

BLOOD TEMPTED FATE



By Zach Saunders

Blood Tempted Fate

A Story by Zach Saunders

Chapter I

Revulsion



Writhing in the home of what once was. A torrent of pain and suffering flowing past my body like a rapid of blood and bones. What kind of divine justice is this? A baptism of despair.

As the torrent subsides, I'm left kneeling on the painful and grazed obsidian ground, drenched in the suffocating crimson liquid that was flowing past me like a river of torment. My eyes, plastered by the thick drench, slowly claw themselves open and acclimate to the strange place in which I find myself. My surroundings are dark and unending, an ocean of blood with a dark horizon; this place is draped in an absence of light apart from a radiating red glow crawling its way up from the crimson ocean to the roof of the seemingly infinite abyss.

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My mind is rushing with complete confusion, how did I get to this strange place? What is this unusual feeling of despair residing deep in my soul? What wretched force has brought this upon me?

The island supporting my withering body is small and isolated, a tiny speck of difference in an ocean of the same. Perception of time is an illusive thing on this island; I can't tell if I've been here for a day, a week, or a month. As I sit here shaking in utter confusion and obscurity, my state of shock is lifted by the sudden appearance of a tall figure walking on the distant horizon. Slowly approaching my small black-rock atoll, the figure grows and grows in size based on perception only I presume... I hope... I dread. As it nears me my mind is flooded with fear and warmth in tandem as I gaze upon the unusual creature.

With a tall form carved from soft crimson marble, the creature somewhat mimics the body of a mortal human; from head to toe it's body is engraved with mesmerising lines of symmetry expressing the intricacy of the creature's manifest. Giant razor-sharp horns curve around the back of its craven pointed skull and its enormous mouth is lined with numerous whetted teeth.

As the creature's mouth slowly parts open my ears are met with a trembling cacophony of sorrow; the creature bellows, "lost rune of depravity and contempt, the end of your prior existence was plagued with despondence and hopelessness. All that you lost within an instance, we need that burning pain, that concentrated rage. Such unadulterated emotion is a finite resource in the deep province, a valuable commodity in the outsider's legion." The crimson being pauses for a moment as if waiting for my reaction.

I struggle to catch my breath, my voice is lost in the dark, organic maze of my throat. I try to heave something out of my mouth but all that comes out is mumbled confusion.

The entity interjects my pitiful puzzlement, “I don’t expect your rudimentary, caged mind to comprehend the nature of your situation. Where you are... why you are. Do not worry, such understanding will come with the embalming of your rune.”

The towering entity leans down, its pointed skull approaching my terrified scowling face with a wave of heat emanating from its jaws. “All you have to do is commit to one thing. Revenge.”

The creature snarls with its final remark.

Waiting for a response with baited breath, the devilish figure leans back looming over me once again. I don’t know what to say, what to do. The word revenge rings through a mind like an ensemble of anger, I know there is something my soul craves; whether or not its revenge is beyond my knowledge. But something within compels me to agree, some demented form of acquiescence creeps through my body. I stare up at the creature with a blurry face of mesmerised anguish... and I nod.

The dominion of the underworld, the so-called Tempter’s Province, a vast union of realms that lie deep within the mantle of planet Earth. Scattered throughout the planet’s innards in random clusters, connected by an invisible yet ever so complex web of celestial thread preordained by the will of the Outsider. Runes entwined in this celestial web are known to be agents of the contingent, a vast synthesis of operatives tasked with ensuring the stability of the Outsider’s desire. But the legion itself is not just one expansive army, no, its a cohesive organism of independent bodies working in tandem to secure the perfect chaos. The reavers are a module of this legion, they are the only sector with the ability to reach beyond the domain of the Outsider. Reavers are entities that share one commonality, a mutual writhing pain, a crevice in their rune smelted by a burning contempt.

That shared pain ties them to the mortal world, emboldens their connection to the past allowing them to travel between realms bearing the Outsider's notch. By virtue of its purpose, the mortal world resting on the Earth's crust is somewhat divorced from the will of the Outsider. The reavers are the only thread of influence that the Outsider can exact over the mortal planes, the last hope for any intervention in the event of a cataclysmic misdirection.

I can't move and I can't speak, as far as I can tell I'm kneeling down and my entire body is encased within some thick layer of suffocating, mercurial black fluid. What have I agreed to, am I to become a reaver? Is that why those thoughts were rushing through my head like a river of delirium?

I'm not breathing, I haven't been breathing for awhile. Every time I attempt to take a breath of air the dark liquid invades my throat and violently singes my insides; my mind and body are telling me to breath out of some clawing habitual desire... but I don't need to.

My hearing has been utterly numbed by this constant orchestra of despair, it must be coming from whatever has encased my body; like the drowned wailing of countless dying creatures.

After some time and much pain the mysterious fluid releases its grasp from my body and slowly seeps off my flesh. As my head is released from its suffocating bind my vision is returned to me and I am met with an astonishing sight. A grand throne room of incomprehensible scale, miles and miles of cloudy marble flooring layer the vast space, like kneeling on a solid tempest. The grand room is populated with evenly spaced intricate, golden wells with pillars of ethereal dust flowing downwards from identical structures on the ceiling.

The numerous giant wells are interconnected via a grid of deep, thin canals flowing towards a prodigious regal gate embedded with symmetrical, shining adornments. The astonishing gateway is located far in front of me on a far away wall, between the adornments sits a symbol with some sort of abhorrent, fleshy manifest lodged within the gate. A seemingly perfect circle stricken with five thick, jagged lines; the centre line is the longest with each pair of symmetrical outer lines being identical in length. The exact symmetry of the symbol has been distorted by its revolting fleshy make. I wonder what it means?

As I kneel on the cold marble floor I look down and am struck with disgust at the sight of my deathly, grey skin. Sharp black veins are writhing underneath my skin like some sort of alien parasite lining my arms, legs and torso. My body has been completely sapped of energy, with my limbs holding only the limited capability of mere trembles and lethargic jolts of pain.

After mustering the energy to move my neck I look down and am struck with shock. The grotesque black fluid has formed some strangely complex symbol on the floor in front of my despondent kneeling figure. Glancing around the room I find I'm not alone. Others... all of them kneeling on the cold marble alongside me in a line, all of them with the same disgustingly sombre black veins and pale grey skin. There are three on either side of me, some women and some men, all looking down in despair at the inky black emblems resting on the floor in the front of them.

The piercing screech of metal scraping slowly across the ground shatters the deafening silence permeating the expanse; the monumental door on the far side of the grand room is slowly prying itself open. That fleshy symbol embedded into the doors intricate design is split in two symmetric halves with the break releasing a revolting squelch.

A blinding light seeps through the newly present gap in the doorway and overwhelms the room like a blaze of radiance. Standing tall amidst the sea of light is a mechanical monstrosity, a monumental beast made of flesh, bones, and metal. Some sort of sick conjunction, an organic colossus intertwined with frightening, twisted gold alloy.

The dreadful beast begins slowly marching towards us with each lethargic step creating a resounding bang loud enough to shatter glass. It staggers with a sense of mindlessness, like a massive husk of flesh and metal.

Dripping with blood and oil, the creature is made up of various intricate metal components melded with a fleshy body in line with that of a flayed giant. One arm is adorned with a metallic glove boasting the makings of a normal human hand, only with exaggerated scale. The other sports a gleaming talon with golden rods running up the beast's arm to hold the hefty claw in place. Its head is completely obscured by a ominous metal dome with no openings, a lone misshapen amethyst sits embedded on the front of the rounded helmet. Strapped to its back is a large glass vat partly filled with a viscous black fluid.

As the monumental being gets closer to us it begins moving towards the leftmost prisoner in this despondent line of lost souls. With the grotesque creature towering over her, the kneeling woman screams in terror.

"NO NO NO GET AWAY FROM ME PLEASE HELP SOMEBODY HELP ME," the woman's wailings of absolute fear ricochet off the distant walls and send a shiver down my spine.

Within an instant though the wailings are snuffed out like a dying flame, the women's head is crushed like a melon under the supreme force of the creature's heavy grasp. Crimson blood seeps through the cracks in the shining metal glove and as the beast releases its grasp, shards of bone and clumps of flesh fall to the ground in a revolting splat. The women's now deceased body falls limp to the ground in a pool of her own blood.

In unison the line of prisoners erupt into intense disarray with enough screaming, pleading and desperation to fill a stadium.

Before moving on from the now deceased women, the creature halts for a moment allowing the mercurial black fluid that formed her symbol to break apart, climbing the creatures legs and torso before sliding into the glass vat on it's back from a small entrance in the top.

I kneel quietly, in utter shock at what just happened. A tightness grips my throat as if my body is telling me I'm about to die, I'm becoming much to familiar with this feeling. Why were we brought here just to be slaughtered like cattle, it doesn't make any sense.

One by one the screams of my fellow prisoners are silenced with swift brutality. A collective pool of blood crawls towards me, flowing past my kneeling figure and engulfing the marble tempest floor. The flood of crimson despair inches around the black symbol on the floor in front of me, the black fluid forming the symbol shows a slight reaction to the blood with minuscule tendrils reaching out from the edges of the symbol to seemingly analyse the new presence.

Before I have the wherewithal to conceptualise my fate in the presence of this tenebrous beast I look up and find it towering over my shivering husk of a body. The creature seems enthralled by the emblem constructed at my knees, with its glass dome tilted downwards the embedded amethyst reverberates with a cloudy flare.

As the rest of the grand room is writhing in collective desperation, the gem on the creatures metal skull produces a lone, calming ding noise. The beast takes a step back and allows my dark symbol to fragment and seep into the glass vat not unlike the other symbols of my now deceased fellow prisoners.

In quiet desperation I remain kneeling... me, Sawyer Whitlock, anticipating death once again. At this point my life has been played back to me so many times I think the proverbial tape is degrading. Here we go again, I close my eyes and accept my fate.

Returned to reality with the cold touch of blood. The left side of my face and body is painted with the organic mush of the prisoner to my right. I'm not dead... why was I spared? With daring succession the creature executes the remaining prisoners and returns their emblematic black fluid to the glass vat on his back.

"Why me!" I say with a faint and damaged yell. "Why did they have to die, and why didn't I?" I plead to the creature with an equal intensity of desperation for the reprieve of death and the yearning for life.

The revolting flesh beast ignores my cries and picks my thrall-like body up with his gleaming metal hand. It carries my body with a sensitivity that seems oxymoronic to the creature's essence; I'm too weak to fight back, only capable of accepting my seemingly preordained fate.

Through the grand room we march, giant footsteps creating a resounding thud with each step, leaving a trail of crimson blood imprints on the tempest marble floor. Inching closer and closer to the monumental door, agar with blinding light pouring through its opening. As we pass into the doors entrance I feel my body enveloped with a burning warmth, like a million tiny fires raging across my bare skin; it burns with the same tender rage as a hot shower during a icy winter morning. Further engulfed by the smouldering radiance, my eyes grow heavy and I begin to slip out of my frenzied panic and into a reluctant slumber.

Chapter II

Reborn



The past, present and future, all trapped. Swirling in the incomprehensible pool of liminal space nested deep in the heart of the Plemora. There is no conceptual manifestation of I, as I am many things. The residual fragments of a trillion disjointed thoughts, sown together into a distinct pairing of predictability and chaos. Those who would like to control my unknowable manifest call me the Scribe, like carving a name into a tethered web of abstract ideas; a bloody struggle to wrap the uneasy hands of fate around the denizens of the spiritual plane.

{Chapter 2 Still in Progress}