

Blood of the Gods

By
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“Do you believe in eternal life?” the hooded figure asked the man slumped before him.

“I –” the man faltered, his gaze fell to the ground, and his feeble shoulders were somehow able to droop even further than they’d already been. “I don’t know what to believe in anymore.”

Pleased with the pathetic man’s shamed response, the hooded figure retrieved a cloth pouch from inside his cloak, held it in the palm of his hand and shook it, jangling its silver contents.

The man looked up; his dark, brooding eyes locked onto the pouch. He reached out his hand, wavered, then stopped, as if time froze up. But only for a moment. His hand started to tremble, and he felt what little bearings he had left in him quickly slip away. Panicked, he shot his hand forward and snatched away the pouch. He cradled it to his body, fingering his traitorous reward.

He turned to take his leave, but after taking one step, he looked back over his shoulder. His voice quivered when he dared to turn the question back onto the hooded figure.

“Do you believe in eternal life?”

A sickle smile revealed jagged, yellow teeth within the darkness of the hood, and with black mockery he replied, “Verily I say unto you, I certainly do. And it shall be mine for the taking.”



The hostile sun burned high in a cloudless blue sky, baking the desert earth and sending up tiny dust clouds from marching footfalls. When he stumbled and fell the abrasive ground scraped his knees and caused his burden to rub raw against the back of his skinned neck, but it was a far cry from what he’d already suffered.

The fall elicited a thunder of cries and curses from the inflamed crowd. His eyes were crusted with dried blood and dust and nearly swollen shut, but through narrow slits of his eyelids he was still able to see. He saw their faces, the hate they portrayed, but not only that, he could actually *feel* their hate. He’d known similar hate before, a hate fueled by ignorance and fear, but never such a strong sense of it like this, and although these people, his very own, numbered in the thousands, there were many among them who bemoaned his fate. The physical pain he endured was almost unbearable, but through it he was able to absorb the love of those who believed, and that gave him the strength to push onward.

Weak legs wobbling, he lurched back onto his feet. His arms ached beneath the weight when he pulled his burden back up across his shoulders. The journey would soon be over but these last steps felt like an eternity.

On the hills crest he was forced to lie with his back against the dogwood post, arms out to his sides, and long iron nails were hammered into their places. When he was raised vertical to the ground his body

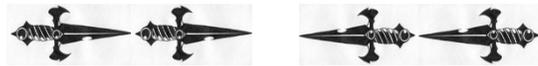
stretched under his own weight, and he gave a painful shudder when the bottom of the post slid into the posthole and hit solid ground.

The crowd's collective anguish and hatred was so severely focused that no one gave notice to the hooded figure that came beneath the crucified's bleeding wrist, and still gave no notice when a small silver jar was held up to catch his blood. Once a satisfactory amount was procured the hooded figure secured the jar and vanished into the crowd.

Sometime later the crucified's side was pierced by a spear and water and blood gushed from the wound.



The catacomb had many galleries and chambers, most were reserved for tombs, but two were specially reserved for more observed purposes. In one of these two chambers a eunuch slave lit torches in the wall sconces and then prepared the room for the event that would soon be taking place, and even though the task he was charged with was not difficult, he was sure to be precise in what little was required of him. He dare not disappoint his masters in the slightest, especially on this night. After he rolled up the camel skin that covered the stone floor's ancient inscription and swept away all the dust and dirt from floor to ceiling, and secured the iron chains, he stood anxiously near the entrance, awaiting their arrival.



There were six of them, hooded in long dark robes that dragged the ground as they entered the chamber and took their allotted positions in the middle of the room. Each member of the brethren stood within one of the five triangles, and the sixth person stood within the pentagon in the middle. Five circling one.

A hand gesture was made to the eunuch and he immediately responded, timidly approaching the figure that stood in the middle of the five and easing the hood away from their head. The eunuch had known prior to this evening that it would be a young woman but he was startled to find how beautiful she was: long silky black hair framed a slender face with high cheek bones and bright honey colored skin. Her wide framed eyes were big and so dark that the irises were indistinguishable from their pupils. But she did not look directly at him, her gaze was downcast and unfocused, as if she were in a dreamlike trance.

The eunuch disrobed her, slowly slipping the coarse garment from her shoulders and letting it drop to the floor, collecting in a dark puddle of fabric around her feet. She wore nothing under the robe, and he chanced a moment to allow his eyes to pass over her nude body. Like her male counterpart, she was pure and flawless, a virgin of smooth skin and supple

curves, dainty nipples crowned high breasts, and a small thatch of dark rabbit's fur pubic hair nestled between her long legs. Had the eunuch still been equipped he would have felt an immediate stirring, but despite the loss of his carnal desire it did not affect his cognizance for beauty and so he took advantage of its measures, secret as they were, on the rare occasions he was blessed to behold its essence.

Having spent a moment too long appraising her, a slight but obviously annoyed gesture from one of his five masters reminded the eunuch of his place here.

Chastened, the eunuch bent down to collect the robe from around the young woman's feet and then scuttled back to the wall.

All at once the five hooded figures carried their hands skyward, palms out, and commenced the incantation of the Fallen. The chant began slowly, each word concentrated with bridled intensity and control, invoking a hypnotic cadence that lulled the young woman's eyes closed and lured her body to unconsciously sway ever so slightly side-to-side. While the eerie chant continued, the volume and speed of the five increased until their vocal reverberation bounced off the chamber's dense walls and vibrated through the stale air.

Suddenly the torches in the wall sconces blossomed into orange and green tinted balls of fire, causing the eunuch to flinch and empty his bladder where he stood. Had he the right mind to, he would have bolted out of the chamber, but he was held entranced.

Heat waves rose from the young woman's feet and a multi-hued prism pulsed around her body. A sulfurous odor tinged the air. Her chest heaved as her breathing hitched and escalated. Each intake of breath caused her to stand more erect, her body more tensed, until suddenly she became impossibly still, as if she had turned to granite.

Her eyes shot open to reveal obsidian black orbs.

The five surrounding her were instantly silenced.

And then she spoke, but the voice that came from her was not her own, nor was the language of her native tongue. She was now an incarnation of Hemozel, the blood demon.

"Man no longer sacrifices such chaste beauty as he once so easily had in the days of yore." A small, wicked grin curved her bee stung lips. "This must be good."

She happened to be facing Daniel, so it was he who answered her, and while he spoke to her in the ancient Nephthum tongue, Samuel and Horace quietly eased up behind her with the chain and wrist irons at the ready.

Incarnation was unpredictable and extremely dangerous, and although body restraints were ideal, they could only be placed on the host after the spirit was fully incarnated. For incarnation to be successful a host must be free of covering and bondage. A naked and unbound host is an open door inviting the spirit to step inside, and the purer and more beautiful the host the stronger the lure and more tempting the possession,

otherwise had it been so easy restraints would have been secured onto the young woman prior to the incantation.

Just then something alarmed her, a tiny clink of a chain, and with speed and strength none of them could match, she whipped her arm backward and sent Samuel flying into the air, cracking his head against the wall, killing him instantly. She snatched Horace by the throat and he reflexively reacted, locking the iron around her wrist. She channeled her rage and squeezed her hand through the soft skin, curling her fingers around his esophagus and ripping the muscular tube out of his neck. A hydrant of blood spewed onto her body as he fell to the floor.

The eunuch's bowels turned to liquid as he sank in fear, cowering against the wall, shaking uncontrollably and stinking of his own urine and feces, his face a mask of perfect terror.

Daniel dove for the floor, snatching up the second wrist iron as the other two lunged at her, but their attack was false. When she moved to counterattack the three men dispersed and yielded just outside the perimeter of the pentagram, a border she could not cross. It was a controlled barrier and only two things could bring it down; the brethren's approval, or all five of their deaths.

The pentagram was four paces in diameter, the thick wrist irons Horace managed to clamp around her one wrist was secured to the floor on the other side of the barrier, but the length of the chain she was afforded gave her over half the radius of the pentagram to maneuver about. The three remaining members circled her, contemplating their next move. She hissed and snarled as she tried to grab them, jerking her chained arm back and forth, snapping the chain taut in an attempt to break free. The action tore the skin at her wrist to the bone, but earthly pain was such a trivial thing for a high demon, and if circumstances were different Hemozel would simply tear the vessel's hand off. But to do that now would be counterproductive, bound within this small enclosure and allowing the stump to bleed her out, giving them exactly what they wanted, so Hemozel reined in its rage.

Taking a passive stance, the aggression in her face faded into a serene mask. Lightly pressing a finger against her belly she slowly, seductively, traced nondescript squiggles in the slick blood. Then she spoke in their native tongue, using the girl's own voice. If it wasn't for the huge black orbs of her eyes she would appear as the human beauty she once was.

"So beautiful. . . So very pure. It would be a shame to allow it to go to waste, don't you think? Let's have ourselves a little fun."

When all three men spoke as one voice, rebuking the demon, the possessed woman gave them a suggestive little grin as she carried her hand upward, tracing a line with a delicate finger over the soft skin between her crimson covered breasts. Stepping forward just inches away from the pentagram's barrier, she widened her stance, cupped one breast in her hand, massaging its fullness, smearing the blood as if it were body

oil, pinching and pulling her nipple as if to milk it, encouraging it to swell. She pushed out her pelvis and brought her chained hand between her legs. Closing her eyes, a broken series of wanton sighs and moans escaped her as greedy fingers slid back and forth between the vulva of her sex.

The stark contrast of the carnally morbid scene unfolding before him had the eunuch slackjawed with engrossing anticipation for what was to come. He could not move, nor did he want to.

Daniel was about to rebuke the demon once more but before he gave voice Ladamus silenced him with a hand, and then pointed his finger toward her middle. Near to where they stood, blood flowed from the deep gouges she'd made in her wrist, dripping down her inner thighs while she fondled herself.

Zachariah went into his robe and came out with a small silver jar. Ladamus went into his robe and retrieved a silver dagger. Daniel held firmly onto the chain and irons yet to be cuffed onto her other wrist.

The possessed girl brought both hands together between her legs, using both to work herself over. Her chest heaved with a steady rise and fall of hard, shallow breathes on the brink of a screaming orgasm. She shuddered, and while in the lost moment, she withdrew her chained hand to hold it amid the air before her, mindlessly clenching and unclenching the open space there.

The blood dripped.

Her eyes closed tighter as she tilted her head back, rolling it languidly on her slender neck. Zachariah took advantage of her averted attention and carried the silver jar over the pentagram's barrier and held it beneath her wrist, catching the trickle of blood. Instantly he was snatched by the arm.

She snapped her head forward. Eyes opened wide, she leveled a heart stopping gaze on him, and smiled with sinister delight. It happened so fast and without warning that it took them all by surprise. Before Daniel and Ladamus could react she jerked Zachariah into the pentagram's circle, holding firmly onto his arm as she slammed him to the floor, flattened a foot over his chest, and torqued his arm from his shoulder. Zachariah's screams shook the room but Daniel and Ladamus did not falter, they charged at her. She parried Ladamus's dagger using Zachariah's dismembered arm, and then she slung it around and clobbered him over the head just before Daniel tackled her to the ground. The blow to the head only stunned Ladamus for a moment, he recovered quickly and went to help Daniel subdue her with the irons. They laid their full bodies over hers, using their weight to secure her to the floor in an attempt to chain her wrist, but both of their strengths together barely equaled hers as she bucked in a mad frenzy and screamed in vocal pitches not of this world.

Zachariah lay in shock to their side, his body twitching uncontrollably as powerful arcs of blood spurted out of his armless shoulder in time to the waning pump of his heart. Blood shot out onto the

three struggling next to him, its slipperiness made it nearly impossible for Daniel and Ladamus to keep hold of the possessed woman.

Unable to use the dagger ceremoniously, Ladamus took a chance by releasing it from his grasp, allowing it to fall to the floor so that he would have the use of both hands to help lock the iron cuff around her wrist.

Smothered by the weight of both men close to clasp the second iron around her wrist, the demon flexed her chained arm. Her face and neck swelled under the pressure, turning her color into a deep shade of reddish purple as wormy veins popped to the surface of her skin. The two men were filled with dread as she began to slide all three of them across the rough surface of the floor. The short distance she moved them gave her partial mobility of her chained arm, allowing her to reach for the dagger she knew to be lying on the floor next to her, only for her hand to touch bare surface.

All three looked up to find the eunuch standing over them, wielding the dagger in his trembling hand.

“Please help me!” The woman pleaded. “I’ll give you everything you’ve ever wanted. Riches beyond this world. I’ll even give you back what was taken from you, if only you’ll help me. Please!”

” Do not listen to it!” Daniel yelled, red faced with panic. “She is no longer the human woman you see! She is the demon Hemozel, the child of the father of lies and deceit! She’s only trying to trick you! She’ll devour your soul!”

“No, never. Your soul is only yours to give and I would not ask – ”

“Lies!” Daniel yelled.

“They are the liars! Just look at what they are trying to do. And for what?”

“Silence, demon!”

“They will keep you enslaved. I will make you free.”

“I rebuke you demon!”

“Please help me!”

“We need you now more than ever!” Ladamus yelled desperately. “Help us, and you will become a true brother of the brethren!”

Torn between two opposing worlds, vitality and death, beauty and dull content, the eunuch trembled with fear and uncertainty. But for all that, the eunuch readied himself, bent down, then laid the dagger to the side. He took up the iron cuff and secured it around the possessed woman’s wrist.

“Fool!” she spat at the eunuch. Her whole body then went limp, as if in defeated surrender.

A moment of quiet relief passed through the men before they relaxed their grip on her arms. The moment their exhausted limbs went slack, she shot her face upward, sinking her teeth into the soft skin of Daniel’s neck and biting out a chunk of flesh, severing the artery. She

chewed his flesh voraciously and swallowed it down, then she laughed uproariously, arching her back off the floor and whipping her head side-to-side. Her hysterical laughter turned into a mad fit as she jerked her chained arms to and fro, lifting her legs and spreading them wide in vulgar mannerism while kicking about.

Daniel slapped a hand to his neck in a desperate attempt to stanch the blood flow, but it was pointless. In a matter of seconds he collapsed to his knees and fell over dead.

Ladamus snapped at the eunuch, "Hurry! Time is of the essence!"

Ladamus retrieved the dagger and the eunuch retrieved the silver jar. She jerked and snapped and roared at them but the chains held true. The eunuch set the jar on the floor, grabbed hold of her arm and held tight as he stretched it over the jar. Ladamus drove the dagger deep into the flesh of her forearm and sliced down its length, opening the veins. The dark demonic blood poured from the wound like honey from a barrel. Once a sufficient amount was procured Ladamus held the dagger over her, and just before he brought it down, she set her cold dark gaze on the eunuch and said, "A slave in life, and so you shall be in eternal death."

The dagger entered her heart, releasing her and the demon in a burst of green and orange flames.



The silver jar was taken to the second chamber where it was placed on a table, next to an identical silver jar whose contents were visually much alike but the two similarities went no further than what the naked eye could perceive. Their differences went much deeper and were more intricate and powerful than any human could imagine. And what happened to Ladamus's fellow brethren could not have been more perfect. It saved him the labor of dealing with each one himself. All five members were to reap the benefits of what was sure to be an abundance of wealth and power, but Ladamus was greedy and he wanted it all for himself. And as far as the eunuch went, well, he'd be easy to deal with. Once a slave, always a slave.

Just then he was forced again to remind the eunuch of his place, cuffing him sharply across the face and scolding him for his snooping around the work table.

The eunuch bowed his head in shame and apologized for his ignorance, stepping away from his master.

The ceremony was lackluster to say the least. The two jars were emptied equal parts into another larger jar and, using the blade of the silver dagger, stirred into an even consistency. The dagger was then laid aside and the jar's contents were poured into a gold chalice. Ladamus closed his eyes and circled his hands wide around the chalice as he gave a final blessing. His voice quivered as he could barely contain his excitement, knowing what was about to take place.

Alas. Light and darkness brought unto one another to coincide within one living soul.

He opened his eyes to finally take the chalice and lift it to his lips. . . but it was gone. Struck with panic he panned the chamber and saw the eunuch at the end of the table, holding the chalice in his hands. Instantly he was enraged at the eunuch for so blatantly defying his authority. He snatched up the dagger and ordered the slave to hand over the chalice or else suffer the consequences.

But the eunuch did not seem to hear him. Or perhaps he did not care. He simply stood there holding a blank gaze on his master.

Or, rather, what was once his master.

The very thought brought a gratifying smile to the eunuch's lips, revealing the crimson stained teeth in his mouth. He noted the look that came over his old master's face, a look of confusion that teetered on the edge of seething anger.

The eunuch upended the chalice, an exaggerated show of proof for what he'd so boldly done.

"No. . ." the old master said breathlessly, refusing to believe it. After all that had been sacrificed and procured, the Blood of Life from the Son of the High God coupled with the Blood of Darkness from the incarnation of the damned, a perfect marriage of the two bloods to create a new and wonderous being of the world . . . Now gone forever from his grasp.

Ladamus's head hung limp and his hand went slack, dropping the useless dagger to the floor. His legs wobbled, threatening collapse as he knelt down to his knees and bowed before the eunuch. One word passed humbly from his lips, a word that was often used by many in reference to himself but he had never once used to address another man by. Until now.

"Master."

The eunuch's lips spread further to form a sinister smile, and the soft orange glow from the chamber's torches gleamed magnificently off the two razor sharp fangs that slowly began to grow in his mouth.