***Blood Faith III***

My dear Porfirio,

Your most recent letter leads me to believe that I’ve engendered some incorrect notions in your head about our fundamental nature. Whether that can be attributed to poor pedagogy on my part or foolishness on your part, I cannot yet ascertain. Nonetheless, I endeavor to avoid any such potential misunderstandings in this particular missive. Indeed, I hope you will use it to cleanse your mind of the erroneous notions you have hitherto entertained.

There are myriad creatures that were once human and it needn’t be supposed that we bear them any kinship other than our most recent common ancestor (*Homo sapiens*)*.* But just as man is superior to all other mammals, so are we superior to all other beings who have transcended mortality. We are more refined in capacity, aspect, intellect, outlook, and purpose. More can be learned about the exact origins of each ‘species’ in Dr. Hesselius’ bestiary, *Tractatus* bestiis Herebus.

Superficially it may seem that we resemble those others in a great many ways, with only a few varied details to distinguish us. But as Flaubert observed, *Le bon Dieu est dans le detail*. We are certainly not gods, but our unique circumstance surely gives us a measure of control over the ultimate fate of an individual unrealized or unexploited by most other beings.

But I digress.

As I indicated previously, our kind is rare by virtue of the exacting and rigorous conditions required to achieve our condition. Many there are who commence in the path but lose their way, left to wander in strange roads. And they are abroad in the earth. Like us they preyed upon their fellow man. But ultimately they achieved parasitism rather than becoming conscientious, noble predators. Either their hunger for power is other than bloodlust or they never crave the final conversion, as we do. In any event, their allegiance to our Philosophy is only nominal, preferring to serve themselves rather than any overarching ideology.

And this is to their detriment. Their actions are splintered whereas ours are cogent and purposeful. When the moment of conversion comes, they are left incomplete. While we retain our physical form and even gain greater powers over it, they live on without their substance. This has inevitable repercussions for their continuation. Our transformed bodies practically guarantee our immortality, but with nothing but their yen to anchor them to this world, they easily dissipate.

Also fundamentally related to the impermanence, is their diet. Rather than feed on vital fluids, most often these *Gräuel* feed most commonly upon the *fears* of mankind. Because they came so close to finalizing the conversion, they may appear to be immortal, like us. But we are superior for we know that the life is in the blood. And we continue to feed after the conversion because it is a pleasure, not a necessity. They, however, subsist on human fear. When that which nourishes them is gone, they dwindle and perish (due to unbelief, as it were).

Thus you see that there are three classes or degrees. The lesser degree consists of those who immediately pass into oblivion, leaving behind an empty, lifeless husk. This encompasses the larger part of the adherents to our Philosophy. These are they who received not the conversion, neither the Shedding. Rather than actually pursue our nature, they succumb to it passively and it is unable to possess them in this world.

The next degree are those who abandon their tabernacle of clay but yet tarry here a good while. They mimic the Shedding, but do not partake of its fulness; they rejected it while in the flesh and now that it is denied them, they crave it. They sought after our nature, but were not valiant in obtaining it. But they, too, shall pass.

The highest degree, the pinnacle of dedication, consists of those of us who successfully traversed the Shedding. Ours is an exclusive and secret glory for we are they who have overcome all things. We esteemed our lives as naught, willing to risk our last breath that we might accomplish eternal life; we have bled out our lives because of our great desires. Many of us were buried in the earth so that we could be reborn. Only those who are fully committed to our Philosophy and its statutes will abide eternally.

If you had lived as long as I have, you would remember that these execrations of the second degree were once more numerous than they now are. The world was thick with them. They lived in graveyards, the forests, the mountains, the wells, the sea, and the sky. Some were so terrifying that primitive man actually worshipped them.

But technology and modernism have dulled man’s senses. He no longer fears the things he once did. Once he believed the evidence of things not seen, but no more. Now the malformations are relegated to dwelling in closets or under children’s beds, in abandoned houses, or in dark alleyways. But children grow up, haunts are demolished, and alleys get streetlights. So while we increase, these incomplete, underdeveloped *bêtes noires* must decrease. In fact, man’s unwillingness to believe in what he calls the ‘supernatural’ or the ‘paranormal’ has made it *easier* for us to thrive while most other post-mortal dead-ends diminish.

There have been members of our order, I am compelled to admit, who were so unseemly and careless in their feeding habits, that they were constantly surrounded by these inferior beings—much as they must have harbored fleas and lice when they were still human. It is a well-guarded secret that we possess the ability to terminate members of our community whose nonconformity is excessive. Great lengths have been taken to purge our society and to educate new initiates so that this repugnant condition is eradicated.

Even so, every time you feed you will notice that these others will be attracted to the scene. You must never allow them to come close enough to feed. We are clean and precise, they are filthy and blunt; we are the silver and they are the dross; we are the wine and they are the dregs; we are the lions and they are the dogs.

In addition, there are certain of our numbers who have been specially trained to detect humans who are on the path to conversion but will not likely complete it. When possible, we drain these humans before their conversion is too advanced. While we always choose our victims carefully, extra care must be taken when eliminating a potential *malparido* since they are often well-known to the public. A revelation of our existence and the concomitant increase in belief would be catastrophically detrimental to our work and our Philosophy.

This is also a sensitive procedure because, as I indicated in my last letter, we are cultivating many of the baser instincts of mankind. Not only does this serve to alienate them from the other Philosophy, but also increases the likelihood that they will convert imperfectly and contribute to the infestation of inferior beings on our plane. Thus a delicate balance must be maintained between hedonism (which relegates most of the human dross to annihilation and amplifies our power) and iniquity (which swells the ranks of the *nechysta syla* which contaminate our existence).

But we are up to the task, my young friend. Because we are truly immortal, we are not driven by the haste and uncertainty that plagues our mortal counterparts. Neither do we possess that sexual drive which enslaves so many members of the family of man, thus freeing us from that hormonal frenzy which robs innumerable mortals of their efficiency.

You are still young, Porfirio, and you have not yet divested yourself of this lingering sense of haste. And I notice in your selection of prey that you still prefer humans of a particular gender and complexion. But soon these sentiments will command no allegiance over your performance. When this happens, you will discover the supremacy of carefully, dispassionately calculating your every move. Fear not to Shed your emotions, for you shall reap a body incorruptible, and it shall make you free.

Affectionately,

Hæmming