

DEVIL'S NIGHT

SAMHAIN: DEVIL'S NIGHT

BY

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INTRODUCTION

This is the story of a fictional character, a man in search of his origins and the mysterious powers that govern his existence. Meanwhile, a woman finds herself on the run, accused of being a witch and pursued by her captors. In a twist of fate, she is rescued by a mysterious stranger. As she realizes the magnitude of this encounter, she understands that her world will never be the same again. Together, they embark on a nightmarish journey of survival, facing terrifying creatures like the succubus, incubus, and fiendish demons, as well as angry townspeople and even the devil himself.

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PROLOGUE

February 22, 1692, Salem, Massachusetts. Nighttime screams from inside of a house echo through the air. Inside, a woman lies on a bed, experiencing labor pains as a child is being delivered by a man dressed in a red robe. Afterwards, he carries the screaming infant out of the back entrance of the house. Suddenly, men burst through the front door, appearing as pilgrims wearing long black hats with white and black tailored outfits. One man grabs the woman who just gave birth by her wrist, yelling out, "Witch! You'll burn for this!" The three men drag her out of the house and tie her to a wooden stake, while one of her accusers says, "The devil has defiled so many in our beloved town. The Devil's children walk among us, which will no longer be tolerated." As the woman screams out in fear, the villagers yell, "Burn her! Burn the witch!" The pilgrim then holds out a torch, while another man lights it on fire. The pilgrim raises the torch above his head and says, "May God have mercy on her soul," after lighting the straw under her feet on fire. She squirms and screams out in pain.

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**PART I: Lillith, the Devil's
Daughter**

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"To know the devil is to know those who deceive and corrupt the minds of people. In return, those people will turn away, with their misguided delusions, from the natural order of creation."

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Twenty-four years later, a woman runs through the woods, being pursued by a group of men. She stumbles and takes a hard tumble, hitting herself against a tree. The men approach her, led by a bearded man with unkempt hair and a wicked smile. He tells the woman, "There's no escape. Final judgment is at hand." The woman slips in and out of consciousness from the fall.

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A man steps out of the bushes, wearing a dark black hooded robe. The men turn to look at him. The man's hands are tucked underneath the arm sleeves of his robe. The men try to make out the stranger's face, as his eyes are concealed by his hood. While the stranger says, "Leave her alone."

The mangy-haired bearded man pulls out a knife and says, "Are you in cohorts with this witch? You'll suffer the same fate by being burned at the stake." The hooded man replies, I take it you heard me the first time. " I'm not going to tell you again."

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The four men surround the hooded man. He smirks, then puts his hands up to his hood as if to uncover his head. Suddenly, from the distance of the forest, fiery yellowish, bright orange, and red lights illuminate a portion of the area. The screams of the men can be heard.

A strange-looking house, built by strong roots, thick branches, and large stones as if the earth was its very foundation, sits in a secluded forest. Inside the home, a man sits in front of a fireplace, watching the fire crackle and burn. As he sits, a woman stirs around on a bed of leaves, then says, "Ohh, where am I?" She sits up, takes a look around, and sees the hooded man sitting in front of the fireplace with his back to her. The hooded man doesn't turn around; he just sits still as he speaks, "Don't be alarmed. You're no longer in any danger," he says. The woman replies, "What about those men? They were going to try me as a witch."

The man says to her, "They're no longer your concern." As she then becomes a little erratic while saying, "Me and a group of women were accused of witchcraft by a jealous shopkeeper who couldn't handle rejection. Oh God, and it was all because of me. Those poor women. I watched as one was stoned to death while another was placed in a cage and dunked under water until she drowned. That's when I loosened my bindings and ran. As I ran, I heard another woman screaming as they were burning her." The woman wipes tears from her eyes while the man just sits still,

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watches the fire burn, and ashes rise out from the flames. The man then says to the woman, "It's all over now. Just be grateful that your life was liberated this day, even from the unfortunate tragic events that befallen your friends."

The woman gets off the bed of leaves and walks towards the man. She tries to get a better look at his face, but the hood is still concealing his eyes. She then says to him, "I am thankful to you. Do you have a name? My name's Sarah." He turns his head in her direction and says, "I never needed one." Sarah says to him "You must be a private person and very lonely at that, not to have a name." She looks around the room and sees some areas of the stone wall that look as if something had scorched them. Then she turns to look back at him and says, "How about we give you a name? Let's see, how about... Oh, I got it! How about Sam? My father's name was Sam. He was a good man. Samhain, yes, that's it. Samhain. What do you think?"

The man then turns his head to stare back at the fireplace, then says, "Samhain it is then." Sarah looks down at the fireplace, then says to the man who has just been given the name Samhain, "Have you always lived here alone?" Samhain says to her, "I suppose, in your line of reasoning, I have." Sarah says, "What is that supposed to mean?" He stands up and says, "There are things you wouldn't understand." Hearing sounds of footsteps outside on the front porch, he says, "It appears we have company."

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Samhain opens the door to a large group of villagers armed with farming tools, led by a pilgrim holding a torch. The pilgrim says, "I hereby place you two under arrest for four counts of murder and witchcraft." Samhain responds to the pilgrim and the hostile villagers, "I'm only going to say this once: leave while you still have the chance, and never return here again." Suddenly, there are sounds of flapping wings as the villagers look up. They all scream, "Run! Run for your lives! The Devil's children have come to their aid." Samhain and Sarah both turn around and look up to see winged bat-like demons. They appear to be female and have a death stare that neither of them flinches from. The demons descend upon the villagers as they flee, latching onto the villagers with powerful, strong grips. They sink their claws deep into the villagers' flesh while their mouths remain wide open, sucking the very life out of them.

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Samhain casts a chilling glance of his own as he gazes up at the sky with his glowing red eyes to meet the succubus's stare. He turns to the frightened woman standing beside him and says, "Looks like these creatures saved me the trouble of dealing with them, but I don't think they're here to make friends."

Sarah asks, "What are they?"

Samhain replies, "I told you there are things you wouldn't understand, but what I call them are succubus. That's the name I gave them after watching them feed off of wildlife one morning,

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just like they're doing now. They've been coming to me from time to time, trying to get me to follow them. I don't know for what purpose nor do I care that I didn't want to get involved with such creatures." Suddenly, a succubus swoops down at him, tearing through cloth and flesh with its sharp claws. Samhain is surprised because they've never attacked him before. Usually, they only beckon for him to follow them. Sarah then screams out as two succubus grab hold of each of her arms. They lift her up off the ground and fly away with her. After Sarah leaves, screaming out for Samhain, he turns towards his distraction. He puts out his hand, clenching his fist as the creature in front of him lights up in flames. Then, he runs after the woman.

Meanwhile, Sarah finds herself in a cave. As she looks around, she sees corpses lying on the ground around her. She gasps at the sight of them. Startled, she notices a rat scurrying close to her foot. As she goes to kick at it, she finds herself kicking at expensive jewelry. It looks as though she has landed in a treasure trove, as jewelry layers the ground from where she sits. She then sees a strange-looking woman sitting on a slab of concrete stone with her legs crossed.

The woman is wearing a torn, see-through nightgown. Her fingernails are polished with dark red paint, and she has scaly skin that glistens from the dripping water and light shining through the roof of the cave. Curved horns protrude out from her forehead, as if something made her that way. There are scabs

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around the openings of the wounds inflicted by the horns. A forked tongue slithers from the devil woman's lips.



Sarah asks the woman, "Why have you brought me here?" The woman stands up, walks towards Sarah, then stops and looks down at her. She says, "Hush, child. Be patient. It looks as though my son has taken a liking to you."

An imp-like creature small as a little boy, known as the incubus flaps his leathery, bat-like wings from behind Sarah and pulls down hard on her long, brown hair. Sarah pushes him away,

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causing him to slide across the jewelry strewn about on the ground. He lets out a scream in anger as he then flies off towards a dark corner of the cave. Sarah says to the woman, "Keep him away from me." The woman replies, "For now, but soon you'll fall for his temptations, just as soon as I get what I want."



Samhain then comes running through the cave, almost losing his footing as he slides through the jewelry on the ground. He comes to a stop, he says to the woman, "What is this place? Who are you, and what do you want with her?"

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The woman turns to stare at him and says, "Come now, surely you should know what I want, and it really has nothing to do with her. She was just to lure you here. I knew it would be the only way to bring you here. As for who I am, I'm the very first woman made from perfection and who committed the first sin against all of nature. Forever now, I am cursed with the appearance of the devil who deceived me and confined me to this cave as nothing more than a breeder for his loathsome children."

Samhain asks the woman, "And what exactly is it that you want from me?"

The woman walks over to a mirror and picks up a pearl-handled brush. While looking into the mirror and brushing her long black hair, she says to him, "What I want is the power you possess, the power of the divine grace, of God itself. We both know you're not like anyone else. You're unique. You've been gifted. Just like I once had been. Once I consume the power you hold within you, I'll break this curse and become immortal once again. I'll never age, I'll never die. I'll be the mother of creation, like the days of old, where it once was meant to be. But this time, I'll do whatever it is that I please. Nothing will ever stand in my way.

Samhain asks the woman, "If you're the first woman to have been created, where is the first man?" She stops brushing her hair, looks at his reflection behind her in the mirror and says, "Pray that you'll never find out." She grabs hold of the mirror and swings it at him. As he raises his hands to defend himself,

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the mirror shatters, sending shards of glass into his hands. He screams out in pain. Then, she leaps on top of him, knocking him to the ground with her knees on his chest. She bends down and licks his face with her wet, elongated forked tongue. As she reaches over and picks up a large piece of broken glass, she gets hit on the back of the head with a rock the size of a fist. Blood trickles down the back of her head. While Sarah is prepared to throw another one, the devilish woman turns her head to Sarah and hisses in anger, showing sharp fangs protruding from her gums. Meanwhile, the incubus and succubus grab hold of Sarah, restraining her. The devilish woman then shifts her attention towards Samhain, holding a broken piece of glass ready to strike a killing blow. Suddenly, the woman can see her breath and she starts feeling cold. She looks down and sees Samhain grabbing a hold of her torso with his bloody hands as her upper body turns into solid ice. He then pushes her off of him, causing her to shatter on the ground. Her lower body lies there with steaming entrails flopping out, no longer held in place by her missing upper half. At that very moment, the incubus and the succubus scream out as they crumble to dust.

Sarah looks at Samhain with fear in her eyes and then asks, "What the hell are you?" Samhain slowly lifts himself off the ground, remembering the pain in his hands. He squints his eyes and grits his teeth before responding, "I don't know exactly what has become of me. I just know whatever it is, it isn't evil, it's more of a benevolent force, something neutral by nature. It acts

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accordingly to certain situations, the environment, and people." Sarah asks him, "And you have no memory of how this happened? Nobody you know, no family or friends, nothing at all?" Samhain looks down at the mangled corpse lying at his feet, then says, "I have vague memories because it's been so long, but I do remember an old woman."

Afterward, the two make it back to the house. Samhain then sits on a chair that is strangely constructed in a way much like the house, from tree bark and vines. Sarah looks for a needle and thread. When she finds some, she goes and kneels down where Samhain is sitting and starts to stitch the wounds in his hands. She says to him, "Now tell me what you can remember." Samhain looks at the fireplace. It slowly starts to go out, but then it lights up as if it were willed by a supernatural force. Then he says, "All I remember is the old woman and the stories she told me of her discovery of me. She came to me while I was washed up on shore with muffled screams, encased in a cocoon made from strong vines and branches. The roots seemed to stay strong, as if they were absorbing energy from my very life force. The old woman must have thought right then and there that I was someone special. She took me under her care like I was one of her own. She was the only one I felt close to. She showed me how to benefit from my powers by quickly growing fruits and vegetables by sheer will, creating flower gardens. It was a serene life, to say the least. But that memory of her seems to fade away

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like a ghost." Sarah says, "You don't remember what happened to her?"

Samhain replies, "I remember as a boy, I got curious one morning, watching the old woman come and go while leaving me alone at the place where we lived together. She would return after some time with the bare necessities, something my powers could not produce. She could really bake a good pumpkin pie, I do remember that, and I do miss that, along with her company. She was a wise woman in her years. She would tell me stories about how dangerous people can get towards one another. Out of fear of death, it becomes a way of life, using that fear on certain individuals. And that's exactly what I have learned.

But now back to the story, one morning I set out to follow her, even though she told me it was dangerous. I thought she was just saying that to keep me there, overprotective as I imagined. Because how could it be dangerous if she never took anything to protect herself with? This made me even more curious. What was it that she could be hiding that she didn't want me to know? I kept my distance so that she wouldn't see me following at a steady pace, lurking behind one tree to the next. We then came to a town which will forever haunt me - the town of Salem."

Sarah says, "I've heard of that town. It was suspiciously burnt to the ground, and many lives were lost in that fire." She stopped talking and continued stitching Samhain's wounds. Samhain then goes, "Ow!" She apologizes for sticking him too hard with the

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needle. Samhain then goes on with his story, saying, "I then entered the town and walked quite a ways, not trying to draw too much attention to myself. I tried to keep my distance from the crowd of people. I remember there were a lot of people giving me looks, to the point where I felt I wasn't welcomed there. That's when I decided to leave town. On my way out, I then came across a group of kids laughing and pointing at me. One kid picked up a handful of mud and threw it at my face. As I went to wipe it off, one of the bigger kids stood in front of me and then punched me in the face causing my nose to bleed while falling to the ground. I don't remember much after that, only the feeling of wanting to put a stop to whatever caused me the pain. As far as I can remember, I found myself running alongside the old woman out of the town. I then caught a glimpse of the boys as we were running, and I saw the biggest one frozen in ice. The townspeople started to chase after us. We made it back to the house, and the old woman told me to hide in the secret hiding place under the floorboards. As I did that, I heard her screaming at the people. Telling them that I'm just a child. But they weren't listening to her. To them, I was just someone possessed by the devil. I watched through the window, holding the floorboards overhead, out of all their anger and confusion. They stoned the old woman to death, the only woman I ever knew and cared about for so many years. Watching a woman who was like a mother to me being brutally killed, and I could do nothing to stop it. At that time, I hadn't fully grasped the potential of my powers.

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Something had to set them off. I guess it must have come from maturation to learn to fully control them, but I was just a kid then full of anger. Next, I watched as they lit the house on fire while I hid underneath the floorboards. After everything became calm and the house had been burnt to cinders, the townspeople took their leave. I crawled out from under the floorboards and walked over to the old woman, hugging her tightly around her neck. I can't recall much after that, except for extreme heat and the sounds of screams, which I'll never forget. I then found myself lying face down in a creek with very little memory at all of the tragic events that had occurred."

Sarah looks at him with sadness in her eyes, holding back tears. She says, "You poor man. Do you have any thoughts on where you came from?" Samhain says, "None at all. But there is something else that has been brought to my attention. After killing that woman Lillith, I felt a wave of energy pass into me, as if I had absorbed a part of her. But not the part that made her into that creature. I feel it has made me stronger. I only used a small portion of my power on her because I was afraid that I might lose control. In any case, I needed close contact with the woman who claimed to be immortal. I didn't think fire would have had much effect. I didn't know what she was capable of. But now, I feel more in control. I don't feel that radiant energy that just wants to release itself at any given moment. It feels more calm, more willful." Sarah says, "So, then, that is a good

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thing, right?" Samhain replies, "I don't know about good; nothing ever is, but it isn't bad for someone who isn't power-hungry."

Conclusion: In a cool, damp cave, a gruesome scene unfolds. The lower half of a corpse lies there, with flies swarming and feasting upon the remains. A shadowy figure hovers over the lifeless body, wielding a blade resembling a scythe. With a swift motion, the figure slashes at the repulsive insects, determined to protect the remains. Then, a skeletal hand descends upon the corpse, its fingers stained with blood. With his corpse-like bloody bony fingers, the figure traces the shape of a heart where the lower missing half of the upper body should have been. In a demonic whisper, he vows that someone will pay dearly for this act, addressing the deceased as his loved one. While the figure retreats, as his foreboding shadow creeps out of the cave.

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PART II: Asmodeus, the Demon of Lust

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"Servitude is a plague of nature brought about by the aspirations of humanity, who burden others with death and despair for their own desires and selfish reasons. Those who are in control believe that it is true power, but in reality, it is nothing more than the possession of what people fear the most."

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Somewhere near a burnt town, which used to be known as the town of Salem, lies a river not too far from there known as the Ipswich River. A dark, cloud-like figure walks along its shores. As it rests on land, it takes another form of a cloaked skeletal figure that of a bony corpse. He holds a scythe that appears out of the cloudy darkness. This demonic persona, which appears to be death itself, raises his scythe into the air. As he stabs it into the earth, drawing a pentagram, the ground starts to tremble and the earth itself opens up. Three serpent-like creatures, known as the Shedim, with rooster-like features, emerge from the opening in the ground. They seem to be the very souls of demons themselves as they slither away towards the forest. Next comes a demon known as the Bagdana, who then lifts himself out of the ground, brandishing a sword made from jaded steel with ancient markings written on it. As he looks around, he spots the serpent-like demons slithering off towards the forest. The Bagdana has torn flesh throughout his body and spikes protruding down his muscular spine. His skin has a light green tint, and his face looks like it was gnawed on, with pus and blood spewing out from where his nose had been. His lower lip hangs from his other half that still seems to be attached to his mouth as he runs off towards the direction the other demons slithered off to. Suddenly, a yellow mist emerges from the opening in the ground, taking the form of another demon. The demon appears with drool dripping from his rotten, yellow teeth and bloodshot, yellow eyes. He then looks as if he has a bad case of mange, with

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his head covered in blotches of hot steaming tar. While sporting a fiendish smile reminiscent of a hyena, he turns to the skeletal, cloaked figure wielding a scythe who stands before him.

Asmodeus, the demon of lust, then speaks, "Now, what would the harbinger of death want with the demon of lust? Aren't there plenty of souls you can lay to waste without my help?" Death speaks in a horrid, chilling tone of voice that echoes as if there were more than just one of him. He says, "You know, I have no power over the living. I need you to bring someone to me. He has a companion. It should be simple for someone in your position. Seduce him, drain the life from him, do what you must, then bring his soul to me."

Asmodeus asks, "Why me? Can't you send lesser fiends to do your bidding?" Death stares at the demon of lust with a hollow gaze that makes the demon feel uncomfortable. Without feelings except for one that burns at his very bones, which remains as an example of disobedience from a very long time ago, Death speaks, sounding more horrible than before, as if there were souls all around screaming out in pain. He says, "Because the man that I seek possesses powers that should not be. He has taken the only woman I ever loved and shattered her memory to pieces as if she meant nothing. She was everything to me." His bony hands tightly grip the scythe he's holding. He continues, "Even though I no longer feel love, she was the only one who made me feel like I still had meaning, a purpose to go on. And

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now all I can think about is death. The cravings are getting stronger to the point where it's out of my control. Reaping the soul responsible for this will bring me great comfort, knowing he is in here with us."

The demon of lust rubs his chin with a tar-stained hand with long, chipped fingernails. He says, "Hmm, if I do this, what do I get in return?" Death moves about in a shadowy form, then appears in a skeletal form beside the demon of lust. He puts his bony hand on the demon's shoulder and says, "You do this for me, and you'll get your freedom. Corrupt and feed off the lustful desires of anyone you choose. No longer will you struggle in Hell, feeding off the unhappiness of others who have already been damned. You and I both know there's no pleasure in that. Now go, prove yourself, and I'll release the restraints that bind you to Hell. You'll no longer be controlled by a boundary system of a set of rules."

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The demon of lust fiendishly grins and says, "I'll hold you to that." He then changes shape into a yellow mist as he heads towards the forest, disappearing from Reaper's sight.

In a forest area, there lies a strangely constructed house. As if it were built from the earth itself, sits a man and a woman on the porch of the stone steps. The man, dressed in a dark black robe with a hood over the top of his head, converses with the woman. She has long brown hair and is wearing a filthy dress, as if it hadn't been washed in days. The woman, named Sarah, says to the man known as Samhain sitting beside her, "You never did tell

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me what that old woman's name was who took care of you for all of those years." Samhain says to her, "Her name was Bethany." Sarah then says, "And she never decided to give you a name?" He then looks up at the sky, watching a flock of birds fly out of the trees in the forest. He says to her, "No, she liked to call me Red. It was her nickname for me. She was kind of fond of it. I didn't like it much, but I saw that it pleased her. She took a liking to the color of my hair. She said it resembled a cardinal, one of her favorite birds. So I just let it go and never mentioned to her to give me a real name that people normally go by." Suddenly, bushes rustle in the forest as if a creature is ready to leap out and attack the two sitting at the foot of the steps. Then, what appears from out of the bushes is a fox with orange fur and a streak of white fur from its neck to her chest. She runs towards Samhain and stops in front of him. Samhain reaches out with a bandaged hand and carefully pets the furry creature. He then says to the furry familiar, "Trixie, where have you been?" Sarah says to him, "Aww, why didn't you tell me you had a pet fox?" She walks over to Trixie, reaches out her hand, and pets her. Samhain says to Sarah, "After all we've been through, it just didn't cross my mind. This has been the longest time she has ever been gone before. Sometimes I wish I could see through her eyes and see what it is she sees." Trixie then sniffs around and sees a yellow mist forming from behind Sarah. It looks as though it entered into her. While rubbing her arms, Sarah feels a chill and says, "Brrr, this fall weather." Samhain says, "I haven't noticed." Trixie

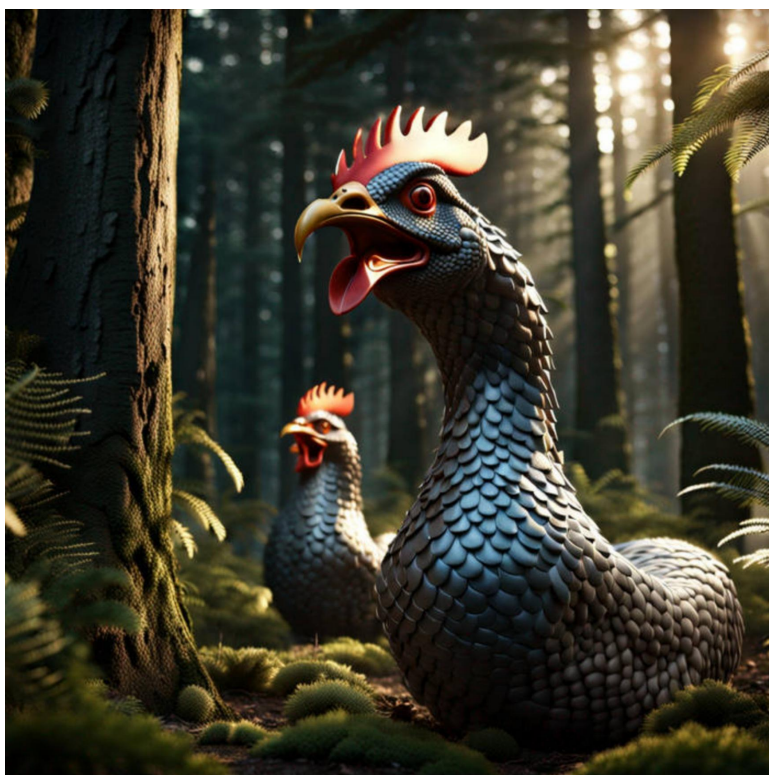
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then whimpers and runs back into the forest. Samhain rubs his chin then says, "That never happened before. Something must have spooked her. I better go check it out." Sarah tells him, "Wait, I'm coming with you." He tells her to stay close.

As the two search through the forest, Samhain calls out, "Trixie, where are you?" But she's nowhere to be found. Samhain calls out once more, "Trixie, where did you go, girl?" Sarah says to him, "I've got a bad feeling about this," giving off a creepy look from behind him as if she were possessed. Suddenly, the two come across the fiends that came from out of the portal to Hell that the Reaper had opened up, releasing them. Sarah reacts in a frightened way from the grotesque appearance of the Bagdana, looking for comfort in Samhain's arms while she covers her face with her hands. But suddenly, out from the wooded area, two more Shedim slither out. While the Bagdana is facing off with one Shedim, the other two turn their attention towards Samhain and Sarah. As he holds her close in his arms, he then pulls her behind him as one of the Shedim clamps down hard on his bandaged hand with its beak, opening up his stitches. Meanwhile, the other Shedim slithers towards his feet and clamps down on his calf. He screams out in pain and anger as he grabs the head of the Shedim with his right hand. As it hangs from his bloody left hand, he freezes the demon's head with pressure, causing the creature's head to shatter into pieces. He then looks down at the other Shedim with a dead-like, mad stare, as if he felt he could destroy anything in his path, like he did to

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the town of Salem all those years ago. Suddenly, the ground begins to shake under the demon as strong, rooted spikes come up from under it, impaling the creature. The Shedim falls limp at his feet, twitching for a short period of time before finally stopping moving.



The Bagdana finishes off the last Shedim. He then turns and stares at Samhain with a half-swollen eye and the other eye bloody, making it look as if he were crying tears of blood. It

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seems as though he had experienced human emotions of pain and torment. He snarls at Samhain and then says, "You were what they were after. I can see why you have something that I want." Samhain tells him, "I have nothing of yours." Bagdana replies, "Oh, but you do. It's buried deep within your chest, which is where I'm going to bury my sword." Samhain replies, "You can try, but the condition you're in looks as if you'd be just as successful as those bothersome creatures," as he points down at the dead demon Shedim lying at his feet.



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The Bagdana then howls in anger, raises up his sword as it glows with a greenish flame like it was pulled out from a fiery furnace, and charges at Samhain. Samhain waves his arms in front of him, creating an ice wall shielding him from the demon's attack. The Bagdana slashes into it, melting through it quickly as if it was made of nothing. Sarah runs towards a tree to take cover while Samhain casts a small whirlwind just to knock the demon off his feet. The whirlwind sends the demon vertically, slamming his back hard against a tree. He then slowly gets up, looking around for his sword as he goes to reach for it. Tentacle-like vines come up out of the ground, entangling him all over his body. Samhain approaches and starts asking him questions, "Where did you come from? Are there any more of you?" The demon replies, "Plenty more. All I know is someone has it out for you, and the one who does is Godsend." Samhain asks, "If that's true, why doesn't he come and resolve the issue himself instead of sending a lesser fiend and mindless creatures to do it for him?" The demon spits out a slimy yellow and green mucus, then says, "Maybe he is toying with you, seeing if you're worthy to face him," and lets out a loud laughter, loud enough to scare birds out of their nests in the trees. Samhain then sends the demon descending into the earth as the vines pull him under the ground, still laughing while trying to free himself as his mouth gets filled with dirt. Sarah then approaches Samhain and says, "What do you suppose that was all about? Do you think maybe it was because of Lillith? She did mention she had once been with a

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man we have not yet encountered, and those demons seem to be drawn to you." Samhain says, "I expected as much. That wouldn't be the end of it after Lillith. As for those demons wanting what I've got, that's something I'm looking forward to finding out. It could help me understand why I'm the way I am." Sarah then says, "Can we head back now? I'm getting cold." Samhain replies, "Yeah, I'm sure Trixie will find her way back home now that there's no longer a threat."

As the two make it back to the house, Sarah gathers fresh bandages, a needle, and thread. She proceeds to stitch up his hand and lower calf carefully. She rubs salve on his wounds to prevent infection, Samhain expresses his gratitude, acknowledging that he wouldn't know what to do without her. He admits that he would probably have infections setting in if not bled to death.

Sarah then hands him a cup of orange spice tea that Samhain had kept around as a memory of an old woman who once was like a mother to him. It was their favorite tea during stormy nights. Sarah asks if he minds that she found it in his cupboards. He responds, saying that there's no better time to drink it than now, especially with a friend. Although it may not be very fresh, Sarah takes a sip and assures him that it tastes fine, encouraging him to drink up.

After taking a few more sips, Samhain's vision becomes disoriented. He then feels a strong attraction towards Sarah, a

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kind he has felt before but now no longer in control of his urges. She walks him towards a bed made of sticks and leaves, and lies him down. Everything appears to go in slow motion, as if he has an uncontrollable urge to just allow her to do whatever it is that she wants to him. She then slips out of her dress and walks over to him, helping him out of his clothes. As they kiss for the first time, they hold one another in a loving embrace. She lies in his arms, rubbing her fingers across his shoulder where the succubus had once scratched him, which has already started healing itself.

Sarah sits on top of him, then smiles fiendishly and starts to change into a grotesque rotting corpse. Asmodeus speaks through her, saying, "Ha ha! You're now in my domain. No use fighting it. The one who sent me said you had powers, but I never dreamed of the pure energy flowing through you. I thought maybe you might have been protected by an angel. Some angels have been known to protect saints, but you remain a mystery. I promised, I promised to bring him your soul, the one who sent me. But I'm afraid I'm going to have to break that promise because I think I'll take your power for myself, and there won't be anything left of you once I'm through with you. After consuming the sheer power that you possess, I'll become a god, and I won't need to worry about him and the power he holds over me anymore."

Samhain stumbles to his feet and says to the demon, "In whose name do you speak, demon?" The demon of lust says, "Never

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mind him now. He's no longer relevant. It's just me and you." Samhain tells him, "I don't know what makes you demons think you can control the powers within me. Hell, I can hardly control them myself. And if these powers are as strong as you say they are, what makes you think you can defeat me, even here in this makeshift fantasy of yours?"

Asmodeus says, "For one, you can't tell what's real and what's not. And two, what you think you're capable of will become something entirely different than what you had expected, all because of this makeshift fantasy you call it. But what I like to think of it as distorted reality, giving me the upper hand over anyone's God-given free will."

Samhain says, "Right!" as his hands ignite in flames. He then throws a fireball at the demon, which then becomes a cloud of smoke after hitting the demon square in the chest. The demon fans the smoke away from his face as he walks through the cloud of smoke. Then, he laughs and says, "You'll have to try harder than that." The demon appears in his natural form, standing next to the corpse of the woman. The corpse slumps over on the bed of leaves, Samhain stands a few feet away from the corpse, the woman he was just getting to know and developing strong feelings for. The demon then makes a gesture with his hands, as if he were controlling a puppet. The corpse starts to move about on its own. It then leaps at Samhain, snarling like a rabid beast devouring its prey. Samhain and the corpse struggle together as

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they hit the ground, her teeth gnashing while he tries not to get bitten, holding her by her wrist. Asmodeus then stands next to him, watching as he struggles with the animated corpse on the ground. The demon of lust says, "it's hard to tell if that's really your friend, your lover, or your newfound enemy. It's hard to make that choice of how to put a stop to it, huh?" Suddenly, Samhain catches a glimpse of their reflection in the window and sees what's really going on. He realizes that he is lying next to Sarah, struggling in his sleep while she is sound asleep next to him. The demon of lust is standing at the foot of the bed with a fiendish smile, mischievously twiddling his fingers together as if the demon is watching the outcome from two places at once. Samhain realizes that it really isn't her; it's a struggle within himself. Only then, he starts to draw energy rather than casting powers at the corpse. As he does, he absorbs her energy along with the energy of the demon Asmodeus. Shocked and not believing what he sees, Asmodeus says to himself, "That can't be." The woman's corpse then turns into a black cloud of smoke, as if she was incinerated into thin air. Samhain stands up on his feet without wearing any clothes. He has a slim build, long red hair, and a death-like gaze. As he reaches out his hands, he grabs the demon's face while igniting it on fire. The demon then screams out in pain as pus and green ooze drip out from every part of his body until nothing's left of him but a pool of melted flesh and bones. Once everything goes back to the way it was, Samhain wakes up and sees Sarah sitting beside him, asking

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what happened. "All I remember is making love. It's not like I didn't want to; it just didn't seem real. It felt more like a dream. I kept trying to tell myself to do one thing, but I would do the opposite." Samhain sits up beside her and says, "It was a demon who called himself Asmodeus who possessed you. He put something in our tea. I believe it was drops of his own blood. It worked its way through our system like a drug. He has been dealt with, and that's the last we'll hear from him again. That's all that matters now." Sarah then looks at him, rests her head on his chests, and says, "Oh Sam, when is this all going to end?"

Afterward, Death glares out into the distance of the house the two lovers share together. With hate fueling his tortured soul, he grabs hold of a branch that starts to decay and falls from the tree as he walks away.

**PART III: Abaddon, The
Demon of Sloth**

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"The unrighteousness in people is an unlawful act that spreads like a disease, where morals are only valued when it comes to their own pleasures."

Located along the shores of the Ipswich River, there is a grim skeletal figure cloaked in darkness, holding a scythe. It looks as if he has split open the very earth with his scythe, resting his

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bony hands upon the hilt. From the depths emerge four gremlin-like creatures with the agility that of an ape, crawling on all fours. They have long pointed ears, foaming at their mouths, and revealing two fangs, a slightly different appearance from the other. Their bodies are mostly exposed, save for patches of brown hair. They race as if playing a game to see who can reach their prey first. Next comes a red mist, which then takes the form of a hairless demon with a scalp partially showing his pulsating brain. He squirts dark red blood onto the ground and chews on a piece of human flesh, tentacles squirm from out of his back. His eyes widen as he speaks, "What's this? Called upon by Death himself? Oh, this is priceless! Tell me, has some poor soul refused to die? Now you need the Demon of Sloth to come up with a strategic plan to make them wish they had." He spits out a piece of flesh and stares the Reaper in the face, laughing out loud. "I take it that's what it is because your silence is golden." Death fades out, then appears closer to Abaddon. He says, as if speaking to the Demon of Sloth in his head, "Don't test me, fiend. You know how much I loathe pride and arrogance. I will feast on your soul, leaving you with the thought of all those whom you have failed to tempt with your diabolical schemes. You will be lower than the lesser fiends among your kin, lower than the tortured souls. Once I'm through with you, you'll be scrounging up scraps left out by lesser fiends as they sit and watch you scurry about for their own amusement." The Demon of Sloth swallows hard on a piece of flesh, then says, "You made

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your point. So, what is it that you want from me?" Death fades out, only to reappear from behind the demon. He whispers into the demon's ear, saying, "What I want is for you to do what you must to end the life of one man." Abaddon says, "That's it? Usually, you're capable of persuading them to do that themselves. This man, he doesn't get out much, does he? To the point where he already feels like he's dead, from the way the world is now." Death replies, "Enough, yes, Being involved with humanity in the general population could tear a man down to the brink of madness. I know his history, but still, it isn't enough for him. Wanting to end his own life, be forewarned, mind you. I tell you, he's not your ordinary man. He possesses powers that no other man in history has, except with the help of demons or, dare I say, angels. Abaddon says, while making a growling noise during his speech, as if he were purring like a cat, he states that this man is as good as dead if he is as powerful as one of his own kind. However, he reminds Death that he's still just a man who can be tempted or persuaded to make the wrong choices. All it takes is a friendly face and an offer he can't refuse. "We'll discuss a reward after I'm through," he adds, then he floats off in a red mist towards the forest, while Death stands and stares outwards to the shore of the River Ipswich.

During the morning hours, Samhain walks through the front door of a house strangely built together from the earth, as if it were built from some unknown force specifically made just for him. He says to Sarah, "No luck finding Trixie, but we've got to eat,

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so I'm going to go catch us some supper. I hope you like venison. There seems to be a lot of deer around this time of year." Sarah says to him, "Sounds good. So when are you going to tell me about this house? The vines around the foundation seem to move on their own, not like any other normal plant, and an orchid bloomed by the windowsill just a few moments ago." Samhain replies, "I don't know where to start, but I'll try to explain during supper." Sarah says, "Okay."

As he walks out the door onto the front porch, he sees Trixie running out of the forest with a chipmunk between her teeth. Samhain says to her, "Trixie, you had me worried. Yeah, I know it must be getting lonely for you. I see what you're up to. I see you already caught your dinner. Go on inside, maybe Sarah can warm that up for you while you keep her company, as I go catch us something." He holds the front door open as she runs up the steps onto the porch and into the house, while Samhain heads out on a narrow path in the forest.

Meanwhile, in the house, Sarah turns around as Trixie lies the dead chipmunk at her feet, then barks. Startled, Sarah jumps and puts her hand to her chest, as she goes, "Eh"

Walking along the narrow path, Samhain spots a deer drinking from a creek. He quietly creeps out of sight behind a tree, then shoots out shards of ice sickies from his fingertips. As they make contact, they hit the deer in its neck. The deer falls to the ground, kicking as it struggles to breathe. Samhain stands over it,

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watching as it takes its final breath. He then says aloud, "I'm sorry it has to come to this. Such a beautiful creature in a world full of predators. It's the only way." Samhain leans down to pick the deer up, but then hears a scream for help.

Samhain quickly runs in the direction of the scream. There, he sees an old man sitting on a large rock in the middle of a stream from a distant lake. The old man is holding his ankle, and a big brown bear is approaching him. Samhain shoots fireballs from the palms of his hands, landing at the bear's feet and scaring him off. He then approaches the old man, while the old man speaks, saying, "Thank you, my boy. I surely would have been that bear's meal if it weren't for you. You should have killed it. It might come back madder and hungrier than before."

Samhain says to the old man, "I only kill when I need to. The bear was only trying to survive, just like we all do." The old man says, "I suppose you're right, but how did you shoot those fireballs?" He watches as Samhain approaches the fire, putting it out with a cold, frosty wind, and asks, "And how exactly are you doing that?" Samhain replies, "There are things you wouldn't understand. Hell, I don't even understand them myself. I have a question for you: What are you doing out here all by your lonesome, old man?" The old man says, "I inherited a great sum of gold and silver buried in a cave not too far from here. I couldn't trust anyone from town to not rob me of it so I journeyed off on my own but you look like a trustworthy fellow

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who could help me, after all, you did save my life. A man deserving of a reward." Samhain reaches down to the ground and picks up a tree branch, handing it to the old man to use as a walking stick. Then he says, "Let's go find your treasure, old man."

They travel quite a distance before reaching the cave. Samhain walks alongside the old man as he hobbles on one leg. Samhain starts to grow suspicious of the old man, prepared for anything that might come his way. As they reach the mouth of the cave. The old man says, "Oh, it's kind of dark there. Is there any way you can shine a little light inside?" Samhain asks the old man, "How were you planning on lighting your way through as soon as you got here?" The old man replies, "It never gets easier with old age and all." Samhain says, "I see." Samhain's hands, which were by his side, suddenly light up in flames. The old man says, "Perfect." The two of them enter the cave, which drips water from the ceiling and has a cold draft blowing through it.

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Samhain then hears creatures scurrying about as they move further into the cave. The old man says, "Just a little further." Samhain says to him, "Enough of this charade. Show yourself, demon." Abaddon then says, "If you knew I was a demon, why would you allow me to lead you on?" Samhain replies, "I've always been the curious type. Something just didn't seem right with your story or with you. I thought maybe you'd lead me to someone you might have plans to hurt. Also, I wasn't sure if you were someone possessed or not. I believe in treating everyone fairly, and give them the benefit of doubt, including demons, to

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an extent." While he's talking, Abaddon blends into the shadows, showing his true demonic form as he disappears into the unlit darkness of the cave. Samhain continues, flashing areas of the cave with light from the flames coming from his hands, while saying, "As soon as I start to feel uncomfortable with trickery, there will be no going along with it. I will treat it with nothing more than just an act of deception. And you, fiend, are really starting to-" Before Samhain could finish his words, he felt a sharp piercing bite on his shoulder blades. While Samhain screamed out in pain, he raised his flaming hand to get a better look at what had just bitten him. He saw a gremlin-like demon known as the mazzikin clinging onto him, getting a taste of his blood. He then raises his hand towards the creature, but before he could grab hold of its face, it let go of him and scurried back into the darkness. Samhain dropped to one knee, holding his shoulder. He then tried to cauterize the wound by applying heat to it, all while screaming out in anger. He heard laughter from the demon in the dark, who taunted him, saying, "You aren't so tough. These lesser fiends can take you on and will be nothing more than amusement for the day as I claim my reward for such an easy task." Samhain gritted his teeth and replied, "You've underestimated me, which will be your downfall, demon." He then shot flames to give off light around the surrounding area, while creating spiked ice gauntlets, preparing himself for battle. As he did this, he caught sight of one of the mazzikins running past and heard a snarling sound from behind him.

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He turned, swinging with all his strength into one punch, sending spikes into the base of the Demon's skull and sending it rolling lifeless across the rough terrain of the cave. He then heard two more demons approaching him from opposite directions. He quickly created an ice spear and threw it, impaling one of them with all his might. He struck the other demon in the face with his spiked gauntlet, crushing its face. Before he knew it, another demon leapt out from behind him. He swiftly formed an ice dagger and plunged it into the creature's temple, causing it to fall dead at his feet. Caught off guard, he then feels sharp fingernails slash at him from behind. While the demon retreats back into the shadows, he hears the demon laugh and say, "I'll have your head." Samhain then smirks and adds, "Let's see how you fair with more light on the subject." He raises his arms pointing out forwards in two directions, creating a firewall that pushes forth, catching the demon as he screams out in pain. The demon's flesh melts until he becomes nothing more than a pile of ash. Samhain then walks out of the smoked-filled mouth of the cave, walks over to retrieve the dead carcass of the deer, and heads back to the house.

Samhain walks through the front door of his home and places the dead carcass of the deer to the side of the wall. Sarah comes running to him, saying, "Oh my God, what happened to you?" Samhain says, "It's becoming more common. I'm encountering more demons than I imagined. If only I knew where they were all coming from, I could put a stop to it. Sarah goes to retrieve

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some bandages for his wounds and needle and thread while saying, "We need to just get out of here. It's getting too dangerous." Trixie whimpers across the room. Samhain says to her, "Don't you worry, Trixie. I'll be okay." Then he says to Sarah, "But where will we go? These demons seem to follow us no matter where we'll end up. Besides, I feel like I'm getting stronger. Soon they won't even be a problem." She says to him, "I hope you're right. God, I hope you are. I think it's time for that story that I've been waiting to hear." Samhain says, "You got it. You see, this house was built on a grave - the old woman's grave, whom I thought of as a mother to me. After the destruction of the town of Salem, I woke up face down in a creek. I returned to the place I once called home, kneeling down at the woman's corpse in the pouring rain. I decided to give her a proper burial. Once I dug a grave with my bare hands through the night, I placed her corpse in the grave and covered her with dirt. Confused and not knowing what to do next, I had no one in my life and no place to go. But suddenly, the burnt remnants of what was left of her memory that I placed upon her grave started moving, then vines all over the place, then strong roots uplifted from the ground, started building a foundation from anything they could find. I was in awe at what I was seeing. It was like the old woman's spirit had passed into the earth itself. Every now and then, I would see her ghost sitting on the chair, rocking back and forth, watching me while I fell asleep. There was also a time when I saw her walking towards the forest, so I decided to follow her.

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As she disappeared in the clearing, that's where I came to meet Trixie. There she was, trapped under a thorn bush, trying to find her way out. That's when I freed her, and we became good friends after that."

Sarah says, "Wow, what a story! It's an everyday adventure that makes life more interesting, but also terrifying just the same with those demons."

As the scene shifts from outside the house, the moon shines brightly, and grey clouds pass by, giving off a gloomy and unpleasant feeling that something might be lurking about.

**PART IV: Belphegor, The
Demon of Gluttony**

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"The infatuation of hunger physically attacks the prosperity of one's soul, deriving a manic-depressive state of shame, loneliness, and disgrace. They'll only live with regrets as to why they even exist while looking for a way to inflict their pain and misery on those around them."

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On the outskirts of the River Ipswich stands a grim figure, looking down at the opening of the earth as steam rises up from the ground, accompanied by a large pimply hand as it reaches out from the fiery pit of hell, as a gluttonous eight-foot-tall demon rises out covered in filth from head to toe. His eyeballs sway back and forth, while a woman with long black hair covering her face, pale skin, and a filthy torn dress gets pulled out of the pit by the large gluttonous demon as she then weeps nearby. Her skin seeps out a watery liquid, as if she emerged from the River of Ipswich itself. Belphegor, the demon, speaks as the demon woman, Abyzou, grows louder from her cries in fear upon hearing his voice.

Belphegor says, "You, the deliverer of souls, what do you want from the devourer of souls of despair?" Death raises his head to the eight-foot-tall behemoth, lifting himself off the ground while floating against the wind. He replies, "You destroy one man for me, and I'll deliver to you as many souls as you want. Of course, those souls will be the ones supplied to other demons, but you can work out their jealousy on your behalf." The overweight monstrous demon chuckles and says, "Where is this puny runt? I'll tear his skin from his bones." Death points in the direction of the forest and says, "Just so you know, he's not what you think. He's no ordinary man." The Demon of Gluttony responds, "We'll see about that," as he reaches out for the demon woman, carries her beneath his arms, and heads out towards the forest. Death

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changes shape into a black cloud, hovering over the opening of the earth to hell.

Nighttime in a remote part of a forest, where a house sits occupied by a man and a woman, along with their pet fox. The couple lie restless on a bed of leaves, with the fox curled up in the corner of the room, seeming restless due to the weeping sounds that have been keeping them awake. The woman, Sarah, says, "What is that?" Samhain replies, "Your guess is as good as mine. I'm sure whatever it is, it's not going to be neighborly. Wait here while I go check it out." Sarah tells him to be careful as he exits. The doorway to the bedroom as he opens the front door while it makes a creaking sound he walks out onto the front porch.

Out in the distance, he sees a woman with long black hair weeping as she paces back and forth, rubbing her arms as if she were cold. Samhain then approaches the woman and asks her, "Are you hurt? Is there anything I can do to help?" The woman quickly turns around, her hair moving away from her face, and he gets a good look at her. She appears to have no eyes in her eye sockets, and blood pours from her mouth, revealing that she is missing all of her teeth. Then, she screams out, "You can die!" She spews blood from her mouth, and demonic infant-like creatures start to form from the putrid blood and other substances that were in her digestive system. The demons begin to wail a high pitched scream, twisted in agony with maggots feeding off

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parts of their bodies. They have demonic arms swinging about, as they share one body as it grows larger and splits into, As a second mouth grows from the side of one creature's cheeks and fingers



move about underneath its closed eyelids. The other creature has a foot growing out the side of its stomach, deformed and grotesque. They both spit out what appears to be steaming hot bile, which lands inches from him at his feet. Samhain tries to keep his distance from the demons as they move closer.

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Meanwhile, Sarah hears a loud crashing noise coming from the kitchen. She cautiously gets up, while Trixie stands beside her. As Sarah peeks her head out of the bedroom doorway, she gasps as she sees a large fat, pimply hand reaching through the window and into the sink full of ice and leftover venison, which was being preserved to prevent spoilage. Trixie starts barking, while Belphegor shouts, "If you don't shut that mangy creature up, I'm going to come in there! I'm just looking for a snack, that's all, and I'll watch the show from out here. Otherwise, I would already be there feasting on both of you!" Sarah grabs Trixie as they both curl up in a corner together.

Samhain backs away from the demons as they spew hot, steaming bile from their mouths. He raises his hands in the air, as if he was pulling something up from the ground, as flames rise up, igniting one of the demons. It screams out and drops to the ground. The other demon continues to approach him, still spewing bile. Samhain shoots a burst of ice, freezing the demon in place. As he does that, the demon woman jumps on his back, scratching at his face and neck with long sharp fingernails. He struggles with her, but manages to grab her by her hair and throw her off. She crashes through the frozen demon, sliding through the icy body parts on her hands and knees, ready to pounce on him once again. Meanwhile, Samhain creates a whirlwind and shoots flames into it, creating a flaming tornado. The demon woman gets sucked up into it, and pieces of flesh tear from her bones as she screams out in pain, burning to death. Samhain

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walks over to the steaming pile of bones and says to himself, "What a sad, twisted soul."

After sometime gathering his thoughts, he turns around to see Belphegor, the demon of gluttony, standing a few feet in front of him. Belphegor is devouring the leftover scraps of the deer Samhain had killed earlier that day. Belphegor's stomach lets out a foul stench from the mouth of its jagged crooked teeth, he is not wearing anything, only a torn cloth covering his genitals. He has large, fat lips smacking together with a noticeable overbite as he licks his bloody, fungi-encrusted fingernails. Flies swarm around his bald head, which is covered by remnants of dead carcasses. He goes to speak, saying, "I see you've met the misses. I would have shown the same courtesy of treating the woman you love and that mangy pet of yours if it weren't for taking the time to see what you're about. I couldn't miss out on any of it, but maybe I'll get to them after I'm through with you. I don't know how you came upon those powers, but I'll strip you of them and shit out your remains."

Samhain says to the gluttonous demon, "Is this how you treat someone after the hospitality of eating up all of his food?" The demon goes, "Har har har, yeah, I hope you don't mind." Samhain replies, "No, not at all. Let's just call it your last meal." Belphegor looks at him and says, "Funny." He belches out bile while Samhain quickly jumps out of the way. As a result, he shoots ice shards at the demon's face, but the obese demon

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belches out another puky substance of bile, melting the ice on contact. Samhain then shoots a fireball, scalding the demon on his stomach, as the large mouth on his stomach squirms in agony. The demon screams out in anger, reaches under his armpit, and throws out a foul sticky substance, pinning Samhain's foot to the ground. Flies swarm around his foot. As Samhain then bends down, puts his hands to the ground, and the ground starts to shake. The ground splits apart underneath the demon as he goes, "Huh, how can someone wield such power?" He loses his balance and screams as he falls down the bottomless pit that opened up beneath him. Samhain sets his foot free from the foul sticky substance caused by the demon's bad hygiene and walks back to the house.

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After entering the house, Samhain walks to the bedroom and sees Sarah in a corner of the room, holding Trixie in her arms and shivering in fear. Samhain approaches her, kneels down, and grabs hold of her hand. He then asks if she's okay. She frantically says, "Please tell me that's the end of it. Even if it's not, I just want to hear you say it because I can't take much more of this," Samhain says to her, "It's too much to take in. I know tomorrow we'll look for a better-suited place far away from here. If you want more reassurance-" She then interrupts him, saying, "That's all I wanted to hear." They both lie back down on the bed of

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leaves, holding each other in their arms, while Trixie lies between the two of them at their feet as they try to get some sleep.

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**PART V: Cain, The Wanderer,
Slayer of Kin**

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"Murder is the worst crime committed against nature. A soul, with the knowledge of how to love and be loved, while taken away by the careless act of someone else, is branded as a defect, an abomination throughout the existence of all of humanity. There's a soul feeding into something more terrifying than either beast or man has ever intended: to die just to feel more alive."

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In a secluded forest, a man and a woman exit a house with vines moving all around it. First, a fox comes out, appearing anxious to set out on their travels. As Samhain closes the door behind him, he puts his hand on the door and says, "It saddens me to leave you. I hope you find peace. I want you to know you'll always have a place in my heart." He speaks as if he is talking to someone he once knew and had strong feelings for. As he removes his hand, an indentation of his hand print appears. As he turns and walks away, another hand print appears over it, as if two hands were holding each other. Then, Samhain, Sarah, and their pet fox, Trixie. Set out through the forest.

On their travels, Sarah says to Samhain, "Do you have any idea where we're going? It'll be dark soon." Samhain replies, "Don't I know it. Don't you worry, we could set up camp if you get tired. What I had in mind for our first destination is the town you were run out of." Sarah says, "Sam, you're not meaning to-" Samhain interrupts her, by saying, "No, of course not. But we could use some supplies, and what other options do we have? By getting some without violence, of course. I'm no tyrant, unlike how cruelly they treated you and your friends." She says to him, "Okay, as long as we're on the same page." She then leads him to the town she spent a little over twenty years in.

As they reach the town, they keep out of sight, watching people pass by, bargaining, and being neighborly towards one another. Samhain whispers to Sarah, saying, "This is not what I expected

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at all. I thought they were all going to be a miserable lot, like the town I once knew." He then spots a bucket in the back of a house and goes to retrieve it. As Sarah quietly asks him, "What are you doing?" Samhain places the bucket on the ground and says to her, "No matter how wicked these people are, I'd feel guilty taking stuff that doesn't belong to me." He then places his hands on the ground, and watermelons, pumpkins, cucumbers, and tomatoes start sprouting out from the ground. Sarah, witnessing this for the first time, says, "Oh my God!" He then feels the bucket with fruits and vegetables and quietly tells her, "Hang tight, take Trixie, and keep out of sight. I'll be back shortly." She does what he tells her while he creeps behind people's homes. He stops and sees a woman taking clothes off a clothesline while a baby starts crying. She then runs back into the house. He spots a few blankets and clothes, retrieves them, and leaves the bucket of produce out for the woman. As he heads back, he passes the back window of a house and notices a pumpkin pie. Samhain, not being able to help himself, goes and grabs it. As he does that, a woman sees him and starts screaming, "Thief!" He makes it back to Sarah and tells her to run for it as they make their escape.

As soon as they lose the townspeople on their trail, they go as far away from the town as they can before setting up camp. Samhain gathers wood for the fire while Sarah and Trixie share a blanket together. Samhain then walks over to Sarah and hands her a slice of pumpkin pie, while throwing some pie down on the ground for Trixie. Trixie jumps down and gobbles it up in a matter of

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seconds. Sarah gives thanks, then says, "All of that for a pumpkin pie?" Samhain replies, "I just couldn't help myself. It was practically handed to me." They both laugh together. Samhain says to Sarah, "How about you tell me some stories? What was it like living with those people, and what about your family?" She stares at the campfire as if mental images played out in its flames, and says, "I was the only child. My mother died when I was a child from tuberculosis. My father raised me on his own. He was a fisherman and tended to crops. One day, he got into a heated argument and a man stabbed him to death. The man was found guilty of murder and hanged for it, but I was left all alone at age seventeen. The townspeople were very strict. If you didn't show up at church every sunday, they would accuse you of being a witch. Anybody could accuse anyone, and it still wouldn't matter. You'd soon find yourself in shackles. Waiting for your execution. It was terrifying." Samhain says to her, "I agree. That's no way to live. If there is a God, I thank him for the day we met." Sarah says, "Me as well." As they finish the rest of the pumpkin pie. They wrap up in a blanket together while Trixie curls up next to the fire, and they settle in for the night.

In the morning hours, Sarah changes into the dress Samhain got for her. He tells her to be quick about it, as it is daylight and the townspeople might still be out searching for their campground. As they get ready to move out, a dozen villagers surround them, one of them, wearing trousers with a mustache, says, "No one's going anywhere, not until you pay for the pie you stole, amongst

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other things." Samhain responds, "I did. I left some fruit." The man rubs his fingers along the straps of his trousers and says, "That's not enough." Samhain counters, "How about this? You all won't get hurt." The man then says, "You think this is a joke? A game? We're hardworking people. We can't have people stealing from us." Samhain replies, "Right, and what about killing your own kind? Is that population control? Sarah takes a good look at the man and recognizes him, who couldn't handle rejection very well and accuses her and her friends of being witches. The man then says, "And you should be dead." Before they can all move in to attack, twisted-looking female demonic spirits fly out from the forest, dropping those they come in contact with, causing them to convulse in seizures. As the villagers drop one by one to the ground, the spirits start feeding off of them. Samhain tries to kill one with a fireball, known as the Dakini, he drops one, only for it to double into another one. He says to Sarah, "Well, that's not good." The two of them, along with Trixie running beside them, run towards the woods.

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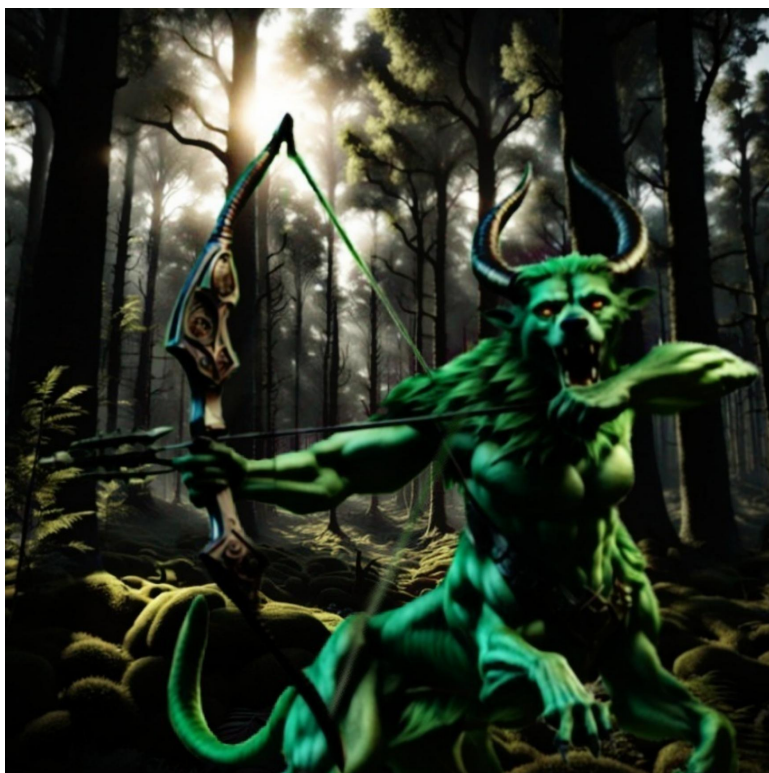
While they make haste to get away from the demonic spirits, ghoulish screams, and frantic cries of the townspeople, leaving them far behind, a figure steps out of the woods ahead of them. Known as Kali, he has hounding features with large fangs, drool dripping from them, cat-like eyes, and wild, bushy green hair. He says to them as they stop a few feet in front of him, Trixie barking away at the fiend as Sarah bends down to hold her in her arms to keep her from getting hurt. The fiend says, "There's no escape. There's more up ahead. I made sure of that," holding what appears to be a bow. Samhain says, "This is it. I've had

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about enough of you fiends." As Kali raises his bow, he says, "Let me just end this, and you won't have to worry about it no more." Samhain walks closer to the fiend, showing no fear at all with his cold stare. The fiend then lets loose the quiver while still walking towards him, making a gesture with his hand to change the direction of the wind and speed as the arrow flies past him. Kali then lets another arrow loose, then another and another,

while Samhain once again changes the direction of the wind and speed as they pass by him. Suddenly, strong roots spring from the earth, entangling the beast by his arms and legs. Samhain walks up to him, grabs two arrows, and plunges them into both legs of the beast. Kali howls in pain. Samhain then walks away as the vines release the beast, returning back to the earth. Kali says to him, "With all of that power, you're too cowardly to kill me." Samhain looks back at him and says to the demon, "I needed you to buy us more time. I saw how they enjoy feeding off of those who are still alive. Enjoy your new friends." They then cut through the forest as they hear the sounds of Kali screaming as he's being torn apart.

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As they happen to come across the River Ipswich, Sarah says to Samhain, "This must be the river my father spoke about. He said strange things would occur-hearing voices, seeing ghosts. He was also deathly afraid to go out on the river. He said something big would move out in the water." Then they see red light coming from the ground from afar and a boat resting on land. Sarah says, "What do you think that light is?" Samhain says, "I don't know, there's no time finding out. This is our only hope of making it through this with our lives." They then race towards

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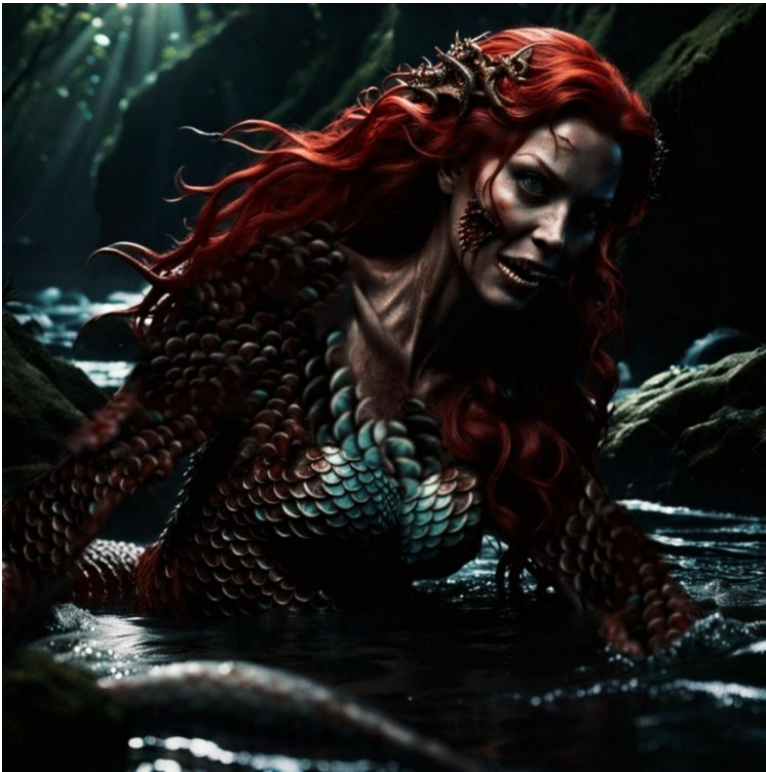
the boat, get on it as Samhain grabs the two oars and starts paddling.



Sarah watches to see if the Dakini are following after them. They then appear out of the woods and stop on land, as they look out towards the river as if they can't travel across it. Sarah then sees a hooded figure moving about where the light was coming from, holding a scythe and staring out at them, noticing his fleshly, skeletal face, she then gasps. Samhain says, "What is it? Are they

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coming?" She says, "I think I just saw who's been after us." Samhain responds, "Asking her where, as he sees no one. She says, "He was there just a minute ago." Before Samhain could ask what he looked like, something big from out of the water capsizes their boat, sending them into the waters of Ipswich.



Moments later, Samhain wakes up from being dragged by an undertow, almost drowning to death. He then coughs out water from his lungs while he hears barking. As he looks in the direction of the barking, he sees a blurry image of Trixie barking at what appears to be a beautiful long, red haired woman, as she

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then changes into a fish-like creature, without any hair, covered in scales, crawling on her hands, dragging her tail behind her, towards the river. Samhain says to himself, "Well, I'll be damned. Mermaids do exist. Why am I not surprised?" He then gets up and says, "Sarah! SARAH! Trixie, where is Sarah?" Trixie then whimpers. He says, "I take it you don't know. I can't do this anymore. Someone's going to answer for this." As he and Trixie go search for Sarah, he sees a campfire burning. He then heads in that direction. He then comes upon a man sitting on a log, with his back facing him, wearing bearskin clothing, brandishing a large hunting knife. Samhain says to the man, "Alright, are you the one behind these attacks? If so, Lillith left me no choice but to kill her. I was only defending myself. Sarah has nothing to do with this. Let her go, and we can settle this like men," Cain then says, "Lillith, mother, you KILLED MY MOTHER!" He angrily stands up and turns around quickly, as a bearded man stares at him enraged, holding the large hunting knife with a tight grip, while a dead corpse flails about on his side swinging back and forth like a conjoined twin, he charges at Samhain. He says to the angry man, "Was it something I said?" He dodges the knife-wielding maniac as he slashes through the black robe he's wearing, nearly cutting open his stomach. Cain, The Wanderer, Slayer of Kin, keeps screaming out, "YOU KILLED MY MOTHER," Samhain then catches the man by his arm, holding the knife. Samhain's strength isn't comparable to the barbaric man, so he starts to use ice to freeze his arm. The big man drops

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the knife, and then Samhain feels a strong punch to the face, bloodying his nose. He puts his hand up in front of the big man's face, shards of ice blinding him as they pierce through his face and eyes. The big man screams out, holding his bloody face, falling to his knees with one frost bitten arm and a corpse hanging by his side. Samhain wipes blood from his nose. Then, he takes a look at the man and says, "You're a ruthless man. I don't know what you did, but it's quite obvious it wasn't anything good. I know I won't find the answers I seek, not with you. I'll have to find them elsewhere, so I'll make this quick." He then walks behind the large man, puts his hands on the big man's head, and turns it into ice as he snaps it off his body, then his headless body falls to the ground. Afterwards, Samhain feels a burning sensation on his shoulder. He goes to look at it, and a branding of three circles in the form of a triangle appears. He says to himself, "If it isn't one thing, it's another." He starts walking with Trixie by his side, in hopes that he might find Sarah and put an end to all of this.

**PART VI: Mammon, The
Demon of Greed**

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"Those who value possessions and riches over those in need are the lowest of life forms. They do not know how to live without constantly desiring more than what they already have. Greed is a motive driven by envy, which only serves to entertain the self-centered fools who engage in it."

After some time walking through the damp, mucky forest. Samhain comes across a cavern. Bright, gold-colored,

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illuminating light shines out of it. He then looks down at Trixie and says, "This might be the end of our journey, girl. Let's hope it's a good one." She barks at him as the two enter the brightly gold-lit cavern. Samhain and Trixie climb up jagged stones and slippery slopes as Samhain helps Trixie along the way as they reach the source of the light. Finally, they reach the entrance of the cave. Samhain can't believe what he sees. He looks upon what seems to be the treasures of the world. He says to Trixie, "This can't be real." He reaches down and grabs a handful of gold coins. While he says, "It sure is real." Suddenly, the biggest pile of them all starts to crumble, and the demon Mammon appears underneath it all. His skin color seems to change due to his surroundings, like a chameleon, from gold to jade to onyx.

Blending in with the jewels embedded in his crown. Mammon, the Demon of Greed, then says, "Are you a follower, offering me your soul in exchange for a wish, or are you a thief?" Samhain replies by saying, "Neither, demon. I've come in search of someone close to me." Mammon replies, "Human emotions do not belong in this place, just the will of greed and power." He then pours out the contents inside the urn, which appears to be gold dust, as it starts to take the form of a gold, four-armed sword-wielding creature known as the Bhandasura.

As it approaches him, Samhain throws fireballs, but they have no effect. The Bhandasura continues to approach him and starts swinging its swords. Samhain ducks one swing but gets cut in

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the arm by the other. Samhain looks around to find something to knock it off its feet and sees a golden statue of the Greek God Poseidon holding a trident. He knows he's not strong enough to retrieve it, but he has another plan in mind. He raises himself, trying not to slip on the coins, and reaches the statue while watching the Bhandasura turn around and come closer. He then gets behind the statue and pushes with all his strength. The seven- foot-tall statue falls, pinning the Bhandasura to the ground, still swinging its swords. Samhain goes over to it and shoots a flame from his hands until its face starts to melt. As he does this, he sees an enormous shadow cast over him. He turns around to see a tide of gold coins heading towards his direction. Samhain looks in the direction from which he came and sees Trixie standing at the entrance. He then makes a run for it, trying not to fall as he slides and jumps over things in his path before the tide barrels down on top of him. He finally reaches the entrance and grabs Trixie while sliding on the ground. They both almost fall off the cliff, but Samhain catches themselves with an ice grappling hook formed at the last minute. Mammon says to himself, "Hmph," and looks over at the cave entrance. The coins blocking the entrance then start to melt, and he sees Samhain standing there. As Mammon watches, Samhain raises his arms, and his hands start to tremble. Along with the roof of the cave, large spiked rocks fall from above, landing all around the demon of greed. Mammon looks up, and one rock falls on top of him, piercing through his chest. He spits out purplish blood as it

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streams down the treasure in the room. Samhain walks into the treasure room and looks at Mammon's impaled corpse, which resembles many of the golden statues displayed in the room with dead-like expressions on their faces. He notices a satchel full of jewels tied around the demon's waist and decides to grab it, saying, "For my troubles." He then walks out through another cave with Trixie following behind and they both come to a dead end. He sees cave entrances all around, but realizes there's no way he can reach them. He knows the ice grappling hooks aren't very reliable and that he got lucky the first time around. He looks down and sees the black waters of the river starting to bubble. Samhain says to himself, "This can't be good."

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Suddenly, a fiendish-looking serpent rises up from the water and snaps its strong jaws at him. He jumps back into the entrance of the cave, narrowly avoiding being eaten. Samhain then tells Trixie to leave this place and go back out the way they came. He says, "I'm going to hate myself for this." He goes back out to the edge of the cliff and the serpent snaps at him again. Once again, he jumps back and then finds himself landing on top of the head of the Leviathan. He creates an ice axe and plunges it into the sea serpent's eye, causing it to let out a high-pitched scream. Samhain, trying to keep his balance, freezes his knees to the

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serpent's scales while he then shoots flames out of his hands, knowing he won't be able to pierce through the serpent's thick hide without burning through it first. As he does the Leviathan is ready to descend back into the murky waters, but Samhain says out loud, "Oh no you don't." He creates an ice spear and plunges it through the base of the creature's skull, killing it. The Leviathan falls into the depths of the water as Samhain leaps off and lands at the entrance of the cave. Trixie looks down at him and whimpers. He reassures her, saying, "Go back the way we came, Trixie. Don't you worry, I'll find a way out. Go now." He watches her as she goes back as he then enters through the cave.

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**PART VII: Beelzebub, The
Lord of Flies**

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"The master manipulators will seek out those who're weak and vulnerable, enslaving those certain individuals to exploit them for their sinful ambitions. They are nothing more than playthings to them, tinkering with their lives to create a facade of control. Those that are diabolical at heart are only accompanied by death, with the perceptual conflict of living with what it is and what it will bring."

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While Samhain enters the cave, he sees light and smoke ahead at the entrance, which leads to another cave. He enters the second cave and sees a woman working, mining what appears to be gems of all kinds. These gems light up the room in all colors, creating a beautiful sight. However, it is marred by how badly these women are being treated. They look as if they aren't there of their own free will. Then, Samhain sees what has control over these women; a fifty-foot tall demon rises up from the smoke-filled depths of the cave.



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It has bat-like facial features and the body of an orangutan, with long, sharp fingernails and orange hair covering its whole body. Samhain ducks down between some rocks and says to himself, "Alright, this isn't funny. There's no way in hell I can beat this thing. This is just too cruel. I've got to do something." As he watches, a woman falls down on her knees. The Shuten Doji reaches down at her, picks her up with two fingers, and then swallows her whole. The women scream, but they start working harder, no matter how exhausted they are. Then, the demon starts to laugh. Samhain says to himself, "I think I've seen enough." He then forms an ice spear and throws it at the giant's head. It shatters on contact. The Shuten Doji says, "What's this?" Samhain steps out from behind the rocks and says, "Alright, demon, your reign is at its end." The Shuten Doji moves in closer to get a better look at him and says, "You can't be serious. Who do you think you are?" Samhain replies, "Just a man. That's all you need to know." The demon laughs and says, "I see a fool. One who is mad." Samhain replies, saying, "I was thinking the same thing myself, but I can't sit around and do nothing to help these women out." Shuten Doji says to him, "I hope your courage tastes better than your stupidity because you've just volunteered to become my next meal." Samhain thinks to himself, "I hope this works. God, I hope this works." The demon then bends down with his jaws open." Samhain leaps into the mouth of the beast before he could take a bite out of him. As he falls down the beast's stomach, he creates ice daggers to slow his

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descent and split some parts of the beast's insides. He hears loud growling, causing the beast great discomfort. Samhain smirks, feeling proud that he is at least doing something right. Hanging at the bottom of the beast throat, he sees its beating heart. Samhain knows he needs to create something thick to pierce it, so he creates a broad sword of ice. He leaps across and plunges the sword deep into the heart of the beast. The demon clutches its chest with a frightful look on its face and falls towards where the women are working. They scream and move out the way, narrowly avoiding being crushed by the gigantic beast. The beast impales its stomach on sharp spiked rocks at the edge of the cliff before it can fall to the bottom depths of the cavern.

The women stare at the giant demon's head lying in front of them as they watch a long, sharp, icy blade cut out from the demon's left cheek. Then, two hands appear from out of the slit of its cheek as it tears open, and Samhain comes crawling out. He stands up on his feet, takes a look at the women, and says, "I hope I'll never have to do that again," covered in the demon's blood, he picks pieces of the demon's flesh from out of his hair.

One of the women says to him, "who are you?" Samhain says to her, "You can call me Samhain. Tell me, have you seen a woman with long brown hair who goes by the name Sarah?" The woman says, "No, but we've been seeing women and men being carried out by demons through that cave entrance there. But you don't want to go through there; it is nothing but full of death."

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He says to the women, "Thanks. Can you three women find your way out?" One of the women says, "Yes, it's that cave just over there. It'll lead you straight out to the forest." He then says, "Great, I know where to go once I'm done here." The women crowd around him, giving him a hug for saving their lives, as they part ways.

As Samhain walks through the cave to the other side, a foul odor, the stench of death, lingers in the air. He then sees pieces of rotting flesh scattered on the ground, covered in maggots. He comes out of the other end of the cave and sees corpses chained around large stones, some missing their arms and legs, including some without their heads. One has a face that looks as if it has been torn off. While another looks skewered, hanging over a burning fire.

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He then hears a high-pitched buzzing sound as a demonic creature with insect wings and a face repulsive that it resembles a fly, green putrid waste oozes from the creature's mouth, while the creature moves its mouth slightly, as if hungry to feed. The demon, Beelzebub, drops the rotted flesh it was holding and looks at him. Then, says, "You, you're the cause of all this interference. Just a mere mortal, but you're not just a mere mortal, are you? There's something different about you. I must know what it is." Samhain says, "Come closer, and you'll find out." As Beelzebub descends, becoming more grotesque than

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before, spitting out hot bile, Samhain tries to maneuver, but one strike lands clean across his chest, burning through his flesh. Samhain grits his teeth and tries not to worry about the pain just yet.

While Samhain shoots fireballs, trying to corner the demon near a cave wall. As soon as the demon moves from one side to the next, it becomes harder for him to dodge the fire. Then, one fireball singed its wings, causing it to plummet to the ground and roll across the rough terrain upon impact. Samhain then freezes its arms and legs, pinning it to the ground. It struggles to break free and shoots hot bile on its restraints, melting them. But before he can react. Samhain comes down with a crushing blow to its head with an ice-formed sledgehammer. Its eyes pop out of its sockets, making a squishing sound, followed by a high-pitched scream that ends within seconds from the moment of impact. Samhain looks down at the Lord of Flies, and a wind chill blows through the air as ashes pass by the demon's corpse from the bodily remains skewered over the fire. Samhain feels the burn on his chest and says, "You're by far the worst thing I have ever encountered. Why would God allow such a creature to exist?" He then turns and walks towards the entrance to the next cave.

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**PART VIII: Satan, The Father
of Lies**

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"Nature evolves around all that is or will be taking place, whether it's adultery, savagery, tyranny, or just about anything willing to exist to be in power, to rule over, control, and manipulate. For the devil is mischievous and a liar, the ruler of the world. He is so great in deception that death makes its way through life, living amongst the people as though they portray death on a daily basis. They no longer have the will to live, but

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only to destroy what they can't have, that of which is being a God."

Samhain enters the cave, which appears to be like a catacomb, as a spiraling stairway of human skulls lines up on both sides of the walls. As he walks down the stairway, Samhain hears the screams of a woman. The walls are outlined by human body parts. Samhain feels repulsed by the demons. He knows it's becoming a habit for them to let it go on any longer. He then sees where the screaming sound comes from. He sees Satan himself sitting on a throne chair made out of flesh and bones. Sarah is wearing nothing at all and struggling on his lap, while the devil's long, forked tongue slithers from under her chin. Satan is holding a pitchfork in one hand and squeezing her body close to him with the other.

He then stands up, holding Sarah with one hand by the throat off the ground. She then stares at Samhain with tears in her eyes as she pleads for him to help her. Samhain says to the devil, "Let her go, whatever it is you want, I'm right here. You've got me. Come finish it, just let her go." Satan growls out loud, then says, "You're in no position to bargain with me, human. I have both of you here in my possession. Now, do you think I'm merciful?" Samhain replies, "Alright, let us settle this but first. Tell me what this mark is." He shows Satan the branding he received after killing Cain. The devil then laughs out loud and says, "You received the mark of Cain. They will come for you now if I don't

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put an end to you first." Samhain asks, "Who's they?" The devil replies, "The sons of God. They're made to bring order to chaos on the last days. But me killing you would give me what I need to prepare myself for Armageddon and nothing will be able to stand in my way." Samhain asks, "And what is my role in all of this?" The devil replies, "That is for you to decide, but you are just as good as dead to me. Enough questions, time to put an end to this once and for all." He then pierces Sarah's backside with his pitchfork as she screams out, making gurgling sounds as she chokes on her own blood. Then the devil throws her body to the side and points his pitchfork straight at Samhain, Samhain's heart in his chest, skips a beat as he feels he has just lost a part of his soul. He stands there in shock, traumatized by losing the love of his life. A stream of flames bursts from the devil's pitchfork straight towards Samhain. Samhain lifts up his hands as the flames pass straight through him, as though it had no effect on him. Satan stands with a surprised and worried look on his face. His muscular body tensing, drool drips from his razor-sharp teeth overlapping his bottom lip. He then shoots forth more flames as they then burn hotter and brighter. Samhain trudges along through the flames. Once he gets close, he reaches out, grabbing the pitchfork, freezing it as the ice travels down to where the devil that is holding it. The devil then screams out, letting go and holding his arm, while giving Samhain enough time to drive the pitchfork up through the devil's bottom jaw and out through his skull. Satan hangs on the tip of his own pitchfork in the grasp of

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Samhain, while Samhain puts his hand on the devil's throat and says out loud, "No mercy." He then turns the devil's body from the neck down to solid ice and snaps his head off, pushing his body as it shatters to the ground. He then looks over at Sarah, still holding the pitchfork with the devil's head attached. As he drops it, it lights up the devil's head like a jack-o'-lantern. He then runs over to her while she's still alive. She whispers through her dying breath the words, "Sam, I love you." Tears stream down his face as he picks her lifeless body up and walks out of the cave, across the Ipswich River. The grim skeletal figure who had been pursuing the two since it all began looks down at his hands as they start to crumble into dust. He then lets out a horrid scream that sounds like people being tortured, transforming into a monstrous sound of a beast, as his scythe and cloak drops to the ground in a pile of dust. The gateway to hell closes as all of the demons fade out into nothing. Samhain then exits the cave and sees the three women he rescued sitting together with Trixie. They sit there, petting her. Samhain says to the women, "I'll help you three if you need it. I just need some time." One woman approaches him and says, "Take all the time you need. I see you have found what you were looking for." He says to her, "I have a place not far from here. You three can stay there if you like. In a few days, we can look for a town the three of you can settle in." The woman says, "That would be nice. Thank you, did you put an end to him?"

Samhain says, "Him?"

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The woman replies, "The devil." Samhain says, "Let me tell you this, if there is a devil, then God must have realized how much of a failure it has become to let this go on. The nightmare is over, for the world can now finally wake up from it." Samhain then turns to Trixie and says to her, "Let's go home, Trixie." As they all head towards the forest to find a way to get across the river onto the other side.

The end.

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EPILOGUE:

The group reaches a town, unlike any that Samhain has encountered before. The people there appear to be common folk, from farmers to shopkeepers. He says to the three women, "Well, this is it. Here, you three will be able to start a new life. If any of you have trouble, you'll know where to find me." The three women give thanks for the supply of produce and hug him, while the one woman he commonly speaks to and had developed a closer relationship than the others kisses him on the cheek. She then says, "Thanks a lot for all of your help, Sam. Take care of yourself. I'll never forget you." As they walk towards the town, Samhain turns back towards the direction of his home for a few days of travel. However, he gets caught in the middle of a strange storm. The sky lights up with thunder and lightning, as a ball of electricity plummets to the ground, exploding in a shimmering bright white light. Then, a man appears with feathered, bird-like wings. He speaks to Samhain, saying, "Prince of Perdition, judgment is at hand. I am the Archangel Uriel. Come with me."

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Author's Note

I thought I'd add some pictures to the novella using AI. It costs an arm and a leg to hire an artist, and sometimes they like to take advantage and don't properly do the work right. With my artistic creative talent, I corrected the mistakes the AI made and blended them in to give each character the look I had in mind. I wrote the stories myself without the use of AI. I hope you all enjoy it! Please leave a review, bad or good; I can handle it. I'd just like to know if someone took time to read it after all of the work and effort I put into it. Be sure to follow all of the other novellas I've written, which will describe more of the main character Samhain. I'd appreciate it. Have a blessed day, and thanks for reading!

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Continue – TRIBULATIONS

