaks of God and faith and death and, in the end, redemption, [21st-century people] sort of roll their eyes. In fact, those are things which we’re all in our hearts concerned about, I think. We sort of lost the vocabulary along the way. We’re embarrassed by the vocabulary. And one of the

things that horror stories have always allowed us to do is brush off that vocabulary, allow us to return to the notion of absolute good and absolute evil. The notion of redemption. The notion of deeds that are too terrible to be recounted except in whispers, and how they can be made good. And those sorts of ideas, in a curious way, are more pertinent since a certain event than ever. We’ve seen these terrible things going on in our world, and we have little but a secular response to it, and that’s perhaps regrettable.”



**The Story** [From the SCI FI Channel](#)

*Saint Sinner* begins in a secluded monastery at the northernmost reaches of the California Mission chain in 1815. **Brother Tomas**, a handsome novice monk, enjoys a quiet life at the very edge of civilization. His idyllic existence changes with the ominous arrival of **Father Michael**, a distinguished emissary sent by Pope Pius VII. Although Rome officially broke ties with Tomas' Order years earlier, the Holy See privately recognizes that the Order's ongoing mission is vital: it serves as the secret repository for all evil and unnatural objects collected by the Church, which places the accursed items there for s a f e k e e p i n g .

This time, Father Michael has traveled far to deliver yet another extremely dangerous parcel into the Order's care: a small, ancient statue depicting two beautiful women. Father Michael warns Tomas that the women are imprisoned demons who were trapped by Saint Nicodemus of Alexandria in 1260. Even handling the object is forbidden, Michael cautions the young novice, because the demons' escape would lead to unspeakable perversions and devastation.

Father Michael hands over the demonic relic to the monastery's **Abbot**, who consigns it to the underground repository, a huge room crowded with the evil artifacts accumulated by the Church throughout the centuries. Dominating the chamber is the great **Wheel of Time**. Carved of dark, gleaming bronze and adorned with elaborate arcane etchings, the Wheel was created by a monk of Tomas' own Order who desired to travel in time to the most significant moments in Christianity's history.

That same night, Tomas and his friend, **Brother Gregory**, sneak back into the dark repository to get a better glimpse at the alluring, new "forbidden" relic. Unwittingly, they unleash its captive demons. After centuries of imprisonment, evil is let loose upon the world to wreak deadly havoc. In a bloody rampage, the seductive creatures feed on the life essence of Brother Gregory, then flee to the future using the Wheel of Time.

Brother Tomas is given the chance to redeem himself by pursuing the creatures and quelling the nightmare he has unleashed. He follows them through the Wheel into the 21st century. And though feeling overwhelmed by the modern world, Tomas tracks down the two demons to present-day Seattle — where they inflict unimaginable horrors on hapless victims. Although the police arrest Tomas as a suspect in the first of the murders committed by the demons, Tomas finally convinces **Rachel Dressler**, a no-nonsense police detective, that he holds the key to stopping the gruesome rampage. In due course, Tomas struggles to awaken extraordinary mystical powers within himself as he teams up with Det. Dressler to track down the beautiful-but-deadly demons and put an end to their carnage.





# CAST

GREG SERANO ..... Brother Tomas  
GINA RAVERA ..... Det. Rachel Dressler  
MARY MARA ..... Munkar  
REBECCA HARRELL ..... Nakir  
ANTONIO CUPO ..... Brother Gregory  
JAY BRAZEAU ..... Abbot  
SIMON WONG ..... Wade  
BOYAN VUKELIC ..... Playland Guard  
BRIAN DRUMMOND ..... Officer #1  
PETER BRYANT ..... Officer #2  
LISA DAHLING ..... Officer #3  
KRIS POPE ..... Brother Rafael  
ROBIN MOSSLEY ..... Clark  
DONNA YAMAMOTO ..... Irate Mother  
JUSTINE WONG ..... Little Girl  
DAVID THOMSON ..... Vince

# PRODUCTION CREW

directed by  
JOSHUA BUTLER

director of photography  
BARRY DONLEVY

costume designer  
TERRI BARDON

screenplay by  
DORIS EGAN  
HANS RODIONOFF

editor  
SEAN ALBERTSON

special effects coordinator  
ROB PALLER, EXTREME  
SPECIAL EFFECTS

based on the short story by  
CLIVE BARKER

original music by  
CHRISTOPHER LENNERTZ

creature design & fabrication  
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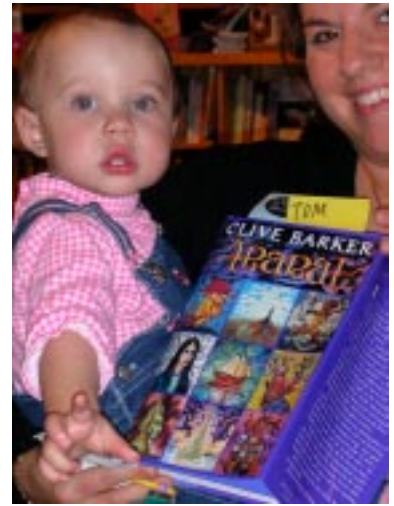
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# Ararat

Tour Photos



Photos:  
Courtesy of David Armstrong

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*J. Is Anderson*

# Curious Fish

For Steve, an artist in every sense of the word.

Branches swaying in the early morning darkness cut crazed shadows in the luminescence of the street light across the floorboards and danced across his chest, a mixture of blood and sweat and delirious light. His eyes were murky slits. A faint moan escaped from behind his gag. A dark stain seeped down the wall behind his head to soak the floral sheets and run down the mattress to puddle, to be absorbed by the dry splintered floor.

She had restrained him with piano wire as a deterrent from struggling. The evidence of exposed tendons and bone showed her advice had gone unheeded. The wind in the branches sounded like rain as the storm subsided outside the candlelit room. With feline detachment she sat smoking, wrapped loosely in a burgundy satin robe. She watched the lavender curls dissipate in the stale air, regarded the corpse (or soon to be corpse) and made a mental note to call Didier. She crushed out the cigarette, reached over and picked up a vial of tiny white pills. She knew all too well that she shouldn't be ignoring her medication, and although her moods had been unpredictable, the nausea had subsided. She replaced the vial and turned on the radio next to her. *I once had a girl, or shall I say, she once had me?* George Harrison's tangy sitar sliced through the humid air. She turned it off quickly. *Jesus, are these people over sick to death of those guys? I certainly am, the whole fucking country for that matter.*

She lit another cigarette and waited.

Seducing this young thing back to her place had been a cinch; a few drinks, a lazy flip of her hair and a promise of pleasures beyond his wildest fantasies. She watched his reactions, the lusty gaze he ran over her body and knew this was a *sure thing*. *Oh, yeah*, she thought to herself, *he wants it. But then again*, she mused with a impish grin, *don't they all?* She knew her intentions even before they left the club, but so did the others in the know at The Danse Macabre.

A secret club, reminiscent of the Speak Easies during Prohibition, The Danse Macabre was carefully guarded by those worthy of admittance; vampires out for a taste of nightlife, brutal criminals, connoisseurs of sexual deviance that flirted with insanity. The hard-core of society's lunatic fringe came here to play and anything desired was on the menu.

It had been Didier who first introduced her to this gathering of oddities with a stern warning that she was to leave with no one, regardless of the conditions and under no circumstances. She laughed at his upright tone thinking that this was some over-zealous concern or misplaced jealousy.

"What if the place is on fire?" she jibbed. He shot her an exasperated look.

"No, not even then. Burn or get out. Just get out alone." She cast him an incredulous glance. "Fire can have a strange effect on people," he said. Although deeply in his debt, she scoffed at this. *Bless his tight little heart*, she thought as he opened the door to this Wonderland of Debauchery. After witnessing The Danse Macabre, she heeded his warning.

It's understood that as a courtesy to fellow patrons one brings guests to the club. Most often these guests or "toys" as they're referred to here are met earlier in the evening, perhaps fed a few drinks and enticed to venture to another hot spot where the music and crowd are much more exciting. Upon entering the 'Macabre, rarely are they heard from again. The few that escape, a rare occurrence, tell horrendous tales of terror and bizarre visions that are commonly dismissed as drug-induced hallucinations. The Danse Macabre is a hunting ground. The weak and unknowing are lured and used to satisfy the urges of the Members.

In a curious and cavalier way, this repulsed and yet intrigued her. She was part of the clique, privy to private information. Membership here among the Masters and Mistresses of Perversion made her a Predator Extrodinaire. Vivian had an insatiable taste for adventure and power and with manic determination pursued her fantasies. Once fulfilled, another more perverse followed in it's wake. Vivian Juene commanded attention, thrived on control and had learned that the ultimate control was to possess mastery of fear. Fear that went beyond pages of a book, fear beyond that of the screen, fear that crept into the flesh. Fear she could smell and taste and direct.

Didier had fascinated her from the moment they met at her apartment. Even

through her exhaustion, he was spellbinding. Quiet and brooding, he was the pure image of a Bohemian; a shock of black hair, unkempt, unshaven, but his eyes, his eyes that drifted around the taking in all the sights, were magnetizing. His gaze rested on family photos, her work propped up on a make-shift easel, the clothes scattered around the room. In that gaze was a recognition of *who she was and what she did*. Didier was there for a purpose, but his glances were those of one taking notes of a secret life. He was deliberate and methodical as he went about fulfilling the favor of disposing of one of her toys. Quietly he went to her bedroom and fleetingly, before he closed the door behind him, she caught a glimpse of what Didier was seeing; a body bounded and gagged it's abdomen gaping with gore. This toy had been commanded, controlled and ultimately, destroyed.

There came a shuffling sound of Didier's feet on that unforgiving floor, something metallic, and then only silence. As instructed, Vivian did not disturb him. It was made clear that he worked alone and she sat curled in a chair smoking heavily waiting for the door to open.

Vivian had gone to The 'Macabre a number of times in the last few months, had a drink or two, chatted with him and felt she had somewhere to belong. He often mentioned that he'd be delighted to have her visit his studio.

"After all, I've come to see you. You ought to return the favour." His expression was unreadable. Was he being polite, or was there something more in that invitation? She never declined his request outright, but thought it wiser to wait.

The intrigue was there, the physical attraction was something she couldn't deny, but assuming he felt the same could prove hazardous.

Besides the physical attraction, Didier's history peaked her curiosity. He was an artist. A Real artist. A Paid artist. For as long as she could remember she wanted to be an artist and witnessing someone, especially as mesmerizing as Didier, doing what she pursued, was intoxicating. His stories about the Art World as he called it were enchanting. When asked, he would state simply his style was Classicist, an admirer of Michelangelo.

He was the son of an Italian financial officer and a French diplomat. Coming to England years ago to study art and finding the climate suited him, here he remained instead of returning to Naples. His love of dreary fog and late day showers served to captivate her

more. He had invited her to The "Macabre perhaps she thought as a toy, but finding she was cut from a similar cloth, showed her the survival tactics required here. Now that she knew the structure of The Danse Macabre she was free to mingle. Her last few excursions were purely social and after scanning the room thoroughly, she left alone bidding Didier a good night as he held the door open for her.

Tonight, however, was different. This was no social visit. The storm that pelted her windows and soaked the ground in a fury of lightning crashes and thunder rolls woke the Predator in her. Tonight, she wanted Control. A fury coiled around her stomach. A tangible living breathing thing deep within her commanded her body, watched her dress, whispered in menacing tones that it would have nothing less than full satisfaction. And then Vivian would rest.

She woke that morning to an azure sky deliciously high and stepped in to the shower. She washed, soaping her body with elegant milled soap feeling hr texture of her skin. Her fingers covered in satiny foam massaged the lather in to her shoulders, her breasts down each arm, her stomach. She slipped those tapered fingers inside her body. She rinsed and turned on the tub faucet. Laying back against the warm porcelain she opened herself to the stream. The spray hit her face, her thighs as the steam welled up around her body. She stroked her hair back and directed the water where she needed it. Hunger enveloped her like madness. Her fingers held her open for this assault and stroked her like velvet. The delicious heat pouring from the tap sent her hips in to a frenzy. Her muscles tightened, released, tightened, released and she came hard. She lay on the porcelain panting. Good, but not good enough, The Predator judged.

She hadn't known until his last throes that it would go this far. This young man lashed with piano wire, his vision fading, his member still wet, had met The Predator. And Death, that permanent blindfold was slowly being tied about him.

She drew on her cigarette again deeply letting the smoke curl out her nostrils in to the muted shadows. She'd see his face again; on flyers around campus, on a brief news story of another missing youth in a never-ending parade of runways, kidnappings and simple disappearances. His body, after Didier was done, would never be recovered. She crushed out the cigarette as she flipped open her directory. Didier's number was untitled; no name, just an exchange in Guildford jotted out on a well-thumbed page.

## II: Still Water

The following weeks were gray and filled with drizzle, typical of this dreadful country she despised. The constant misting had gone on for days, not heavy enough to command an umbrella, just annoying enough to ruin a hairstyle and augment her depression. Just when she thought she'd had as much as she could stand, the skies opened in a cleansing fury that soaked the earth and pelted the creatures that dared oppose it.

Friday evening found her at the 'Macabre's doorway, her scarlet umbrella announcing her arrival. She slipped out of her trench coat, Didier's hands helping her, lingering on her shoulders. The club was sedate, but it was early yet. The 'Macabre didn't start rocking until well after midnight.

She recognized a few of the patrons that glanced her way when she entered; a thing balding man with sniper sharp eyes she had heard referred to as both Jack and Paul, by her estimation, a probable child molester with more than a few kills under her belt; Lynne, a beautiful young woman with dark eyes and high cheekbones. An aura of androgyny hung about her much the way the hint of incense did as she passed by. Tonight she was clad in black leather, from which impossibly long legs stretched. Her eyes were holed so heavily that her nationality couldn't be guessed at. Vivian supposed that there was a touch of the orient in her blood, but perhaps that was wishful thinking. Vivian had been tempted more than once to approach her, but kept to Didier's advice. *After all*, she reminded herself as she moved her gaze over those beautiful legs, *you never know about people*. She had never seen Lynne leave with anyone, but her graceful movements suggested discretion. If anything, it appeared Lynne's role, whether employed or self-appointed, was to move from table to table laughing and beguiling those held in her presence. A party girl, the one to entice people to relax, order another drink, and slip into a sense of well-being that could ultimately prove to be their demise. *She and I*, Vivian thought, *could have similar tastes in pleasure*; Nigel, the barkeep, as always wiped glasses. His fluidity suggested comfort, however his demeanor was so foreign to such an environment. Straight-laced, proper, he was the picture of the perfect butler. His hair neat and groomed, his expression unreadable. With a nimbleness of familiarity his slid the sparkling glasses base first into the overhead hanging rack; And of course, Didier, minding the door.

After Didier slid off her coat and hung it in an adjacent room she thanked him, their eyes lingering in each other's a moment too long. She strolled off to a table in the

corner. Looking up, Nigel acknowledged her and made a gesture. She nodded as he began to pour a drink.

Her eyes found Didier again. Propped up on a stool near the entrance, he was more desirable than any man she had ever seen. Under his clothing lay a fine sculpted body. He wore simple jeans and a white T-shirt cinched with a worn brown leather belt. The light caught the buckle when he shifted and she caught herself staring into the crevices of his trousers. The warm wet feeling spread into her stomach. She raised her gaze to find he was looking at her. A blush crept up her face as she turned quickly to accept the drink delivered to the table.

She thought back to the moment she met Didier and the strange turn of events that brought her here. It had been early March that she ventured to The Student Union on campus for a smoke and a cup of tea before a two o'clock lecture. There, as she reviewed some notes, she was approached by a girl. She was a new student, recently transferred from Hollis College, majoring in Fine Arts who had recognized Vivian from an earlier seminar. She was fresh, blonde and blue eyed; Vivian's opposite, and indiscreet with her attraction to Vivian. A curious come-hither lingered behind those eyes, and although not her preferred sex, Vivian found herself oddly enticed by this young woman. Her name was Christina. With a borrowed pen, she jotted down her name and number and handed it to Vivian saying that they'd have to get together sometime. Next week there was a Mapplethorpe showing and asked if Vivian was interested in going. Vivian supplied a non-committal answer but pocketed the number saying she'd see her around campus.

That night, after a devastating argument with Michael, a long-time boyfriend until tonight, Vivian poured a strong drink, one more of vodka than juice. She put some smoky jazz on the dusty turntable and sat to roll a joint. There, going through the motions of measuring out her little secret pleasure, she contemplated the dark. The combination of smoke and drink made her euphoric, leaving Michael and his petty problems behind. Mellowed and somewhat drowsy she picked up a piece of charcoal and began scratching out figures on vellum. A light knock from down the hallway stopped her. After letting Christina in from the incessant rain, they both sat and drank.

"...and since I was in there area, I thought I'd drop by. I mean, the light was on, so I just thought you might want some company," she hesitated. "Besides," she continued, settling herself on the couch

assuming a casual pose with her arm thrown across the back, "there's still that Mapplethorpe thing that you didn't really answer me about."

Vivian sat watching Christina's lips form around words. Her teeth were gorgeous melting around perfectly pouty lips. She felt the urge stalking inside her like an intruder slinking in the shadows of the dusky room. Vivian knew at once Christina shouldn't stay, but couldn't bear to be left alone to sit in darkness. The storm had kicked up again in reminder of what she felt inside. They both had been drinking, Christina mentioned, so it was best that she stay put. Christina stripped off her oversized sweatshirt to reveal nothing more than a pale peach t-shirt. She wore nothing underneath it. Vivian could see Christina's nipples hardening slightly under the cotton fabric. The decision made, Christina had relaxed visibly, but she didn't hear the padding of the Predator's paws, the horrible whispers, and Vivian was powerless to intervene.

Vivian had been rough with her, far rougher than she anticipated but the during the act itself, Vivian was mesmerized at the peculiar detachment that overcame her. Vivian, a spectator at some dark erotic film, sat quietly in the shadows of her mind as the Predator took over.

She played willingly to Christina's kisses, sucking and playfully biting that gorgeous bottom lip. Her skin was soft and she smelled clean. Her shoulders tasted sweet as Vivian ran her tongue down the crevice of her neck. The living room foreplay grew in intensity, but the bedroom altered the dynamics of this encounter. Quickly, in familiar territory, it was Vivian or a part of her anyway, that had the upper hand. It was then the Predator reared it's head. From the quiet of the theater, Vivian heard herself suggest something Christina would really like, but it took trust.

"And you do trust me, don't you? I mean, to show up here," straddling her she ground her hips into Christina's, "in the middle of the night," she reached over to the side of the bed, recovering something Christina couldn't make out in the darkness, "hoping what's happening would happen. You *do* trust me," Christina gazed up at Vivian taking in her stormy eyes and ran her hands up Vivian's thighs. "Don't you?"

"What did you have in mind?" she asked almost coyly.

Within the theater, Vivian averted her eyes, but knew her body, her seemingly disembodied hands were reaching for one of her favorite devices; leather. Leather that bound, leather that constricted, leather in it's

soft buttery texture that at once was supple and then, inescapable.

Bondage, the stuff of dirty movies and unspoken fantasies achieved it's desired effect. Christina was moaning, swaying her hips as Vivian's tongue danced between her legs. A calmness overcame the room, filled only with Christina's tortured breathing coming in short gasps when Vivian stopped. The wrists secured to the bedposts pulled and tugged in wild anticipation, hands clutched empty air and finding solid ground left half-moon imprints on her palms as her nails dug into her own flesh in ecstasy.

Vivian heard her name called. It was from far away and rang unfamiliar on her ears as the beast emerged from between Christina's legs. In it's hand it held a scourge. Around it's base wrapped Vivian's hand in loose familiar grip, the tails silhouetted themselves against the glow of the window's light. They danced with a power of their own. They both stopped moving. Vivian's eyes rested on Christina waiting for her eyes to open. The Predator had to see it register on her face. It wanted, no, *needed* to cherish that moment when pleasure turned to fear and, ultimately, pain, then the pain to rise to the validation of power, the validation turn to surrender.

Christina in lazy intoxication pulled herself up closer to the pillows, resting her head, sighing deeply. She may have said something. Something husky and throaty but the words did not register in the Predator's ears. Her eyes flickered open, settled on Vivian and with a questioning tone went from her face to the whip and back. The effect was nearly comical. Then, it registered. Ah, yes, then it registered.

"OK", there it was, "no, I'm not into that kind of thing. Tying me up is fine. It's different, kinda cool, but that," she made a motion towards the scourge with her chin, "is too different. I'm not into pain. I'm not that kinky." The Predator raged, something warm and wild stirred in the room.

"You are now."

The scourge came down again and again slashing her breasts, her arms and stomach. Then, through screams that no one heard, the hilt was used to dash out the pulp in her head. The blows came without rhythm in a frenzy of torture.

Vivian collapsed on to the carnage, her arms burning, muted colors of blues and grays swirling before her eyes. The Predator sated with it's fill of lust and control and command drifted back to lazy hibernation, leaving Vivian with the responsibility of

disposal.

Vivian, the good keeper, made a few phone calls, pulled a favour here and there, and with the introduction of Didier in to her life, was able to keep herself from harm, at once denying the Predator's existence, and knowing that it was of her making. She thought once that perhaps it wasn't such a good idea that she's been skipping doses again.

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The 'Macabre was now throbbing with music pumping from amplifiers mounted in every conceivable nook and cranny of the club. Still, she sat alone, laughter and animated chatter ringing in the air. Even among a crowd, she was hollow and isolated. The steady rhythmic breathing of the beast within was of no comfort.

She had once or twice toyed with the idea of possible schizophrenia, but comprehending her coherence during those times she let this alter ego take over confirmed her belief that it was truly was her own doing. Vivian was the beast, something else allowed her to walk through Mundania as a functioning member of a society that hid in the shadows from it's own dark side. The same people who would gasp and stare at the atrocities she'd committed allowed their own perverse fantasies to be played out in the flicker of a television screen or on stage at some seedy skin club. They would gawk at traffic accidents and regale the details to friends and neighbors of blood and twisted metal all the time gleefully exclaiming how horrible it all was, but couldn't look away. When she allowed herself to think of it (which wasn't often) she prided herself on being a woman of action, a woman of power. Some do, and some watch, but we all partake in one way or another.

She looked to Didier again, his body straining against the denim. *He knows*, she thought, *He's been inside my world. He knows.* Theirs was a deep alliance. Some strange intimacy had occurred between them. She could see it in his eyes, the way he moved around her like a secret lover in a crowded room. That gaze was unmistakable.

At one time another man had shared intimate thoughts. With Michael gone, she drifted. When he had left, so had her balance, her sense of what was right and wrong. Somehow he gave her a security that kept the beast at bay, or at least took away the ferocious edge of desire. He managed to make her promise to keep taking the "meds" as he called the pills, and she had. For awhile.

"But you don't understand," she had

whinned, "they make me so sick and dizzy. Would you keep taking shit that made you throw up all the time?"

He sighed on the other end of the line. "I know, Hon, but they told you those are some of the side effects. I've seen you on the meds and I've seen you off. I like you better on them. You know they even you out."

How she hated that term "even you out" he used with her. It made her seem incomplete without the pills. "Viv, they're good for you. They make sure you don't..."

"Go crazy?" She supplied sarcastically. He was quiet.

Michael had been intrigued my her mind, her art, her creativity, her off-kilter way of looking at the world, but had never completely understood her. To her spontaneity, he kept a tight schedule, to her wild flights of fancy, he was tried and true. The sex, which had come early in the relationship was good and fun, but he never gave in to her "deviance" as he termed it. Perhaps that's why he was still working at his father's shop instead of becoming another victim of Vivian's horrible appetite. Vivian knew he was never in danger really, Michael's smooth voice could positively charm her and dampen any fires burning under the surface of her skin. Under his control, Vivian was a quite pliable, if not skilled, lover. But time and distance, the bane of all relationships, took it's toll and Michael had made the phone call.

Now she was left to her own devices.

She looked to the tumbler of scotch sweating on the table in front of her and focused on the engraving it nearly covered. The table, like the rest here, was carved with seals from the Necronomicon. She traced the half moon figure with her fingertip, recognized the symbol, but couldn't name it.

A lively game of Cleavers was taking shape in the back room. Men hurled butcher's tool at a corked human form. An occasional outburst of laughter drowned out the music and Didier's arrival at her table.

"Care for company?" She looked up but didn't answer. He slid into the booth across from her and eyed her. His gaze was penetrating, she could feel it crawl down her face, her neck, her breasts. "No offense, Lovey, but you don't look good. What are you doing here anyway? Certainly can't be trolling. Not with a puss on your face like that." His clipped Italian accent smattered with colloquialisms was strangely lyrical. The effect, however, was charming. She sighed

and let her shoulders slump.

"I don't know, Didier. I just don't know." The music slowed, couples gravitated towards the dance floor arm in arm to begin rotating in small circles to clutch at each other's waists and hair, to whisper promises of tonight's pleasures. "I can't explain it," she continued. "Nothing's peaked my interest in so long. I mean, I used to get off just being here, but now, it doesn't do it for me, you know?" She looked into eyes that didn't quite comprehend. "I go to class, I go home, I study and I draw and I go to sleep. I go to class, I go home..." She made a gesture of apathy. "I used to feel really in control, I don't know, somehow alive, vibrant. Now I just feel gray and dead."

A small soft "Ah." escaped his mouth, his eyes now glistening in understanding. He shifted his weight to lean closer across the table. She caught a slight scent of his cologne, sweet and musky that made her think of her morning escapade on the porcelain. Her stomach tightened. "Maybe it's time you went on to bigger and better things."

### III; Strange Lure

The suburban streets of Guildford were hushed and damp. Didier and Vivian traveled together without speaking. He, behind the wheel of the auto had reached over to stroke her hair, but there had been no suggestion of anything more. Vivian began to doubt her decision to take Didier's invitation back to his home. If Didier were planning to have sex with her, his body language read quiet differently; he was too composed. How many nights had she laid in bed thinking about this man? What did his mouth taste like? What was he like during the act? Was he passive? Aggressive? Did he have his own deviances? What? That fantasy's fruition loomed ahead of her.

He stopped the car, and lead her up the bricked walk to the cottage. Lovely gardens on either side seemed out of place, knowing Didier's secret skills. The house, covered in ivy with stained glass suncatchers in windows illuminated with Tiffany lamps, was charming. It was not anything that she expected Didier to call home. In her fantasies she envisioned contemporary clean lines, even a touch of Art Deco here and there. Even black velvet curtains with gold corded tiebacks were closer to her expectations, but certainly not country

charm. But then as he opened the door without a key, she reminded herself again that you never know about people. A soft stroking against her leg made her halt as she looked down in to the golden eyes of a yellow tabby cat as it brushed against her.

"Chaucer." said Didier nodding at the animal. The cat turned and disappeared in to the house. Vivian followed, her eyes sweeping the room. Didier reached out to catch her arm as she entered the cottage. Suddenly and smoothly he bent to kiss her. His smell, his taste, the sheer proximity of his body was more intense than Vivian had even imagined. His mouth opened hers, his tongue soft and smooth probed at hers. She encircled his head with her hands running them through his magnificent hair. He pulled away.

"Relax," he said, "there's honour among thieves." He turned to let her pass.

Didier Pasques made his way to the kitchen. She saw the light go on, heard him rummaging through a drawer and a moment later heard the sharp pop of a wine cork announcing the evening was taking on a different tone. She slipped off her shoes and curled up into a tufted chair by the fieldstone fireplace. The lighting here was muted and cast a glow that presented his artwork well. Various pieces, undeniably Didier's, scattered the walls. He had mentioned once that his preferred subject was nudes and that became evident with the extraordinary display. His pieces were mixed with Monets, Rembrants and a miniature *Bacchus* statue adorned the corner of the room. From her perch she could almost see the little god grin as he staggered under the effects of wine, the goat-hoofed boy snatching a grape from behind his lord's back. Didier appreciated fine art, talked about it passionately and displayed his collection proudly. At once Vivian was jealous and enthralled. *Perhaps*, she thought to herself, *one day he'll be displaying one of mine.*

One piece in particular caught her eye, the detail so fantastic, she looked more closely to see if it was a photograph. It was not. Done in stark black pencil, the simple clean lines brought the image to life as she'd never seen before. This was her vision of Pure Art, a sketch so perfect that it left the seer stunned by accuracy. The form lay on a bed, a sheet slightly ruffled around her. Her head was tilted back, arms outreached for something just beyond her grasp, and the expression. The expression! The shadowed face, although not heavily detailed suggested bewilderment and pleasure all at once. Didier had captured desire and frozen it on paper forever. A Pure Artist.

There was something about the face, something along the chin, the way the little teeth pouted out the bottom lip that was purely magical, and somehow familiar.

"Your drink." announced Didier's presence. Vivian, so engrossed in the sketch hadn't been aware he had been watching her. She accepted the glass handed to her as he settled himself on the sofa opposite her. They were both silent for a moment, sipping wine, gazing at each other. No matter what their conversation was about or how long it took, Vivian was keenly aware that this evening would end with the two of them passionately entwined. She smiled again wondering if they'd wait long enough to get to the bed room or whether they'd fall to the floor here.

His voice snapped her back from the vision.

"You seem nervous." he mused swirling the wine glass between perfectly tapered fingers. She suddenly realized that most of her encounters had been on her ground, turf familiar to her, which put the other at disadvantage. Here she was overcome with new settings, new smells, and was unfocused. Didier had the upperhand of familiarity. She hadn't responded and his eyes, pools of midnight rested on her. His small knowing smile made a blush creep up her face.

"Oh," she thought quickly, "I was thinking of something else." she lied.

"Really? What were you thinking?" he pressed, somehow amused at her verbal stumble.

"The sketch." She gestured towards the woman on the wall. "She just looks," she took a heavy breath in, "she just looks familiar." Didier regarded it and took another sip of wine.

"She should." he stated flatly, "It's one of yours."

He took a large swallow, nearly draining his glass. Vivian looked to the picture again.

"No, I didn't do this." She laughed. "I'm not that good. Besides, I never gave you anything." She stopped as his eyes rested on her again. It was then she understood. She looked back the picture. The pout, the arms, the head tilted back at a queer angle.

Christine.

She sat nursing her drink, somewhat stunned, but at what, she knew not. The fact that he sketched Christine? No, not that. The fact he had documented her kill? No, not even that. Perhaps it was his appreciation of her.

Didier's explanation was simple upon entering the room again.

"It was a lovely gift of beauty. Such

a shame," he said "you were so rough with her. There was an awful lot of improvisation to be done with that one." Vivian looked to the image again. She was a beauty and for all intents and purposes, Didier had done her justice. The wine had begun to effect her and her thoughts drifted off the woman and on to Didier.

He was a smooth conversationalist, fascinating as he was attractive. Although he was thin, he had a magnetism that suggested he was larger. Worldly, well-spoken, educated and wise in the ways of the art field and profession, she allowed her glass to be filled again, a healthy dose of the best wine she'd ever had, and was swept away in his stories.

When he come back from the kitchen again, he settled on the floor next to her chair. This was such a natural progression of the conversation that she hadn't noticed his hands on her feet until he began stroking them, coercing her on through her stories of how she had come to England to study art. He was massaging her feet now, a little pleasure very few men (or women for that matter) knew Vivian basked in. She kept up conversation, but when his mouth found her ankle, well-formed thoughts a moment ago, were lost completely.

He looked up. "Go on." She laughed shook her head.

"I forgot what I was rambling on about." She pushed her foot at him in jest. "You started that and I kind of went blank."

"Pity," he said softly.

He leaned back against her chair still cradling her foot in his lap and reached for his glass.

"Vivian, is that your real name?" he asked.

She looked at him questioningly. "Yes."

"Ah, it's French."

"I don't speak French."

"No? It's a beautiful language. All tongue and throat. Very beautiful, very melodic. How did you get the name?" He began rubbing her ankle, moving slowly up her calf. This motion did not go unnoticed.

"My mother read it in a book. A character, a heroine of some romance novel had it and I guess she liked it, so that's what they named me. It kind of goes along with my last name, although my father's family is German. Where Jeune came from is anybody's guess, there's a lot of broken branches on my family tree."

"Do you know what it means?"

"I don't speak French. I mean, I took a class years ago, but we never got beyond Common tally vous, if you know what I mean. Something about Life, I think."

"She Who Lives." he said.

"What?"

"She Who Lives." he repeated.

"Oh." The wine swirling around her brain made her responses numb.

"It's a symbol, Vivian, a metaphor, if you will. I like the name. It's a strong name. A name that carries weight." She suddenly was taken by his serious tone. He looked up at her, the wine making his eyes glisten.

"I know what you do. I've seen the work you've done."

"My art?"

"In a way." He hesitated, still cradling her leg, "Your Art is far more beautiful than what you see. It carries weight. It is significant."

She turned away, half in embarrassment, half in fear he would see the joy of the artist's compliment fall on her ears.

"So, do you?" he asked.

She looked down at him, tousled hair, onyx eyes searching hers.

"Do I what?"

"Do you live?"

She hesitated, knowing the question had many connotations to it. Before she answered, his hands reached out and brought her to floor as his lips crushed down on hers. This was all she had dreamed of, to be overcome by Artist, the man who had held her captive in dreams, the man immune from The Predator. He was Command personified. The man who could give her, Vivian, pleasure.

They lay there for minutes kissing, clutching, his hands ran through her hair, kissed her neck, her ears, her mouth. And again, he pulled away, leaving her breathless on the floor.

He say back drinking her in with his eyes. They became stern.

"You," he stated, "are so beautiful,," He adjusted his clothing. "but untrained." She sat up bewildered by his actions.

"Is there something wrong?" The Predator paced inside her ribcage. *Go away*, she willed it, *go away*. She gathered her thoughts.

"No," he cradled her chin in his hands, "nothing's wrong." his voice was lilting, suggesting something else.

"What?" he insisted.

"Vivian, Lord, I love saying that name. You're a sensual woman. I've seen the way you move, the way you dress, your entire demeanor. You walk into room and without saying a word, you scream 'See me. Take notice. You are in the presence of Glory.'" She screamed with laughter at this animation of her, knowing somewhere deep within that

he was right and in the same instant wondering if he was making a parody of her as they spoke. He continued on furthering her enthrallment. "You are curious."

She found a strength in her voice she didn't recognize, but the presence was welcome. "Not really."

"I'm willing to bet, if, of course, I were I betting man, that you love the stalk, you love seduction, the whole cat and mouse thing, you love the feel, no, the actual kill. You get off on it. Don't you? The kill. That's where you love it, and, of course", he cleared his throat, "the power." This blatant display of intimate knowledge of her made her stop laughing. He took her hand.

"Vivian, Vivian," he sighed as he kissed her throat, "the things I could show you."

She rested on her elbows and looked to him.

"Like what?" she asked with feigned innocence. He simply smiled and alighted the stairs, leaving her with two options; Follow or leave. *Fight or flight*, she mused. Her decision made, she killed the light as she took to the staircase.

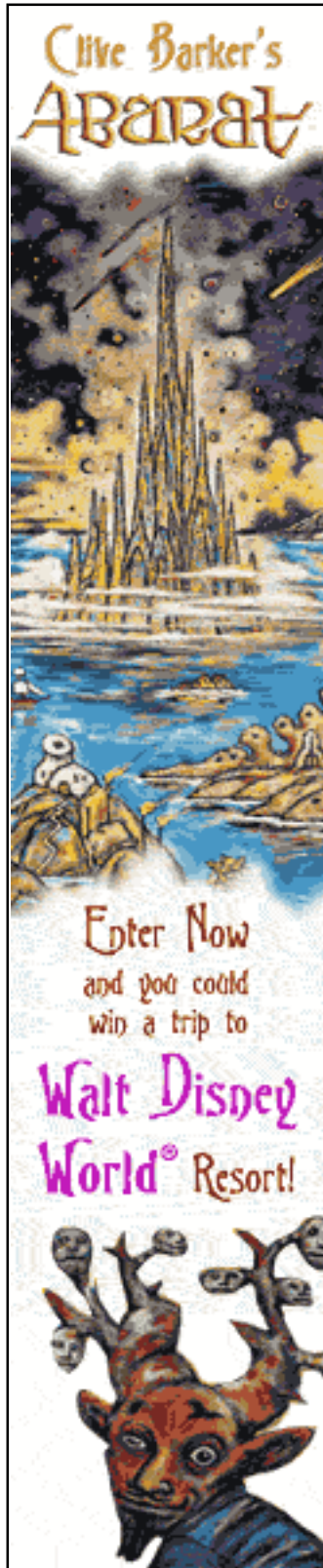
Only the slight sounds of movement betrayed where Didier's bedroom lay. From the doorway she saw a flame dance to life as he went about the room lighting creamy tapers in the corner.

He went to her almost trance-like again cradling her head between his hands as he kissed her. There was no rush to this scene, no impassioned frenzy as expected. If Didier were nervous, he certainly didn't show it. Her shallow breathing, however, gave her away. He reached out and put his hand near her breast.

"You're heart's fluttering like a little bird in a cage." He stepped away and sat on the bed taking in her body. "You're a beautiful creature. You lack discipline, however." Didier's smooth nonchalance had crept back in to his voice. "Vivian, I've watched you. I mean really *watched* you." His eyes were shadowed like those of a skull's eye sockets, but the look was still penetrating. "I've watched you seduce, I've watched the faces of those who've wanted you, lusted after you. I've seen the morning after." She thought of Christine. "But I've always been a bit curious about what you were like, excuse the terminology, please, between the sheets." His blatant statement of intentions were at once arousing and somehow unsettling. He took a deep breath in. "Get undressed."

She looked at him. *Cat and mouse*, she thought, *I can play this game*. Now there





was no hesitation in her actions. She reached for the buttons on her blouse and slowly began to disrobe. *If Didier wants an exhibition, he's gonna to get one.* She stripped off her blouse, the black lace bustier was stark against her pale skin, but the effect was not lost on Didier. A low sound emitted from his throat, one, she registered of approval. Her hands went to the snaps on her leather skirt and let it fall to the floor as she stepped out of it. She stood in front of him displaying the goods of her flesh, knowing the dish in front of him was far too tempting to pass up.

She took this moment to scan the room not only to gain bearings, but to add to the effect of detached interest she hoped to show him. This was more what she imagined Didier to own; mahogany woodwork, deep hunter greens, rich burgundies and various candles of all different shapes and sizes. The somber tones seemed more to suit the Didier she had envisioned. Delicate lighting shimmered off a bas-relief reflected in a gilded frame mirror. The Madonna, La Pieta, she recognized, emerging from snowy white marble nursed her Holy Infant.

"Well done." he said coolly. "Come here."

She walked to the bed feeling her stomach tighten, the anticipation growing. He laid her down and began to strip her further as his mouth explored the textures of her skin. She languished in this experience, wanting to hold this feeling, this wonderful experience forever. When she was nude, a puppet in his hands subdued with kisses, he spoke.

"You're amazing. Everything about you." She laughed quietly. "Except for one small point." She stopped the gentle caressing across his back and opened eyes. "You're sloppy, Vivian." She looked up as insult registered on her face. "Your kills." he explained "They're messy. With the right training, you could be one of the best."

"What are you talking about?"  
"Discipline, Vivian, discipline. You need it."

She made to prop herself up on the bed, rage suddenly developing in her stomach where a moment ago there was only passion. He stopped her. She writhed under him but he held her wrists quite suddenly. His strength was quite amazing she found, although her resistance was not all she could muster. It wasn't until she found herself being bound to the bedposts that she genuinely struggled. By then, it was far too late. She recognized the knots; she used them herself. Struggle, they became that much tighter. His motions were swift and in an instant he had bound her and

rolled off her body in a fluid motion. Over her exposed body he smiled his lips pulled back in a predatorial grin. Her breath came in halting gasps as she thought back to the young man she had secured. Didier hadn't used piano wire. Instead, these knots bound her with silk. In the candle light, the flames flickered off the deceptively innocent white material. This was surreal. This couldn't be happening to her. The Predator couldn't be trapped so easily. She tugged once again and feeling the knots tighten, relinquished her fight.

Didier was stripping off his T-shirt, unhitching his belt. In this light, his skin glowed. She thought quickly.

"So, you're in to this thing?" she said,

"Not really," he answered, "but you are. This seems like a good place to start." He remove his denims and stood naked in front of her. "Relax, Lovey, there's honor among thieves. I won't hurt you." He lit another taper and placed it on the table next to the bed. "Unless you beg me to."

He leaned over her, checked the ties and finding them secure, went to work on her body. His mouth was hot and alive, tongue so skilled that he had her writhing in minutes despite fear, despite rage. He was slow, methodical, knowing just what it took to exact the precise desired response.

After spending much time traveling her, Didier leaned over her.

"This," he whispered hotly into her ear "is where you learn discipline." He stopped and seemed to consider something. "Scream all you want. I've had the room sound-proofed." He nibbled quickly on her ear, a playful, somewhat painful tug and moved away.

She watched as he leaned over and grabbed a bottle, none like she'd ever seen. In the fireglow it burned in a devilish cobalt blue. It's stopper fashioned from the body of a naked woman, her frosted glass arms stretched out in acceptance. From between her legs emerged the container and upon being pulled from the bottle, a long clear extractor coated in thick oily liquid.

His tongue curled around the dropper as his eyes took in her body and strange light filled them. He began at her stomach tracing small kisses around her navel, his hands running down the lengths of her legs. He moved lower and with careful deliberation brought her knees up and spread them apart. He opened her like exotic fruit and immediately his mouth went to work on her sex, his tongue uncovering every fold. His hands were rough but that went unnoticed through the pleasure and the wetness.

Didier held her open for a time taking pleasure to dart his tongue in to her, running his fingers down her thighs. Under this command she writhed in want of penetration, but he was content with his exploration

And then came the bees.

The burn was slight at first, but built quickly. In an instant a vacuous longing to be filled seethed with insurmountable heat. Not so much pain, but burning. A burning, a want between her legs that seemed to overpower her. It was arousal that went beyond her comprehension. She didn't long for this Artist's body, his tool, any longer, she wanted only fulfillment of this ache.

She looked up at him through her bewilderment. "What's wrong? What's happening?" she asked frantically.

"Nothing's wrong," he replied flatly as he leaned against the wall, her legs strewn wide over his. She followed his eyes to The Madonna. He seemed lost in the bas-relief as the storm raged through her. Her inner thighs, her sex, her stomach burned where Didier had kissed her. Sweat poured from her brow as the bees, the hungry sting languished on. *What has he done? Let me out. Oh, God, please make this end.*

"I can't take this," she pleaded. "Make love me. Please, Didier, make love to me. Fuck me, what ever you call it, make this stop. Please!" He grinned at this. "Make it stop. I'm begging, are you happy? Any way you want. Just make it stop." She tugged at the ties over her head knowing at once that it would bring her no freedom, nor rush him into action, but the movement was instinctual.

He leaned over her, close to her ear, his lips burned whatever they touched. They brushed her skin ever so slightly. "Vivian, this," he drew a breath and let it out hot in her ear, "is where you learn discipline." She raged, the Predator raged, every nerve ending exposed raged in fury and desire and every emotion in between. Rational was a term long forgotten the heat had grown so intense, the bees stung at every second; every moment was greater pain. Beads of sweat pearled on her chest, her lip, rolled down her brow. Her head swirled as the candles cast a phantasmagoric glow.

With the last ounce of power she tugged blindly at the ties that bound her. Her arms came up at awkward angles to wipe the sweat from her brow.

"Get on top of it, Vivian, the pain. Breath with it, absorb it. Control it." he whispered at her. "That is true power, self-control." Once you learn self-control, you can control anything. Anything and everything."

She fought hearing him, her head rocking back and forth as the bees mounted their attack again, moving further in to her body. The sensation was numbing and ferocious at once. He gazed down at her, his eyes full of disgust. "I'll tell you once more. Breath through it. Find a quiet place in your mind and go there.." Her motions became less violent realizing there was no use in struggling. Either she conquered the bees or they would drive her mad. Didier wasn't taking sides but instead watched from his dark theater. That notion struck her and she remembered her own desolate cinema where she had watched Christina die. It was dark and quiet and safe. She remembered the texture of the grainy wool seats, the emptiness to her right and left, the screen spread out in front of her like a great big fresh canvas. It wasn't until Didier softly said "There you go." that she realized that the bees had subsided in their pursuit of torment.

Her arms went limp. She gave herself over to the darkness and warmth of her quiet place and knew somehow she had learned Didier's weird lesson. She held the image of the screen tightly wrapping her brain around every detail and slowly opened her eyes. Didier stood over here naked his member announcing his pleasure of her accomplishment. In his hand he held something small and slipped it into his mouth. He smiled as he moved it around with his tongue. Although every muscle in her body ached she managed an exhausted smile. He returned it, swallowed and knelt on the bed next to her. Her body rolled towards him bereft of any physical strength and she watched as he brought her legs up again and pushed his mouth between them. The cold was startling, but the expertise of his mouth gave way to relieving pleasure as he went to work on her again.

Through a fuzzy brain, exhaustion and strange new lessons learned, she gazed over to the nightstand where the woman still sat astride her blue bottle. Through her eyelashes she watched candlelight flicker through the tumbler of ice.

## IV; Curious Fish

Within months she closed the lease on her flat and moved to Guildford, leaving no forwarding address. Didier had said that this would lessen complications.

She suspected she would eventually move in with Didier, but waited for his suggestion. It came one evening after he had seen her at The 'Macabre dancing with an Irish



boy. He was a toy brought there from the West End. She inquired slyly who he's come with. He pointed across the floor to a man slumped over the bar, a patron she knew well. It surprised her, knowing that Kouli was strictly homosexual. The way Dylan came on to her, she suspected he wasn't. She excused herself, letting her hand linger on his thigh and walked over to Kouli. As always, he was at his usual poison, Metaxa.

"I like your little friend," she whispered in his ear. "Can I borrow him, or did you have plans?" Kouli snorted a little.

"No, no, you go on. I had a little too much to drink at Gordon's and thought he looked fresh so I brought him. I'm not sure he knows what to do with his own dick let alone anyone else's." His breath was boozy and his words slurred. "Use 'em if ya can, Babydoll." She smiled sweetly and kissed his cheek.

"Hey," he said, as she walked away. She turned at his voice. "Try not to think of me when you're ridin' 'em, huh?" She grinned.

She saw Didier a few weeks later at the club. He helped her with her coat.

"I expected a call from you," he informed her briskly. She looked at him with feigned innocence. "What did you do with the Irish bloke?"

"Nothing."

"What? You did it yourself?"

"No, he was quite capable and even washed the breakfast dishes before he left in the morning." It was his turn now to look clueless. "He went home, Didier."

"I really wish you hadn't done that."

"Why? Jealous?"

"No. He had a fantastic bone structure."

The next day Didier asked her to move in.

Vivian's education with Didier had many facets, he taking the role of mentor in sketching, sculpture, color and of course the delicate art of pleasure. His observances were keen, his praise delighted her. She found herself working harder and harder not for the love of art, although that was part of it, but mainly to please him. They often discussed art and their latest projects, but the studio, the secret windowless room down the hall from the bedroom remained locked to her. Her one inquiry about it had been sternly extinguished with a simple response that the studio was off limits.

A sultry June night fueled the tension at The Danse Macabre. *The heat must bring out what is ferocious in people*, Vivian thought as she took in the atmosphere smiling to herself. Although only ten or so, the dance floor was gyrating to some Euro-Techno beat. Arms were flying wildly, skin glowed in youthful display. All the regulars were here already, even those who normally didn't drift in until last call to collect the toys too drunk to comprehend they were being picked up. She'd watch, she decided, and wait; That's really the only way to tell a toy. Their inexperience and social gaffes in unfamiliar territory gave them away pretty quickly. And she was hungry tonight. Starving.

Vivian, not the Predator, who had been strangely quiet these past few weeks, strolled to the booth where she was given the best vantage point of the comings and goings of those in attendance.

She fingered the device Didier had given her earlier. A little something he picked up in Naples during his last excursion. An exquisite example of metal craftsmanship, the handcuffs were unlike anything she ever had seen. The cuffs themselves were polished gold with intricate brass and silver working. The bracelets were separated by a length of chain almost a meter long, each link lovingly tended and wound with silver leaves. It had gleamed from the box he presented to her, his eyes glowing as he told her his idea.

"I think it's time we brought someone else in. Your art, your lessons in gratification are progressing so well, I see this as a natural progression. It's time to begin study of bringing the inevitable." She looked at him somewhat lost. "You're a fine artist, Vivian, perhaps one of the best. It's time you advanced your education."

She took the device in to her hands cradling the links like a newborn. He gave her a small silver key on a chain she slipped over her head. He pocketed the second.

She had attached the device to her waist through her belt loops, the links between her legs like some erotic accessory. The bracelets presented themselves in shining glory from either hip, the links wound her body like an obsessive lover. The effect was precisely what she anticipated; every gaze rested on the coiled metal work around her waist. Men were fascinated, women looked on lustily as she settled into the booth. Nigel, typically so sedate she thought he may have had his brain pithed, stared at her, his mouth open ever so slightly, giving away his thoughts.

She had to work to catch his eye to order her drink. He looked away sheepishly and went to work at pouring her scotch. She caught a woman staring at her waist, her eyes too gave away her enchantment of Vivian's new device and she, for a moment, was cast back to her life before Didier, before art school, before England to a time in a classroom.

The room was darkened, the little projection screen pulled down from the slew of maps in front of the chalkboard. It was Biology class and she was sixteen.

Biology never was her subject. To show interest in such a subject was to risk being shunned by her peers more involved with Things that Mattered; The hottest clothing trends, the latest music, the most private make-out spots, and Who's Doing What to Who. She slumped in her seat, checked the clock for the tenth time in that many minutes and got ready to waste forty-five of them with some stupid movie about fish.

The reel began, first casting white then a visual display of a countdown. Music, tinny and warbled swelled, then the expanse of the ocean filled the screen. Waves crashed on rocks, seals played in harbors, the sharks swam like knives through sapphire water hunting for their next meal. The details of the film had been all but lost on her until the narrator, Leonard Nemo or some such disembodied head took the class into The Deep Sea. Vivian could recall her amazement at the fish who lived so far down, they never saw the sun. And then came the oddities; creatures self-illuminated, plants that looked like fish, fish that looked like plants. One in particular stood out in her mind. This hideous beast was not like the other predators she had seen. It didn't rely on strength or speed, it's weapon was temptation; the anglerfish. A small protrusion from it's forehead could be played so convincingly that an unknowing fish could be lured to it's waiting maw simply enraptured by the movement of the angler's toy. For it's curiosity, it paid with it's life.

Vivian leaned back in the booth feeling the chains coiling around her. Lynne, always the social butterfly nodded an approval at her as she moved to yet another table. Vivian accepted the drink from Nigel's somewhat shakey hand and went about scoping the room. *Curious fish*, she mused, *I got something for you*.

## V: Trolling

Union, a town separated from Guildford by vast expanses of water, was an unlikely place to breed and nurture a creature such as Vivian. Wealthy privileged families, the heads of which were CEOs and tenured professors floated through days of Big Deals and Academia. Church bells rang out to announce dawn over sleepy New England Sunday morning fields, PTA meetings went off without a hitch, the home town team won again and the all-star quarter-back went steady with the head cheerleader knowing his future was secure with an all expenses paid Ivy League education and a six figure salary upon graduation. The air was permeated with the smell of old money.

In so many ways, Vivian embraced this society. Pretty, popular, and yet still somewhat a drifter. She was uninvolved in the activities of the crowded football games, smoking marijuana and steaming up the windows at the local Lover's Lane, but she had a charm that even the other students couldn't dismiss. She was artistic, well-spoken and difficult to fluster. The pressure soaked high-school atmosphere had tried to squeeze her into a typecast, found more resistance than it knew what to deal with and eventually gave up. Vivian wandered about the various cliques, for the most part, accepted and unscathed. At a young age she reeked of sexuality and more over, knew it. Her swiny little skirts were used at the right time, her coy posture practiced to perfection until she could get the most stern authority figure right where she wanted him, nervously twisting his wedding band and trying to keep his eyes off her blooming chest. Through the demure detachment, Vivian laughed at this moronic display.

Untroubled by her parents, so consumed were they by her older brother's drug habit and frequent run-ins with the local law enforcement, Vivian drifted in and out of the home, getting the grades, to her mother's approval, putting her best face (and body) forward to her father's dismay, and exercising her own will. Vivian was unmonitored, uncensored, untamed. For all intents and purposes, she was the perfect child; scholastically successful and with the introduction of prescription medication to control the emotional highs that often left her giddy and exhausted, and lows that normally ended with violent outbursts, emotionally balanced. Compared to Brother Robert, she was an angel. With the stress of parenthood, the numbness

of martinis and the grind of high-society living, her parents retreated to The Hamptons in summer, winters in Aspen. She accepted her enrollment at an English university without fanfare and Mummy and Daddy breathing a sigh of relief that one turned out normal retreated to their leisure, sending money when it was due. Tuition paid, their minds were at ease. Whatever Vivian did was not so much accepted, but ignored for fear the delicate balance of life without the children be upset.

Vivian reached for her drink.

*If they could see me now,.*

She stole a look at Didier who was at this moment involved in a rather animated conversation with Lynne, her fingertips adjusting his jacket lapels. She giggled at some joke and walked to the bar. Vivian watched his eyes follow her, his gaze unpeeling her clothes.

The drink felt good tonight. It went down easy and she ordered another from Nigel who's eyes were still transposed to her waist. She sat in her booth still thinking about the look Didier had cast at Lynne when the light above the door flashed indicating someone's desired admittance.

The Danse Macabre, the brain-storm of a notorious bohemian of the sixties, now a well-to-do entrepreneur, was hidden in best place possible; in the open. The second (dark) half of a popular disco, the members needed only enter the first club, weave their way to the back, pass through a door marked No Admittance, wind through a hall, down a staircase, locate the lightswitch hidden in an inconspicuous spot, flip it a few times and wait for Didier to open the door to their chosen playground. Their comings and goings were hidden by the first crowd, their autos parked among the others, so this wonderland was not only convenient, but safe, provided one knew the laws here. Very rarely did an interloper stumble across the Macabre, and if by chance they did, the members knew how to take care of the intrusion.

Vivian's attention rested upon the door that opened to reveal three beautiful Italian youths. One Vivian recognized immediately as Tony Lino. He had bought her a drink once, but he was definitely not Vivian's type. She couldn't understand why he roamed here every so often. From appearance, he was fairly attractive but in a somewhat bland way. His conversation, his mannerism, nothing gave evidence to any deviance underneath the businessman facade, but Vivian reminded herself that you never know about people. If murderers looked like murderers, there

wouldn't be an awful lot of murders committed.

He came in flashing a pearly smile at Didier and slapping him on the back like a long lost brother. Didier returned his affection. Maybe that one, she thought, but no. She would wait for that perfect curious fish. The men walked in and immediately made a beeline for the bar. Tony pulled out a bill, slapped in front of Nigel and gestured to the other men. Nigel nodded and went about concocting their drinks. From over his shoulder, he caught Vivian's eye. He raised his glass in an offer. She shook her head slightly, but returned his smile.

She didn't have to wait long for Tony to make his appearance at her table. He came over, a cigarette dangling from his lips. He was well dressed in a dark suit and smelled faintly of musk.

"Ah, Vivian, long time I don't see you, eh?" He leaned over and as he planted a kiss on her cheek slid in to the booth next to her. She smiled at him and strained her breasts against the fabric of her shirt. This display wasn't so much meant for him, but for the young man he had entered with who's eyes fell across her body as he stood at the bar drinking. The gesture was not lost on Tony.

"How's the Viv doing, huh? You being good or good at it?" His repartee was light and friendly. Very few men other than Tony could get away with this and still come out alive. Somehow she imagined that Tony knew this and treaded the fine line anyway.

"Both." she answered simply. "What's up with you?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "Ah, you know. Little bit here, little bit there. Hey, you wanna know something?" He leaned over to her closer and it was then his eyes fell on the glowing device encircling her waist. The polished chains cast reflections on his face catching the little beads of sweat that had popped out over his top lip. He laughed and removed the cigarette flicking the ashes in to the white marble tray in front of him.

"Good God, Vivian." he laughed some more. "I knew you were wild, but this? Whoa."

"You've seen them before?" she asked, grinning impishly.

"Oh, yeah, I seen them before. I mean, not as nice as those, but the same kind. In this little club, real little in the Village' a New York City. This Latina was wearing 'em like that. Real sexy. Real hot. She come over, you know, and she ask me if my brother and me, you know, wanna spend some time gettin' to know her an' all, but I ask around the club and find out she ain't all woman, if you know

what I mean." He drew on the cigarette and butted it out. "I think you're all woman." He looked over to the man standing at the bar who had glanced over again at Vivian. He was muscular, tanned and if appearances could be trusted in a place like this, well-off judging from the cut and quality of his suit. Tony flashed another infamous smile at him and he turned back to the group of young women who had gathered on the dance floor.

"Hey," Tony began, "I came over here to ask you somethin'. You see that guy there. The one who was just lookin' over here? He thinks you're fine. Real fine. He mentioned he wouldn't mind spendin' some time with you."

"Friend of yours?" she inquired looking over to the bar. The man had his back to her.

"Me? No. You see," he spied her, his eyes squinting a bit as if he were carefully selecting words. He wet his lips nervously. "My brother, you know, he owe this guy some money. Actually, my brother's pretty stupid, he owe the guy a lot of money. I was thinkin', you spend some time with him, maybe the heat come off my brother." He hesitated, lowering his voice. "Or, if we never see this guy again, that's OK, too." He grinned.

She looked back to where he stood. His eyes met hers and didn't drop away. Instead, in a brazen gesture, he nodded towards the door. Pompous git, she thought.

"Look," he continued. "I do Didier favours, he do you favours, you do me a favour, huh?"

She regarded him again. Tony's eyes appealed to her. She stood.

"All right." she replied. "Once. And only once, but you owe me, and whatever you're used to, when I collect a debt, I collect hard. You owe for this one." Tony smiled in relief and stood also putting his arm around her waist, thumb hooked into the chains and guided her to the bar where the man turned to accept his gift.

Vivian put on one of her most convincing smiles, the one that would melt men's hearts and allowed herself to be introduced. After that, Tony made a hasty retreat with his brother to the back of the bar.

The two stood there silently for a moment. The silence was uncomfortable.

"So, you're Diego." She said. He nodded as he drained his glass. He was still quiet. She pursued conversation. "What are you drinking?"

"Screwdriver."

She nodded as the conversation, if this could be called conversation, died. She was about to ask if he'd like to buy her a drink,

maybe dance, but suddenly his tongue came to life. "So, you want to go back to my hotel, or do you live close around here?" This vulgarity took her back. For a moment she was unable to either reply harshly or think of a brash comment that would put him in his place. Instead she stepped back and excused herself for the WC.

"Yeah, why don't you go freshen up." Her eyes rolled in her head. *Asshole*, she said under her breath.

The club had turned in to a furnace, woman patting at their brows, the men sweating profusely. The music had slowed and couples were leading each other to the dance floor. She sighed. Whatever hunger had been there earlier had been extinguished by this disgusting creature she had promised Tony to take home and dispose of. *Well*, she thought, *Tony's going to have to deal with this one himself. To hell with his brother, this guy's a creep and I'm leaving.*

She stopped at the door to say good-night to Didier.

"Hey, I'm getting tired. I'll see you back at the house, OK?" Didier looked around puzzled.

"Alone?" he asked.

"Yeah, I mean, I know we talked about bringing someone home tonight, and Tony made me an offer, but he's just not what I'm interested in. Guy's a jerk."

"I know, Tony talked to me, too. We had a little arrangement."

"I'm not interested. I've got a headache"

Didier caught her by the arm as she passed him. "Lovey," he purred at her in mock affection, his eyes betraying his anger. "I want you to go back there, stall him for a little while, make small talk, whatever, I don't really give a damn, but get him back to the house."

"You're hurting me." She growled at him.

"Don't tempt me." He let go of her, her hand going up to the place his grip held her firm. He sighed and gathered his thoughts. "I'm sorry, I shouldn't have done that, but truth is," his eyes went to Tony's acquaintance, "I'm under a deadline and this bloke is perfect. Go back, let him buy you a drink, keep him talking, drive home slowly and I'll be there within a half hour." She scowled at the pompous toy as he inspected his nails. "Surely you can keep him distracted for half and hour." She looked back at Didier.

"You're right behind us, right?"

"Yes."

"Right?"

"Right."

"Fine."

Convincing Diego to leave his expensive sports car in the parking lot hadn't been easy, but Vivian told him that she'd drive him back when they were done. Besides, she chided, driving turned her on. With that he got in to her auto. She kept up chatter as she drove desperately trying to ignore his hand that crept up her thigh. Once she checked her watch and he commented.

"Got a date?" he sneered. If this guy was attempting charm, it fell flat.

"No, I just was making sure we have time before my brother comes home."

"Ah, a little girl who lives with her brother. Protective, is he? I guess you don't see much action then." He adjusted his jacket and they rode the quiet streets in silence.

He was on her as soon as she turned off the ignition, he hands roughly pressing against her breasts, his tongue forcing its way into her mouth. The Predator raged at this, she could almost hear it's muffled breathing somewhere deep within her ribcage.

"Not here." she told him. "Let's take this inside." He raised himself back, spread his hands in a gesture of apathy.

"Whatever."

She checked the time again as they went up the walk; 45 minutes until Didier made an appearance. Traffic had been unusually light and although repulsed by him, she didn't want to give herself away by driving too slowly. She had hesitated at every intersection, waited at the lights, even took the longest way here, but they had still arrived just a little too early for her liking. Her comfort was in the fact that the device not only served as an attraction, but in a pinch could double as a chastity belt. The key on the silver chain hung deep between her breasts and even if it were dug out, uncoiling the links could prove time-consuming.

She thought back to one of her first backseat experiences and poor Tommy Walcott (AKA Reginald Thomas Walcott III) attempting to disengage the fasteners of her bra. In his struggle, the tip of his tongue protruding through pursed lip, he managed not to release them, but eventually, and sheepishly asked her to do it. His ego so badly damaged, he could hardly look at her on Monday morning in Home Room. *No*, she thought, *no fear, this one talks big, but is more than manageable. Here fishy, fishy, fishy...*

She turned on the lights in the main room, tossed her keys on to the side table and made her way to the kitchen.

"Would you like some wine?" she called out.

"No." came the response from directly in back of her.

She turned to find Diego standing there. His teeth flashed white, a shark's grin with cold eyes and somewhere deep within her came a message that there was danger here. Real danger. In that simple reply threat lay. Could an angler take on a Great White? The refrigerator door stood open, the cold draft creeping up her back as he reached for her. And in this instance it came to her that she had been set up. The Predator being preyed upon, the Trapper trapped. The Angler caught.

Quickly she side-stepped his advance and made her way quickly out to the main room. She'd grab the keys and be gone. Even in not so sensible shoes, she could out run him. Did Didier know this? Was he behind this? No, she told herself as she reached for the keys, *he couldn't do this. Not to me...*

Her thought was cut off as his hands came around her waist. With his left hand he held her fast with his right, he pried the keys from her grasp.

"Where you going?" he breathed into her ear. "Running out on me?" He turned her around in his arms. "I don't think so." He kissed her mouth roughly. She turned her head but his grip was commanding and he found his mark. Her arms pinned, she pulled back. He tossed her back away from the door and stood there, the keys in hand.

"Feisty one, huh? What, you need to see the money first? I'm good for it. Hell, I'll make it so good for you, you'll be throwing money at me." He let out a dirty laugh and took off his jacket. Tossing it aside, he came at her again. She was more prepared this time, or so she thought. His strength was amazing. In a heartbeat he had her on the floor and was pushing up her shirt. She struggled out of the grasp of her wrists, but this served only to increase his arousal and he pinned her violently that made her realize he had only been toying with her earlier. Now, he was serious and seriously angry.

"You like it like this, huh? You kinky? You in to this kind of thing? Go ahead fight me. Fight me. I'm gonna have you whimpering for more." His lips went to her neck as he began biting her working his way from ear to breast through fabric stopping only to push away the shirt to reach deeper into her cleavage. His hips ground in to her as his leg pushed hers apart. Between them, his attack gained momentum, his breath coming in animal-like growls.

He fell silent as he brought her arms up over her head, both wrists locked together in his hand. He looked down at her.

"I'd love to let you up," he said sneering at her, "but that's not going to happen."

Vivian thought fast. *I can't overpower him, but I've got to get off my back. On you're back, you're as good as dead.*

"Yeah," she growled in as dirty a tone she could muster. "I like it like this, but if you let me up, I can get rid of these chains," her eyes gazing down to where his groin covered hers, the coils surely hurting him as much as they were her now. He seemed to ponder this for a moment.

"Nice try," he replied as his grip tightened. "I can take care of them myself." Her eyes went back to his as his hand came up scooped her neckline and caught the silver chain. "You'd be better off leaving the key under your doormat." With one violent jerk, the silver necklace snapped. As he took a second to regard the key, she went into a frenzy of motion and assault. In one instant she was out of his grip, open hands turned to claws raking down his face, legs pounding against flesh until he propelled himself away from her. Momentarily he was blinded, his screams of fury sending her deeper in to rage. She was on her feet one moment, stumbling the next frantically throwing herself towards the door. Fight, then flight.

He stepped into her path, his hands bloodied from the gouges down his face. He brought his hands up to view the gore in front of him and with wild eyes he slowly turned them to her. Shock was replaced with murderous intent as he again came at her, his hands reaching for her throat. She spun on her heels and cornered, reached out blindly. A well placed sweep of the foot send him off balance as the object came down on his head. She heard his skull crack not only with her blow but as it met the floor. The object came down again and again until Diego no longer moved. Through tears and heaving breaths she looked to the weapon. Blood and bits of flesh dripped from Bacchus. She dropped the statue and stood over the body. In a breath that was at once racked with fear and shock came a strange liberation as she pried the silver chain, key still attached, from Diego's dead hand.

The closing of a door and feet on the walk announced Didier's arrival.

## VI: The Fighting Chair

Inside the room bathed in the peach glow from the stained glass lamp, she crouched over her kill. She was pretty sure Diego was dead, but her eyes lingered on his back to see if the rise and fall would begin again. After two heartbeats, they had not and she stood to face Didier, report what had happened and sternly lecture him that under no circumstances would she do this again. *Fuck the art, she thought, it's my neck I'm risking. He wants a toy, he can get his own goddamn toy.*

Didier walked in, looked to her in smooth salutation, and then his eyes dropped the mass of carnage on the floor at her feet. His expression froze in an emotion she couldn't name.

"What happened here?" he demanded in a low growl approaching Diego's body, stooping to inspect the damage Vivian had inflicted. He rolled over the body revealing Diego's face, now a melange of blood and disfigurement. Vivian took a step back, her fingers wrapped tightly around the key.

"He tried to rape me." She said quietly. "I'm OK."

Didier stood quickly removing a cloth handkerchief from his pocket and wiping his hands rapidly. He turned on her violently.

"You're OK. You're OK?!" His voice was booming through the room, tinny echoes bouncing off the walls of the stairhall. "Well," he yelled, "I'm so glad you're OK!" His eyes went back to Diego and regarded his one eye that lolled without vision to Bacchus still overturned where she had dropped it. "I'm just so fucking glad," his voice broke on this word, "that you're OK. I wouldn't want anything to happen to my little Vivian that hasn't been done to her a thousand times before." He turned his back, she could see his fists clenching.

"Didier, calm down. I told you, this guy tried to rape me. He had me on the floor, he was ripping my clothes. He wanted to kill me." She began to see the ludicrous situation for what it was. She was apologizing to a man. A man who's never been afraid of being raped. He had no idea what it's like to be a woman. Fury in her grew. "Look, I'm sorry if I blew this little good time you were planning, whatever it was, but he..." Didier's hand swung around and caught her across the cheek before she could finish. She stood stunned as she held her cheek in her hand, tears glowing in her eyes.

"I'm sorry. God, " his voice dropped to a whisper. "I'm sorry. I shouldn't have done that." He sat down in the tufted chair that still had Diego's coat draped over it. "Viv, I really needed this one. I'm under a ferocious deadline. My client's going mad and I promised I'd have something special for him." His eyes appealed to her. "I was counting on you." She came over and sat down across from him.

"Didier, he tried to.."

"I know. I know," he said softly. "We'll talk about this in the morning. You go upstairs and I," he stopped and looked over to the body again, " and I'll take care of this. I'll take care of everything." His look at her was comforting. He stood and went to Diego. With strength she found herself admiring through this bizarre situation, Didier hoisted Diego over his shoulder and began to climb the stairs. From behind him, Diego's arms hung limp jerking at Didier's every movement. She heard him reach the top landing and stood to begin righting the room. She stopped suddenly.

"What are you doing? Where are you taking him?" she called.

"Don't touch anything." Didier called down the stairs. "I'll deal with it. You go to bed." His tone was stern, but Vivian hardly noticed, her question forgotten, exhaustion setting in. She simply wanted out of the device, and into soft bedclothes. Tomorrow, she thought, tomorrow I'll figure out just what I'm going to do.

She undressed quickly and slipped on her gown trying not to notice the welts that were beginning to swell on her arms and across her breasts. *Didier will take care of everything.*

Morning came streaming through the blinds, little beams of light she had tried to secure out the night before found her anyway. Her sleep had been rough, full of horrific visions. She had waited silently in darkness until nearly three for Didier to slip in to the bed next to her, but she fell in to that unquiet rest. She checked the clock. Nearly eight and Didier was not here. Either, she thought, he's come and gone, or he never came to bed.

She got up and slipped on a robe. In bare feet she opened the door and listened. Nothing. No coffee being put on, no rummaging of kitchen drawers. Down the hall, just a few scant meters from where she stood from behind the studio door there came the shuffling of feet. Something metallic dropped and Didier muttered something she couldn't make out. She hesitated, curiously drawn, as she always had been by the studio and dared herself to approach the door.

Another piece of metal clanked against something hard and she stood outside the door. It wasn't fastened, but putting her hand on the doorknob felt like sinning.

She drew a tight breath, and pushed.

It opened silently giving her a sweeping view of the artist's room, his craft, his work, and suddenly the artist himself. Didier obviously hadn't heard her approach. He stood over a small draped table scrutinizing the object in front of him. In one hand he held a pallet knife, the other worked the object lightly.

"Can we talk?" she interrupted. At her voice, his head snapped up, the concentration on his face giving way to surprise then anger.

"Don't you knock? This is my studio! Get out. Get out now!" His furious tone echoed the one she had heard the night before, but she stood her ground.

"I think this is a little more important than any little still life you're constructing over there. Didier, we've got to talk about last night." She stepped forward covering the ground between them quickly realizing that this may be her only chance to confront him. His art was one thing, whoring her out to bring home toys was another. He put down the pallet knife, it's edge catching the light. It's gleam displayed the edge, honed to a fine finish. He moved his body to block her view, but her instincts took over and curiosity got the best of her. She moved to one side and gazed upon the table. It was not a still life composition, no fruit and baskets and wine bottles, anyway. In the center of the table lay a metal bowl, the tool she had taken for a pallet knife, a jar of clear liquid and a grisly discovery.

It was not a piece of fruit, but the head of her attempted rapist. Diego's eye sockets had been cleared, the lips pulled back with small fish hooks attached to his cheeks. Didier had been at work prying out the teeth. They sat in the jar of liquid, small strings of bloody sinew tinged the water and floated near the surface. Didier let out a heavy sigh, turned his back to her and picked up the scalpel to begin his work again.

She turned, too shocked to register any coherent thought and walked towards the door. As she did another grim discovery was made. In the corner behind a veil of tropical plants and palms lay a steel tub. In it lay the rest of Diego in pieces. She fainted, falling to the floor with a heavy thud.



## *The Diver , The Parisian , The Freudian*

(respectively)

by **Clive Barker** ,

limited edition prints (500 each),

16" X 20",

acid-free

archival paper

\$15 each

## VII: Baiting The Hook



She regained consciousness on the floor where she had fallen, her right cheek bruised and throbbing. There was a taste of blood in her mouth. She shook her head slightly to clear it as she raised herself. At first bleary, but upon viewing the leg that jutted out from the basin, her whereabouts were made clear rapidly. She turned quickly sending shooting pains through her head and stars swirled before her eyes threatening to take her back to unconsciousness. Didier, if he noticed her movement, didn't register it with his posture. He still stood over the grisly piece of flesh he worked upon. From her vantage point she could see that Didier had moved from teeth to skin removal. He worked at eye sockets peeling back what he could from the eyelids. Diego's skeletal face bore a look of amused surprise.

She stood carefully checking her weight on her legs to make sure they could carry her. She didn't look at him as she went for the door. With her hand nearly to the knob, he spoke.

"You can't be serious." He said straightening. She froze. "You don't really think I'd let you out now. Not after this." He made a gesture that took in the studio. She followed the gesture now seeing that he'd been quite busy while she was in her swoon. Jars filled with bits and pieces of body parts, some resembling something that had been human at one time were displayed for her. The magnitude of what she was witnessing overwhelmed her. "I think you're right, Lovey," he said lightly, placing the scalpel down to set in another jar, "we really should talk."

He wiped his hands on a faded peach towel, pulled out a chair from a corner and made a motion for her to sit. She hesitated, her eyes traveling back to Diego, first his head, then his body.

With nothing else to do, she sat, her heart racing. He stood above her taking in the features of her face. At one time she adored this deep physical admiration, now after knowing what she did and seeing Didier's admiration for Diego, she could almost feel the scalpel cutting in to her own flesh.

"You're going to kill me, aren't you?" she asked in a whisper, her heart nearly stopping. He laughed under his breath.

"No. Not if I don't have to." She let out a small quivering sigh. "But," he continued, "what do they say in those American films? Oh, yes, 'You've seen too much'. And that's why, of course, and you understand this I know, I can't just let you walk out of here." He turned

to regard his latest work. It didn't so much resemble a human head any longer. If anything, Vivian thought, it looked like a bad special effect out of a horror movie. The skin peeled back had begun to yellow and dry at the edges, the empty mouth gaped in mock terror. But she *did* know too much and she knew it. Her brain buzzed with a hundred thousand plot lines she had seen played out. What was Didier going to do with her? Hobble her? Cut out her tongue? Lobotomize? That notion made her swoon again. She leaned back in the chair, the tunnel of darkness clouding her eyes.

"Stop it!" he voice jerked her back to the present and very real situation she was in. "There you go," he said gently. "I almost lost you there again, didn't I?" He went over to a supply closet and opened it gingerly. "I want to show you something." He bent over, flipped through some canvases. Her mind reeled.

"Didier, I promise I won't tell anyone. I'll leave the country. I'll go home back to Union. I'll never..."

"You know I can't let you do that. Come on, Viv. Next you'll be promising me Daddy's money. I've got enough of that. Besides, you're valuable to me. Although admittedly I've thought about taking you apart, you're worth more to me alive than dead. At least right now." He came over to her holding a canvas up. He regarded it as a far away look crept it to those penetrating eyes. "I've never showed this to anyone." With that, he turned the picture to her. It was a simple oil painting of a beautiful Asian girl. Her cheekbones were high her lips a perfect shade of dusky rose. Around her neck she bore a translucent blue scarf and nothing else. A beautiful young woman, but the significance eluded her. Vivian realized that any false move right now would undoubtedly lead to her demise. She thought quickly.

"She's beautiful," she said.  
"More than that." he said, "Far more than that." He fell quiet in deep contemplation of this work.

"Who is she?"  
Didier's eyes came up to rest on Vivian's. "This," he said "is Natsua. Lovely girl. I loved her very much. She was a student of mine as well." The use of past tense in his speech didn't escape Vivian, and suddenly the pieces of this dark puzzle began to fall into place.

With little left to risk, she asked.  
"What happened to her?"

Didier put down the canvas with deep sadness in his posture. "That," he said, "is a very good question. I think she lost her vision. Lost her drive to pursue the art, the big picture.





She lost faith in me and what we were doing and, sadly, it proved to be her undoing." He went over to the table where Diego's head still lay and picked up a glass. As he raised to his lips, her stomach flipped. He gestured to her with the glass. "Wine, Lovey?". She shook her head slightly.

"What *were* you doing?" she implored. *At all costs*, she thought to herself, *keep him talking. It may not unlock the door, but it bides me time.*

"Just what I'm doing now. Here." His hand made a grand sweep of the room as if he were presenting The Taj Mahal. "Pursuing the art. The Pure Art, the way The Master did it."

Vivian had heard Didier speak about art often enough to know who he was referring to. Didier had become suddenly animated, striding across the room stopping only to observe one of the jars and swirl it's murky contents up to the light in his other hand.

"Michelangelo Buonarroti," he announced, "knew the pathway to The Divine." His eyes had strange fires behind them, something Vivian had taken at first to show unbridled passion of his chosen profession, now those fires were of lunacy. "He did this," he shouted at her swinging his hands to and fro displaying the goods of this abattoire. "He knew," he said coming to her quickly leaning in to her face, "that to capture the essence, the pure essence, of what is human and to give it life elsewhere, like my canvas or under my hands in clay, is divine."

Vivian sat watching the mad rantings of this man, no, this monster and looked to Natsua. The beauty captured on the canvas was undeniable. The reality of the flesh and blood of her was overwhelming. She sat here, Vivian thought, perhaps in this same chair and heard the same theories. *What was her reaction? Moreover, how can I keep her fate from becoming mine?*

Didier was still walking the floor, talking about grave robbing and midnight autopsies and glimpsing in to the human body to discover the basis, the essence, he kept repeating, of humanity, of the human machine.

"I don't think Michelangelo was a grave robber," she said quietly.

Didier spun on her with fire and fury. "You don't think so?" he said, "I know so. There's documentation. They knew what he was doing, but an artist, a true artist, can get away with anything during The Pursuit. Others without vision recognize those who do and cower in their shadows. Those without vision fear me."

She realized immediately that these rantings were not to be questioned. Truth was,

she had heard rumors that the Master did rob graves, but chalked it up to romantic angst-ridden rumors of struggling artists. The notion had seemed gothic in theory. Here in this room of human remains and the glare of sterile surgical tools, the practice was unthinkable.

Vivian was no fool, however, and understood that in order to make it out, out of this room, out of this house, out of this country, she'd need to play along. Compliment the artist on his pursuit, as he called it, of The Pure Art, and she'd be free.

"So, you see," his tone mellowing, his mannerism returning to the man she thought she'd known before this fit of passionate insanity. "this is why I do what I do. Michelangelo was a master, but shortsighted. He took what he could get and developed from there. I, on the other hand, can pick and choose. Eyes from one, hands from another, the best and most beautiful parts of the human anatomy compiled for my pleasure and pursuit. I will create a masterpiece of such beauty, such grace, such flawless essence it will put *David* to shame." He picked up the scalpel again. "And you're going to help me." His smile took on a shark's grin. "In more ways than one."

"I don't see how.."

"Hand me that," he stated as he went back to the table. She looked over to where he pointed. He put Diego's head aside, apparently satisfied with his work to it and pulled on some plastic gloves. She could only stare at the device he had gestured to. Vivian comprehended the level her acting ability would demand, and the control of her physical body as she handed him the power saw. Didier prepared Diego's torso for further exploration.

"Didier," she said quietly, "I think I want to go back to on my meds." He scoffed at her as he pulled on thick pick rubber gloves.

"No, Lovey, I won't have any of that now. All you need is the Art, good wine," he swiled down the remainder of the glass, "and this." He held up Diego's head, in a parody pose of Shakespeare's graveyard scene of Hamlet.

*I knew him, Horatio.*

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Lunch on the veranda had gone without so much as a word or gesture passed between the two. The studio door had eventually been unlocked and Vivian dismissed to construct their mid-day meal under close watch. There with the sunlight filtering down through the rose colored umbrella Didier went

at his salad with the vigor of a man who hadn't eaten for days. In this light his skin glowed soft and warm hiding the monster that lurked underneath the facade.

Vivian, tortured with the stench of formaldehyde that permeated the food she prepared, was still. Hands in her lap she contemplated not only what she had witnessed, but the grim reality that her fate lay upstairs among the scattered pieces of humanity. She attempted one last appeal to him, knowing at once it was fruitless, but needing to have herself heard.

"I can't do this," she said quietly. Didier looked up from his meal to meet her eyes. She cast them down immediately.

"Well," he said in a tone as light as the air that filled the garden they sat in, "from my vantage point, you really have no choice." He stuffed more salad in to his mouth and munched quietly as if the exchange between them hadn't occurred. He swallowed down the last drop of white wine, placed his fork on the plate and sat back in the wicker chair wiping his fingers on the cloth napkin Vivian had folded for him. "You think I don't have evidence?" he stated flatly regarding her.

"You've more than enough upstairs..."

"Don't be stupid. I could have this house cleaned out so fast The Pope could inspect it and find it worthy of His blessing. You forget, Lovey, I've had more than enough practice with this sort of thing. You, however, would be tracked down and shot on sight before you could hail a ride for the airport." He had the fingertips of both hands pressed together over his chest as he spoke to her as if he were addressing a child. "I'm very good at what I do. I choose my subjects carefully, keep a watchful eye on the authorities and create artwork heavily in demand by an exclusive group of collectors. You do what you do well. I do what I do well. You are, how shall I say? You are the bait, my middleman, if you will." He laughed quietly at this, still holding his suave posture. "You are very good, very desirable, and now, rather disposable." Her back straightened at this comment. It was a direct threat and she realized that although his plot for supreme creation was insane, Didier wasn't so immersed in his mission that he had lost touch with the real world. He stood indicating that this conversation was over. He turned to enter the house but stopped short of the door. "And, just in case you were thinking about it, I'd make an anonymous tip in a heartbeat if I were to find you anywhere other

than where I dictate you be. Besides, people with a history of mental instability have horrible reputations. Who knows what kind of menace to society you'd pose if not for the watchful eye of your everloving caretaker." He smiled cruelly. "One tip, one little call, Viv, and it's over. That is, of course, if I didn't get to you first. I've always admired your eyes. There're so dark, so beautiful," his voice was barely over a whisper, "I'm certain I could duplicate the color, but it would take extensive study." The vision of Diego's head, his teeth slowly being pried out of it came to mind.

"You said you'd never hurt me," she whispered weakly.

"You wouldn't feel a thing, Lovey. Most of my studies aren't feeling much pain by the time they get to the studio." The horror of his statement hit her as her head snapped around to meet him. "Most," he repeated, "not all. Turn on me, and I'll make it an art lesson you wished you'd never had." Vivian had stopped breathing. "Natsua had the loveliest ears, just like little shells, so small and dainty. She got to see them before her sketch. I put a tiny pearl in one for her. Then...". He shrugged and walked in to the house, the screen door snapping closed behind him. The house, the garden, everything stood silent.

## VII: Setting the Hook

She dressed with great care this evening; a black thong, matching stockings, a French bra. *Make it count, Honey*, she thought, as she applied make up and perfume on all her pulse points that beat in crazy staccato. Didier had announced that tonight was quite special. Kouli had promised him a fresh and wonderful little toy; an exchange student from America was joining them. And, he mentioned to Didier, She has all the looks of a California girl. Vivian knew exactly what Didier was thinking; blonde, blue-eyed, long-legged and tawny skin. She had looked through magazines as a young girl envying these models for having everything she did not. To her dark stern haircut, they represented sunlight and days spent at the beach with tresses that stretched to the small of their backs. To her tiny frame, they were tall and leggy, the perfect body to pour into a black dress. To her pale skin, they seemed to glow as they looked out from the pages. It had taken her years (and countless live nude studies) to realize that the camera lies. There were always hidden flaws, whether it be the tattletale silicone scar under the breast, the

silver lines across the abdomen where a story of pregnancy could be read. There were roots in the hair, nicotine stains on the fingers, the ever so slight scent of vomit as they passed by. Vivian knew she was pretty, and, when she was so inclined, beautiful. Not California beautiful, but in her own way, beautiful. *Puritan*, she thought as she beheld herself, *to have and hold...if that's what you're into*.

All this she knew, but still, the envy was so great that she found herself despising these beautiful sunlit creatures.

And it was as she dressed thinking of the girl she was to meet accidentally, befriend, intoxicate and take home, she thought of Christina. She had been blonde and beautiful and fresh-scrubbed. Everything Vivian hated...and envied, and it was then she realized. She looked in the mirror of her dressing table as she heard Didier moving around downstairs, gathering up the keys to leave.

"There is no Predator," she said quietly in her reflection. "There's only me." She stood for the better part of three minutes staring in to own eyes seeing what she had never seen before. It was she who had killed Christina, lashed out at a metaphor, a symbol, something created before her. In her, Vivian had seen those covergirls holding up an icon she could never be. But Christine wasn't a young woman made of silicone and sunlight; she was real. Flesh and blood real. Family real. Potential real. The piano wire boy was real. They were all real. And The Predator, she thought, no, there is no Predator! I'm real, they were real. I did it. I stole that potential. I fed the beast Vivian.

And the tears came.

From the corner of the bathroom in a flood of tears she heard him call to her. She gathered herself, wiping her face with the back of her hands and answered him.

"I'll be down in a minute. I want tonight to be special." She looked back to the mirror, her eyes now watery and not so dark. *Do what you have to*, she thought, and found queer comfort.

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He was animated tonight, so animated that had Vivian not been so closely monitored by him, she would have thought he'd been drinking. From the corner table, one of the best the 'Macabre had to offer, she watched him and wondered if he'd been at the blue bottle in preparation for Kouli's promised gift. She had been sitting for hours maybe listening to the bass beat through the amplifiers. No one had approached her, although she knew it was

not for lack of want. She could feel the eyes upon her as she walked to where Didier had reserved a table. She wondered if somehow Didier had put out a message to those in attendance that she was, like the studio, "off limits".

Due to the late hour, nearly closing, she thought that perhaps Kouli hadn't been able to deliver on his promise. She was strangely relieved and filled with dread if Didier's chosen study didn't show. She drank heavily tonight, starting a tab, telling Lynne, beautiful Lynne, dangerous Lynne, that the drinks were on Didier. She saw her approach him once. He listened intently, looked over and nodded solemnly to her. Through a drunken fuzz she knew that he knew. In his demented heart he loved her, for what she could do for him. She raised the glass to her lips, something called a Tom Collins (she had taken to stumping poor Nigel with various requests for drinks she'd never actually tried but had heard mention of and snickered upon seeing his dismayed looked when Lynne went over and whispered 'Sex on The Beach' in to his ear) when she saw the light flash over the door.

Instinctually, she knew it was Kouli and The Toy. She made a mental note to get her name and use it frequently in conversation. She'd read once in a customer service manual that people were drawn to those who used their name. She only hoped that through conversation, she remembered it. She called Lynne and ordered a Bloody Mary.

Kouli, after greeting Didier, was a fine gentleman and ordered his lady a drink upon entering the club. Her eyes were somewhat glassy as they approached the table. Kouli forfeited surprise at their meeting and instead mentioned that this was the American he had spoken about. Vivian was unsure if he was referring to her or the Toy, but played along taking her hand gently and greeting her.

The young woman beamed, a great open smile that displayed perfect white teeth. *Caps, no doubt*. She sat down next to Vivian, crossed those great tanned legs and set in on her introduction without the help of Kouli.

"I'm Felicia," she said, "and you must be Vivian. I've heard a lot about you from Kouli here. He's says you're quite an artist.". Over the woman's shoulder she could see Didier's eyes summing up every muscular inch of her frame. She was tall, quite tall, broad through the shoulders and her arms displayed a well-toned physique. It was obvious to Vivian's undisciplined body that Felicia worked

out regularly.

"How long have you been here. I mean not here, here, but here in England?" She leaned on the table determined to extract a response from Vivian.

"Oh, about a year, maybe a year and a half now." She wasn't planning on idle chatter with this woman but her mannerisms, that unmistakable open American gait and Valley drawl to her voice was refreshing in a country of prim proper tones. They ordered another drink as the conversation progressed. So enthralled with drink and the openness of this Felicia, Vivian hadn't noticed Kouli slink off to the corner to engage a young man in conversation.

"I'm studying in London," Felicia announced. "Well, I haven't started yet, I'll begin in September. I'm taking International Relations with a concentration in Russian Diplomacy. The University had a great course selection and here I'll be closer to my Dad. They split up when I was a kid, and Dad got transferred over here with his job and all, so it's been great getting to know him all over again. Hey, ever gone to Picadilly Circus? It's wild! All those people going all different places. It was so great. He said that come spring break, or what do you call it here, holiday? Anyway, we're going to ski in Switzerland." Her enthusiasm was contagious.

It was then she caught another glimpse of Didier straining his neck to catch her eye. When he did, he simply nodded and made a rolling motion with his finger. *Keep it going*, he mouthed.

Sickened by this gesture, Vivian turned her full attention back to Felicia and pondered. *In the end*, she thought, *it's her or me. And it's not going to be me.* Through the conversation, Felicia kept mentioning how great it was to run in to another American and how bad the food was here and how she had lost a lot of weight and how much she missed her Mom back home. Vivian's thoughts drifted back to Felicia's father, the man who was finally reunited with his daughter, and then the inevitable tragedy to lose her to mysterious circumstances. It didn't seem fair. *But*, she reminded herself, *Life isn't fair. Her or me.*

"So, like, do you come here a lot? Is this like the big hang-out for you artist types?" Felicia asked.

"I come here sometimes. The music is good, the drinks are pretty cheap, you know."

"Yeah, there's a place like this back home in California." Vivian doubted this greatly, but Felicia went on. "Downtown LA, if you can believe that, but then, after you see a place like this, you'll believe anything." She took a

hard draw from her drink and lit a cigarette. Vivian looked incredulously on. "Oh, this," Felicia waved her cigarette, "As a rule, I don't smoke," she grinned, "but as a habit, I do." They laughed at this.

The conversation lulled suddenly as Vivian's thoughts went to Felicia's father again. She was beginning to like this man. She was beginning to like Felicia. Her warmth, her exuberance were both calming and exhilarating. She realized how much she had missed social outings. And although this was no social outing for the sake of Didier, she found herself genuinely laughing, something she hadn't done in a very long time.

Without warning, Felicia leaned over to her.

"So, why don't you tell me what's in store for me, huh?" She leaned back in the booth taking in Vivian's bewildered eyes. She dragged on the cigarette again.

"I don't know what..."

"Nice try, Vivian, but cut the shit. You think I'm a little toy. You think I don't know what's going on here?"

Vivian's mouth hung slightly open aghast at what she was hearing.

"Look," Felicia stated, "I wasn't born yesterday. I see you looking over at the guy at the door and it's pretty obvious you're not making a play for me, so what gives? I meet this Kouli a few days ago at Gordon's, he invites me out, gives me a few drinks and says 'Let's go to this other club. You're really going to love it.' I know the game, I know the whole fuckin' script, but I just can't figure out you." Felicia stopped talking and looked over to Didier. He returned her look with a smile that turned Vivian's stomach. "You don't look so hot. Let's step out for some air."

"We can't." Vivian replied weakly.

"Oh, so that's it." Felicia smiled a little, lit another cigarette and laughed. "Different parts of the world, same rules apply, huh?" She winked at Vivian. "They got a lady's room?"

"Yeah."

"Let's go."

The two women stood, straightening their clothing and reaching for purses. Didier looked on as he watched the two walk towards the oak door in the back of the bar.

They emerged a few minutes later, make up freshly applied and talking gregariously.

Felicia had only one question: "Your place or mine?" Her eyes twinkled as Vivian pulled out her car keys.

There was a casual exchange at the door that left Didier grinning.

## VIII: The One That got Away

haucer was standing vigil at the door meowing terribly, encircling his empty dish. Felicia stooped to scoop up the cat in to her arms and scratch him behind his ears. At first the poor thing didn't quite know what to think of this new person, but for all his squirming, Felicia held him fast cooing to him softly as she stroked his fur. By the time the women had settled in to the living room, Felicia was the center of Chaucer's attention. He ran his body around her legs, leapt on his back paws to catch her hand as it rested over the edge of the couch.

Vivian went the wine rack and began reading it's contents aloud to Felicia.

She stopped her. "Did you say *sangria*?"

"Yes."

"Well, it's probably not what I'm used to, but what the hell? Pop it, Viv." Her voice was animated.

As she went about opening the wine, she heard Felicia moving around the room.

"You're right. He's got quite the collection here, hasn't he?" she heard her call. "You do this kind of thing?" Vivian hesitated.

"No, actually, I like landscapes. Wide open fields, big sky, that sort of thing." She knew her art work as of late reflected a lust for what she didn't have: freedom. It had not gone unnoticed by Didier who instructed her to go back to nudes. *Look at the ears, Vivian. You can learn a lot about your subject by studying their ears.*

Returning with drink in hand, the two settled on the couch. They frequently touched, laughed and reminisced about the country they shared in common.

Vivian's curiosity got the best of her and finally she asked. "How do you about places like the 'Macabre'? I mean, you're so... I don't know, just not the type that would..."

Felicia shook off her inquiry lightly. "You never know about people, do you? I mean, you could know someone you're whole life and never really know them."

It was 1:00 when Felicia suggested they go upstairs. Vivian stopped mid-sentence, hesitating.

"Come on." Felicia said taking the glass from her hand and wrapping her fingers in Vivian's. Vivian allowed herself to be lead,

unsure of what would lay behind the bedroom doors. Had she come this far only to be taken by a crazed stranger instead of Didier? Would she supply the gift and wind up being slaughtered as Natsua was? She didn't know, and at this late hour of the game, it didn't seem to matter much. She wanted out, even if it meant losing.

They were languishing on the bed when Didier walked in. He was so silent upon the stairs he took them by surprise, but the conversation had been filled with giggles and shared secrets that a bomb could've been detonated downstairs and the two would've carried on uninterrupted.

"Well, what have we here?" was his greeting. The two looked up. Innocent eyes and pleased smiles met him. The women were naked, Vivian's pale body stark against Felicia's tanned skin. "I take it you two have had an enjoyable," he hesitated, his eyes going from one beauty to the other, "talk."

"Oh, yes," replied Vivian as the two burst in to laughter. "Quite enlightening conversation." She got up and reached for her robe that had been strewn at the end of the bed. "But, I'm quite tired and better get to bed. Sleep, I mean."

"No," said Didier. She stopped. His tone was sharper than what was required. "I'd like you to stay for this." His hands went to the buttons on his shirt. "Think of it," he said, his tone softening, "as a little favour for me." His clothes were shed quickly, his eyes never coming off Felicia who spread herself out on the bed for his approval. Although unvoiced, the approval was unequivocal.

As Didier approached the bed, Felicia sat up and met Didier with her body in a deep embrace. It reminded Vivian of the way people make love in the movies.

She thought back to the screen, the angler, the curious fish that had started the masquerade. Didier was at Felicia's breasts, she could hear him sucking and moaning. The image was at once erotic and somewhat comical. Vivian had never witnessed a sexual act she wasn't a part of and found it ludicrous. She looked to Felicia who's eyes caught hers and then with a message behind them, traveled to the night stand.

Vivian came behind Didier, ran her hands down his back feeling the muscles under the skin tightening and held the feeling for just a moment. The feel of skin, no matter how monstrous the being underneath, was wonderful. She could smell him, that faint musk rising off his body that at one time she found intoxicating, but through it she could find a hint

of the liquid that held body parts. Closing her eyes tightly she delivered a kiss to the back of his neck.

She reached for the device, it's metallic noise lost not on her or Felicia, but on Didier so enraptured by this attention. Vivian gathered it into one hand, it's weight phenomenal, the coils curling around her small fingers. Didier's had moved down Felicia's body and was exploring her stomach. Felicia was still and silent, only her hips pumping to a rhythm known only by women as she reached out and without sound, rescued the device from Vivian's quivering hands.

In a movement that was akin to akido, Felicia had fastened Didier's hands to the bedpost, the length of chain encircling the wooden slats. His body became alive, on guard, his eyes searching hers frantically.

Felicia, still poised under him pressed her body up to his, her full breasts pressing against his chest. "She said you're in to this," she said in a husky voice Vivian didn't recognize. "So am I." Didier was silent, looking to Vivian with question. With a sultry smile she spoke, knowing that any utterance was enough to distract him.

"Honor upon Thieves." she whispered as Felicia slipped out from under his grasp and fastened the other cuff so that Didier lay fixed face down on the bed. His eyes were wild with passion and lust.

Felicia straddled his back as Vivian had moments ago and ran her hands down it. She played circles down his skin tracing the muscles as she went. She cooed at him, the way she had done to Chaucer. He struggled with the bonds, his voice reached a pitch witnessed only by the four walls.

"The blue bottle," Vivian said.

"Oh, yes," said Felicia, "the blue bottle." She lifted it from the table. "What do we have here?" she said mocking Didier's greeting. "What? Cocaine? Spanish Fly? A little topical H?" She drew out the stopper from the cobalt blue container and with the tongue of expertise, took a sample. "Hmmm." Felicia looked about the room, taking in what was displayed while she toyed with the stopper. She turned to Vivian. "You want a lesson?" she asked, her eyes dancing. "This is called *spiking*. I'm sure you'll do me the honors."

Vivian reached for the stopper, regarded the woman, her arms still outstretched in ecstasy, and drove the extractor in to Didier's neck. It shattered as Didier's vein exploded spilling crimson on the sheet beneath him. His body bucked at the assault, but Felicia's hands held him fast.

"You may want to turn away for this,"

Felicia said as she arched his body towards hers craning his neck up towards her face. And Vivian did as she saw Felicia's mouth come down upon the wound.

The blood, the sound in her ears, the scent that was carried in the still air made her woozy. She turned back to watch in paralyzed amazement as Felicia feasted. Death was not new, not to Vivian, but freedom, the smell of green grass and those open fields, that was new. That was real now. To leave this dreadful house, to go home, whatever home was, to go unbound.

Didier was dead, or close to it.

She could still hear the wet sounds coming from the bedroom behind her as she walked into the hall. She turned once to take in the beast that Felicia, her savior, had become. She crouched over the artist's body one hand steadying her balance, the other under his jaw as she drew back his head to bring the crimson stream to her mouth. Felicia looked up once her eyes gleaming with hunger fulfilled.

"Thank you," she said

"Thank *you*." Felicia replied quietly, "You never know about people, do ya, Viv?"

"I guess not." She closed the door behind her.

# CLIVE BARKER'S TORTURED SOULS



## 12 INCHES OF HELL

McFarlane Toys is producing a selection of the original Clive Barker's Tortured Souls action figures in larger 12-inch scale. Out of the initial six figures that were produced in 6-inch scale in 2001, five are being given the super-size treatment. The figures will only be available through special retailers.

**THE SCYTHE-MEISTER.** This figure will be available at Electronics Boutique

**AGONISTES.** This figure will be available at Spencer Gifts and Tower Records stores.

**VENAL ANATOMICA.** This figure will be available at the Musicland chain of stores (Sam Goody, On Cue, Mediaplay, Suncoast) and Marz Distribution.

**TALISAC.** This figure will be available to all specialty retailers.

**LUCIDIQUE.** She'll be available exclusively through Diamond Distributors, which services comic book and hobby stores nationwide.

These figures will be produced in very limited quantities and were set for an October release ... due to the recent lockout of dock workers at West Coast ports the release has been delayed a little. Lucidique will be available about two weeks after the initial four.

*Q&A continued from page 9*

**Abarat**, so much on *Abarat*, to publish all this uncollected stuff so that we make sure it is between hard covers for everyone to see.

**Question:** Do you think that the studio environment that resulted in *Nightbreed* being cut up the way was has gotten better or worse?

**Clive Barker:** There's a great question. I think that it's an important question. I think I have to answer it, two ways. I think the climate has not improved. I'm working with Universal. They took *The Night of a 1000 Maniacs*, or whatever that movie was, and they released it. They made an 8 million dollar horror movie and released it. So clearly that's still something that people do.

On the other hand, the DVD revolution has meant that you can now get in your contract, as part of the standard language in contracts, that you will be allowed to have your version on DVD. I think that as DVD's more sophisticated and the picture and the sound gets better, and as the cinema experience, on the other hand, gets more wretched, it may very well be that the experience we will choose, will be to go to our 70 inch flat television, which increasingly we're going to be able to have, and watch the DVD in the comfort of our own homes with our dog on our lap and the beer of choice sitting beside us, rather than sitting surrounded by people asking stupid questions. "What's he doing with that banana?"

"I don't know." (laughs)

**Question:** What's the status of American Horror?

**Clive Barker:** American Horror is still at New Line. Unfortunately, the man who brought it to New Line, a marvelous guy called Mike Daluca, who is responsible for it amongst other things, the Nightmare on Elm Street movies, Fight Club, and a bunch of others, is no loner there. He's at Dreamworks. So our great project is sort of hanging in the balance right now.

**Question:** What can you tell us about *Thief of Always* and *Damnation Game*?

**Clive Barker:** *Damnation Game* will be a movie from Warner Brothers sometime next year, I think, though we won't see it on the screen until the year after.

**Question:** Do you expect it to follow the book closely?

**Clive Barker:** Not closely.

It is a hard one, and frankly I've been so focused on *Abarat*, that I haven't been perhaps worried about that the same as I have been previously.

*Thief of Always* was going to be done at Universal. The rights

have reverted to me. So I am now looking for a new home for it. What's nice about it is Thief is it's taught in schools now. We have 1.1 million copies of it out in America. I probably get more mail about that book than any other. So I think it's dangerous for us to get into the mindset of that when we feel as though the absolute form of any narrative is cinematic. The absolute form of any narrative is in your head, right? And it gets into your head via my words, and in the case of *Abarat* via my word and my pictures. Then that is my preferred method in doing so because of a very simple reason. You become a co-creator in that process somebody once said that cinema is a fascist medium. Cinema tells you what to feel, when to feel it, here's the music. In a Spielberg movie, now cry. Now be thrilled. It's not the case with a book. A book allows you to create in your own mindscape the things that the words suggest to you. Your *Abarat* will not be like anybody else's in this room. It may have things in common. I hope it has things in common, but it won't be the same book. It will be in some part yours. You will be a co-creator. That's not true with cinema. So I will always value the literary and painted experience over the cinema.

**Question:** What's the status of *Weaveworld* on Showtime?

**Clive Barker:** The status of *Weaveworld* on Showtime is very good. We should, in principle, go before the cameras, although in preproduction in January of next year in Australia, where it will be summer. Obviously, Lord of the Rings was shot in New Zealand. It has a feeling of the landscape can lend itself to these monumental fantasy landscapes

**Question:** I heard on your website you were working on a project to end the Hellraiser story.

**Clive Barker:** Yes

**Question:** What's the status on that?

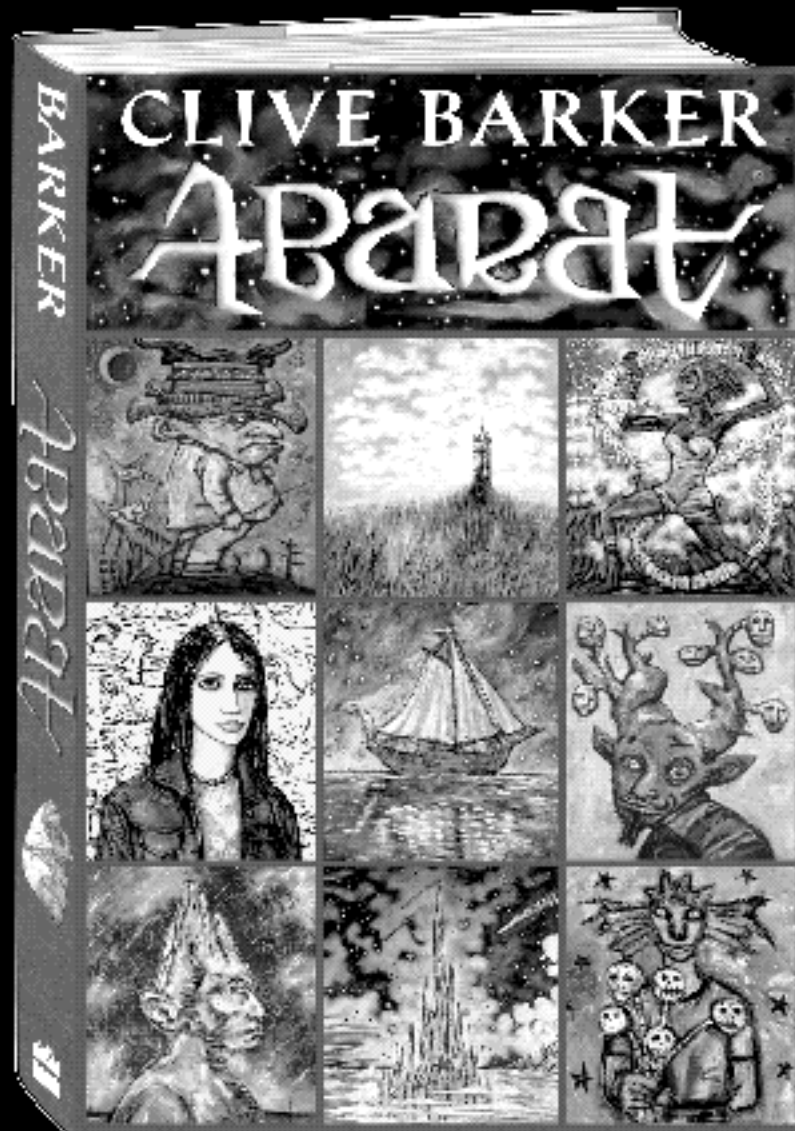
**Clive Barker:** Well talking about collections, as we were talking about before, I'm putting a collection together that would contain all the odds and sods which I haven't published. The only new thing that I might put in there would be a novella which would deal cataclysmically with the demise of the man with pins in his head. On the basis that I brought him into this world, I should be the one to kick him out. Also, I have conceived of a way to let him go with dignity. I think he's suffered a thousand indignities at the hands of bad screen writers over the last few movies. The least I can do is have everybody implored ....and let him go.

The only person who really really hates me for this is a very good friend of mine, a man called Doug Bradley, who plays pinhead. I was 50 yesterday and I've know Doug for 35 years. When he heard about this on the website he wrote me a letter. He was going to put his kids through college on this character. How dare I'm killing him! Literally, it was in the voice of pinhead, this letter. So essentially, I was getting a message from hell saying, "Don't you dare kill me you son of a b!"

I'm going to sign books. I'm so glad you are all here. Were gonna have some fun. Thank you.



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and artist Clive Barker



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