

Introduction

*A*nnette leaned her right side against the tub waiting for her equilibrium to return. She felt her left hand pressing down hard on a few pebble-like objects which she soon realized were her missing front teeth. Her head was throbbing, her eyes were heavy and the mere thought of what took place moments ago—or so it seemed, left an overwhelming urge to throw up, but she decided against it out of fear of what Melsean might do next. Every so often, her eyes would glaze over or attempt to roll behind her head, but she fought the urge to escape her painful existence. *How could he do such a thing to me and call himself a man of God,* she thought. *He's merely the opposite. Surely, he must be the Son of Satan.* Slipping in and out of consciousness, she began to mentally play back the events that led to her unfortunate position...

One

Annette flashed back to a half-hour prior to the kitchen where she was preparing supper for her and Melsean. It was supposed to be a nice, quiet evening spent eating then watching *Sampson*, his favorite movie, and hopefully get a little hard loving later. She took all necessary precautions to make this night special. She made a honey-lime-marinated roast duck, wild rice and a side dish of steamed-buttered baby carrots and asparagus spears. To top the evening off, she began preparing a black forest cake for dessert, frosted and topped with whipped cream and cherries. She wasn't worried about it going to waste because she expected her nephews over tomorrow for the Spring break vacation. In the midst of her blending the heavy cream, she never heard Melsean enter the apartment.



He was instantly greeted by the sweet aroma

2 *Robert Saunders*

coming from the kitchen and he swiftly advanced toward it like a cat. On his way there, he surveyed every square inch of the place. He peered into the kitchen and watched Annette as she blended the cream on the island counter while singing Linda James' greatest hit *Hypnotized*.

God she's beautiful, he thought to himself as he stared at her long, flawless legs that trailed to a place he longed to enter, but knew the Good Lord forbid it. As much as he desired this sexual goodness, he knew he could never come to know her flesh. For sure, she was the very essence of Sodom and Gomorrah and he feared turning into a pillar of salt if he dared to gaze upon her naked temple in which God wished to destroy.

Today, Annette was wearing an extra micro-mini that just barely covered her enormous, yet firm, buttocks and left little if nothing to the imagination. Melsean was about to reach out and hug her from behind when he was interrupted by an inner-voice that was unfamiliar to him. It recited a scripture that was all so familiar.

Come away from her, my people, that you may not participate in her sins, neither be visited by her plagues. "Revelations, eighteenth chapter, verse four," he said silently, though loud enough to get Annette's attention.

"Melsean! I didn't hear you come in. Why are you sneaking around?"

He snapped back to reality. "I'm sorry, I thought you heard me, being I called your name six times," he said, peering over her shoulder. "I guess

you couldn't hear me with all this racket you got going on in here. What are you making?"

"Oh, something special for my big boy, but you'll have to wait until I've finished cooking to find out."

"Hmm, fair enough, but whatever it is, it smells wonderful."

"You're not about to hit me with that 'you didn't have to do all this for me' bullshit, are you?"

"No, I just thought we'd agreed that we were okay with the simple and nothing too outlandish."

"That's true, we did, but I don't consider me making a home-cooked meal and dessert for my man complex or outlandish. If anything, it's a natural gesture expressed from one mate to their significant other of how much they appreciate their presence. And you have surely been an asset to me since my nasty separation with my husband, who just up and left."

"Judging by the way you're dressed, I can see why," Melsean's inner-voice coaxed.

"And I don't know where I'd be if you didn't come when you did."

Probably in a dumpster.

The mere thought of what his inner-voice said brought a mischievous smile across his face.

"There's that smile that I love so much," she said as she advanced on Melsean, grinding her pelvis roughly against his swollen member as if it was possible to conjoin through fabric.

He felt his soldier rising to the command of her sexual prowess, but was startled by the voice in

4 *Robert Saunders*

his head.

“Come away from her for her sins have piled up to reach heaven and God has remembered her crimes. Repay her as she has paid; give her even double for what she has done; in the capsule mixed, mix her a double portion. As she has glorified herself and lived in sensuality, to that measure impose on her torture and grief.”

“What are you talking about?” Annette said, snapping him out of his fugue state.

“Huh, what?”

“Huh, my ass. You started quoting some shit from the Bible again. Last week when we got together, I tried to get close to you and you did the same thing. We’ve been seeing each other for three months, Melsean. Now that may not constitute a trouble sign to you, but the word fruit seems to jump in my head when I think about it.”

“I’m not a homosexual and I would appreciate it if you would keep your blasphemous statements to yourself.”

“Keep my blasphemous...What type of talk is that? I just spent three fucking hours preparing a meal for you,” she said, holding three fingers close enough to Melsean’s eyes to poke him in them. “Not to mention the first twenty hours marinating the duck I roasted for your ass. And another thing, this is my fucking house and I’ll curse or say what I want when I goddamn feel like it!”

Melsean had a look of disdain on his face. His respect for this woman was swiftly dwindling, for in his twisted mind, she had blown his actions out of

proportion. "Listen, I can't be around you when you act like this. It's unhealthy."

"No, Melsean, what's unhealthy is to let all this," she said gesturing to the food she prepared, "and this," groping his hard-on, "go to waste."

Melsean, with his face impassive, stared blankly at Annette as if for the first time seeing her for what she truly was.

"Because in her heart she says 'I sit as queen; I am no widow, and shall never see sorrow. Therefore on a single day her plagues shall be upon her, pestilence, mourning, famine and with fire shall she be burned up. For the Lord God who judges her is mighty,'" he said reaching into the counter drawer and pulling out a bottle of lighter fluid and a box of matchsticks.

"What are you talking about and what're you going to do with those?" she asked with a slight touch of apprehension and fear. She focused on the perspiration flowing down her back and collecting between her massive cheeks.

"What I'm talking about is Revelations, eighteenth chapter, verses seven through eight," he chided. "And what I'm going to do with these is end your sickness like the Good Lord commands. As you know, fire purifies the filthiest of things. C.D.C, that's the Center of Disease Control in case you didn't know, uses fire to contain, control and combat deadly viruses. I intend to cure you and I will, as sure as Jesus cured the man in Gerasenes that was possessed with demons, casting them into a herd of swine. Jesus asked him 'What is your name?' He said

6 *Robert Saunders*

‘Legion’ because many demons had entered him as they have entered you,” he said pointing accusingly toward Annette with the hand that possessed the lighter fluid and began dousing her with it.

Finally comprehending what was about to take place, she flung the hot, fresh vegetables at Melsean’s face, but miscalculated and barely made contact with his shoulder. This upset Melsean who was now completely under the control of his inner-mysterious partner.

“The kings of the Earth, who committed fornication and were wanton with her, shall weep and beat their breast over her, when they look at the smoke of her conflagration.” He began reaching for a matchstick to strike, but before he could make contact, Annette forced the box out of his hand while kneeling him in the groin in the same motion and racing out of the kitchen.

Her first instinct told her to make a run for the door, but she realized it had at least four locks on it, excluding the deadbolt. Her second instinct advised her to run upstairs to her room, make a wedge in the door, lock it, and run to the phone and call for help. Out of both options, she decided to go with the latter, racing upstairs toward the bedroom.

She made it as far as the first landing before Melsean was on her heels. He grabbed her by the ankle with a sweeping motion causing her to fall against the carpeted steps, but barely absorbed the shock of her impact. The force knocked the wind out of her as Melsean crawled his way on top of her. She flailed her arms wildly, attempting to hold Melsean

off long enough to get her second wind. Sensing her motives, Melsean smashed his elbow into her face ending whatever hope she had of escaping.

Annette was jerked from her state of reminiscence when Melsean splashed some liquid over her. At first she thought it was water until she found herself stifled by the acrid odor of the lighter fluid. She stared at the chiseled body of her predator that seemed to contract with every heave of his lungs. Moving upward, her eyes stopped on the cold and blank look on Melsean's face as his hazel eyes stared back, causing Annette to broaden her eyes with awe.

"Why are you doing this?" she asked, trying to steady herself against the bathtub, searching with her eyes for anything she could use as a weapon to hold this beast at bay, but found none to her avail.

Melsean, again sensing her intentions, wagged his index finger in a tsk, tsk manner, making the sound effects for it by striking his tongue against the roof of his mouth, and then said, matter-of-factly, "Oh, I took the liberty of removing everything that could be considered or used as a weapon. Besides, you wouldn't want to strike a man of God, would you?"

At that point, Annette could see that a change was taking place in Melsean. His eyes became distant and were replaced by something more hideous than any she'd ever beheld. His face contorted and writhe, not fully metamorphosing, but enough for her to recognize the evil he harbored within. It was that moment that Annette knew her

8 *Robert Saunders*

bathroom was going to be her grave. The reality of what was to come caused Annette's muscles to give way, forcing her urine and feces out; soiling herself. Like a gazelle trapped in the mighty claws of a lion, Annette submitted to the inevitable, but prayed that God would make her suffering as quick and painless as possible.

Melsean backed up to the entrance of the bathroom, reached for a matchstick, struck it against the flint, moved it in the symbol of a crucifix, and began quoting from Revelations again. "Standing at a considerable distance dreading her torture, they shall exclaim, 'woe, woe, for the great city of Babylon the mighty city'." He tossed the match. "For her judgment is come in a single hour."

Annette's body ignited, causing her to cringe in pain, but she refused to give him pleasure by crying out to the heavens.

"And the Earth's merchants will weep and mourn over her. The fruit for which your soul longed is out of your reach; all the elegance and the glitter you enjoyed are lost to you and never again will they be found."

She finally lay still in a heap of burning flesh, and Melsean raised his hands to the heavens and belled out with a mighty voice, "She is fallen, fallen, Babylon the great! She has become a resort for demons; a haunt for every unclean spirit; a refuge for every filthy and detested bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of her passionate immorality and the kings of the Earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the Earth have

grown rich on her abundance of wantonness.”

Melsean was so caught up in his actions that he never heard the riot squad break down the door and enter the apartment. They raced up the stairs following the rank odor of burning flesh, stopped at the top of the stairs, positioned themselves in every perimeter, and surrounded the perpetrator. When everyone was in their respective place, Sergeant McCray, who was leading the platoon, yelled to the perpetrator in a raspy voice.

“This is the police! You are tightly surrounded. Drop your weapon, put your hands behind your head, and walk backwards until told otherwise. Do you understand?”

Melsean ignored the cop’s rhetoric and continued to watch the charred corpse as its remaining flesh burned and folded in on itself like paper in extreme heat. He was mesmerized by the different colors of light that danced within the fire. “Scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in the act of adultery and placing her in the centre, they said to Jesus ‘they were talking to test him so they might trump up a charge against him;’ teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of adultery. Now, Moses ordered in the law to stone such as she, so what do you say?”

“This is your last warning. Drop your weapon, put your hands behind your head, and walk backwards until told otherwise,” Sergeant McCray said more aggressively.

“But Jesus stooped down and wrote with his fingers on the ground;” Melsean knelt down and

10 *Robert Saunders*

begun making drawings in the soot of his victim, “And when they kept questioning him, he raised himself and told them, ‘let the sinless one among you throw the first stone at her.’”

With that said, Melsean swung around, raising himself at the same time facing the officers, and was greeted by six shots that tore through his chest, missing vital organs by centimeters, but enough to incapacitate him.

Melsean looked up to the ceiling as if staring beyond it and cried to his inner self; “Don’t leave me. Please don’t leave me now. All I’ve done, I’ve done for you. Am I not in your favor?”

The inner voice responded to him by saying, “How long have I been with you without your knowing me? I am going away to prepare a place for you. And when I have gone and have prepared a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am, you also will be, and where I am going you’ll know the way.”

Ah, John, fourteenth chapter, versus two through four, I know it well, Melsean thought. Comforted by his Lord’s words, he closed his eyes. No longer subdued by the pain from his gunshot wounds, he drifted into a void where pain could torment his flesh no more.

Sergeant McCray moved towards the suspect in a crouching manner. When he got close enough, he used one foot to step on Melsean’s wrist, prying the bottle of water out of it. Then he used the same procedure to remove the toothpicks from his other hand.