



A Dark Trilogy

Three short stories of sinister magick, esoterically related, which - like the Deofel Quintet - are entertaining instructional texts for those following the dark quest which is the ONA. The style of these stories follows that of the Deofel Quintet: "While the form chosen is fictional, it is not of a 'conventional' novel. Instead a new vehicle was created with the aim of combining a fast (and thus entertaining) pace with a narrative style that not only required the imaginative participation of the reader, but also sought to involve their unconscious. Thus, detailed descriptions - of, for instance, characters and locations - are for the most part omitted. It is left to the reader to supply such 'missing details': partly from their imagination and partly unconsciously, from their own expectations and 'projections'....."



Atazoth

"So, you came back to see this old man." Ellick smiled, and stroked his greying beard before leaning on his ash walking stick. He stood by the gate of the small field of pasture land on the slopes of the old hill. Below, the hedgeful land gradually leveled out until it met the sea, less than fifteen miles distant.

"I knew you would be back here," Hester said, and kissed him on the side of his face.

"Will he do?"

"Maybe. There's a long way to go."

"But he shows promise."

"Yes."

"I'm glad."

"As I am. It's been a long wait."

"But he can never know, from you, the complete truth."

"I know."

"One more corner until the angles of our nexion are complete," and he gestured with his stick toward where the Sun of early morning rose into the sky of blue.

"Shall I take the next one there?"

"Indeed."

"And the third, and last?"

"Where you met and enticed the first."

"But it won't really be the last, will it?"

"Only for this cycle; this nexion." He sighed, looking at her beauty, her youth.
"How I envy you."

"I know." And she briefly, warmly, held his hand.

"You will live to see it all."

They stood for a long time, looking out toward the landscape of the levels that had seen much darkness and mystery, much joy and revelry, and as they stood, she rested her head on his shoulder, as a daughter might. Once, she remembered, there had been an island, there, before the straight, land-cut drains made and reclaimed the land.

"Will you see her, before the angles are complete?" he asked, interrupting the flow of her centuries of thought.

"Maybe. Do you think I should?"

"Perhaps not."

"But he will meet her again when we all meet for the closing of that angle?"

"Yes, and then he may understand. At least what it is necessary for him to understand." Then he smiled. "I hope you will choose better names, next time!"

They both sensed, and felt, the intrusion, long before the woman and her dog appeared on a footpath an hundred yards above the sloping field where lay several buried secrets.

"You should go, now," he said, regretfully.

She looked toward where her two guards waited, under the shade of the large, old, Oak tree. "Yes," she said, and briefly held his hand.

Then Ellick was walking away, breaking a part of the causal bond between them, and by the time he reached the field gate and the footpath beyond it, he appeared to be only what many people assumed him to be, an ageing if eccentric countryman.

"Good morning," he said as he passed the youngish woman and her Welsh Collie dog. The woman smiled, slightly suspicious, but his smile, his eyes, reassured her, and she returned his greeting. But he was gone, into the trees that led to the Coombe, where he sat, on the sun-warmed grass, thinking about Hester and her sister.

Suddenly, Lars understood. It was partly time itself that magick changed, the slow, causal, time of the world, of mere mortals. The ecstasy, the passion, the triumph, the exhilaration - the true magick - which he had felt since Arleen and Hester burst upon his life, were emanations of the real time which existed in the acausal, an acausal where space as he and mortals knew it, did not exist. So it was he could be here, standing atop Bredon Hill in the falling darkness looking toward the Malvern Hills, and there in that house of cavernous cellars, south-west, on the edge of another sloping hill, while also being near Black Rhadley, completing the three-fold acausal link in this particular causal time and space. He just had to open the nexion to slip into the acausal dimensions where the Dark Gods lurked, waiting.

But there was something else, something beyond even this, which he could not quite comprehend - an intimation of something far greater, far more powerful, far more evolutionary and devastating to the mundane world. But this something was insubstantial for him, in that moment, as a shadow vaguely perceived in semi-darkness.

Then, the insight was gone, as the last light of twilight faded, and Hester, with her two guards, joined him not that far from the summit of the hill. Without a word, she cast dark magick to reinforce the barriers around them, sufficient to make anyone venturing onto the hill in that hour instinctively turn away. The deep pit had been prepared, and their middle-aged and balding victim - chosen according to the guidelines for choosing such opfers - sat, bound and gagged, on the edge of his burial pit, his eyes bulging with terror, his once clean and expensive city suit crumpled and stained.

"This is your right, and duty," she said to Lars, and he took the centuries old curved knife. Then, with the crystal tetrahedron in her hands, she began her sinister chant. "Nythra Kthunae Atazoth," she intoned.

His first cut was not deep enough, and the man frothed blood until the second cut to his throat when he toppled over to briefly writhe in the bottom of the pit. Almost immediately, the two guards began to shovel earth over the still warm and bleeding body.

There were several hours to Dawn when they arrived, washed, refreshed, and changed into new clothes, to stop in a narrow hedgeful lane not that far from Black Rhadley. Ellick was there, dressed in his customary olive-green country clothes, standing in the field where Hester had, not that long ago, sat outside some tent; and there was a woman, standing with her back to Lars, near freshly disturbed soil. She turned to walk toward him, and he could clearly see her face in the star-lit country night. It was Arleen.

He stood, staring, while Hester rushed to embrace her. Then, the two women were kissing, passionately, as lovers might.

"This, here, as you know," Ellick was saying to Lars, distracting his attention from the women. "Is the center, now. You must guard it well."

"I will."

The two women came toward him then, and each kissed him in turn.

"You're going, aren't you?" he said.

"Yes," they replied with one voice.

"There is no child?"

"No," they smiled, replying with one voice. "Not the kind you think!"

"When shall I see you two again?" he asked, feeling he already knew the answer.

There was a brief rushing of air behind him, and he turned around. But he was alone, standing by the hedge in the field, near the fresh earth that covered the recent burial, home as that topsoil now was to the Ash sapling which Ellick had

planted, and home as the deeper soil was to a fresh male and beheaded corpse, Arleen killed. And this sudden departure of Arleen, Hester - and even Ellick - saddened him, for a moment, even though he had many reasons to rejoice. Forty, fifty, or more, years from now, who would he choose to follow him, as Ellick had chosen? Who would be tested, as Arleen had tested him? Who would know the joy, the ecstasy, the passion, the cold calmness of wyrd, the aethereal acausal beauty, that a true Mistress of Earth would bring? Who would be there to shape the changes as he would shape the evolutionary change that the dark rituals of the past months would most certainly bring?

Then he smiled, knowing that he would have to begin a search for some woman, of inner darkness, to share his deeds and his life, and knowing that around him strange, shadowy shapes were faintly hissing their sinister sibilations.

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Kthunae

It was dark. Not the usual dark of a rural English night atop some isolated, tree-free hill, but an intense dark that made Jared unable to see even a few feet in front of him, and he could not help but be nervous. His Black Pilgrimage was not going that well and he had to finally admit to himself that he was lost. His brown hair - like his out-of-place urban clothes and shoes, and even his face - was covered in drying mud.

At least the night was mild, and he bumbled on as best he could for a few minutes in the hope of reaching the top of the hill. It should have been Black Rhadley Hill, but he had lost both his map and torch in the tumble caused by falling over something, somewhere, some time ago. It seemed like hours since he had passed through that dense copse of his fall but it was only thirty minutes. Thirty minutes which had seen him stumble into a stream, trip over twice, and stand still at least seven times in the hope of hearing something, anything, which might give him some indication of which direction to go.

Then, he really was at the top of the hill, able once again to see the stars in the sky, and make out dim shapes ahead and beyond. There was even a faint yellowish glow on the distant horizon which he took to be Shrewsbury town, and, pleased that the strange darkness had gone, he sat down on the damp grass. He thought - but only for a moment - about Lars and his sudden disappearance, for there was a faint light, down toward one side of the hill and he set off, hoping it was a Farm or a cottage.

It was neither. Instead, and nearer than he thought, it was a butane lamp, and it stood on the edge of a field beside a small tent. Jared waited by the old wooden field gate for a long time, watching, listening. But all he could hear was the slight breeze in the nearby trees, and all he could see was a young woman sitting outside the tent, reading, oblivious to the many moths that swirled around the lamp. Her long blonde hair was plaited in a single plait - a style Jared had assumed was long out of fashion.

Then, obviously aware of his presence, she turned toward him as he lurked in the shadows and said a friendly "Hello!"

Awkwardly, Jared climbed over the gate. "Hi."

"Lovely night," she said, as if they had met many times before.

"Yes."

"Traveled far?" She smiled, and something about her - maybe her round, cheerful face - made him feel quite calm and relaxed in her presence, and he sat down on the grass near her tent.

"Not really." For some reason she seemed familiar, and it was several seconds before he realized where he had seen a young woman, with hair like hers, and with a youthful, lively face like hers. It was a photograph in a book about National Socialist Germany and it showed members of the BDM. She was

about the same age as the young woman in the photograph as well, perhaps between eighteen and twenty years old, and thus seven or so years younger than him.

"Be Dawn, soon," the young woman said, and put down her book.

"I suppose so." He tried to see what the book was, and failed.

"I'm Hester, by the way."

"Jared."

"You not camping, then?"

"Just out for a walk. I got lost."

"Easy to do, round here. Bit off the beaten track. Would you like some tea?"

"Well - " he began.

"It's no trouble, really." From the covered porch of her tent she extracted a camping stove, two small aluminium camping kettles, and two mugs. "This one, " she said holding out one of the kettles, "is my teapot!"

Jared was impressed, and while she waited for the water to boil she chatted, as a friend might, about the weather, the old man she had met yesterday who gave her permission to camp in his field, her trip, last month, to Germany, and by the time the tea was prepared, and drunk, Jared was quite content - more than content - to just sit and listen. Occasionally, he would say a few words, but mostly he smiled while she chatted and the light of lamp faded as its fuel was expended. But it did not matter, for the Dawn, opportunistically it seemed, replaced it. And with the light of Dawn he realized that not only was the young woman dressed all in olive-green, but also that her rucksack and tent were olive-green. She seemed like she belonged to a distant, more, gentle past, with her walking breeks, and her woolen shirt, although the shirt emphasized, rather than detracted from, her fulsome breasts.

"Time to get ready," she suddenly said, "it's a long walk back to catch my train."

"You heading for Church Stretton, then?" he asked as she stood up to begin to pack away her gear.

"Yes."

"So am I," he lied, desirous of her company. Suddenly, his Black Pilgrimage did not seem important.

"London?" she asked.

"Yes," he said, surprised. "How did you know?"

"Just a guess," she smiled.

"And you?"

"Oxford."

It did not take her long to pack and - after another mug of tea - Jared, trying to be gallant, offered to carry her rucksack. Her acceptance of his offer pleased him - for the first two miles. After that, he was struggling, and tried not to show it as they walked paths and country lanes through the beautiful rural landscape and under the pleasant warm Sun of early June. He was glad when she suggested they stop by the foot of the Long Mynd for yet another brew of tea. But, after that, his torment got much worse, for the road up to the flat plateau of the heather-covered Mynd was steep, his feet were blistered and the rucksack straps had rubbed part of his shoulders raw. But he managed to keep smiling as they trundled on and she talked of her studies, her college in Oxford, her dreams of traveling around the world. Several cars passed them as they descended down the steepness that was the Burway with its glorious views of South Shropshire: the old hill fort of Caer Caradoc; the prehistoric remains of a volcano known as The Lawley; the ancient settlement and earth circle - as old as Stonehenge - atop Bodbury Hill.

The small town of Stretton was busy, with both people and cars, and Jared was wonderfully relieved when, after many hours of walking, they reached the Railway Station. The one bench - over the open footbridge - was occupied by three young men in modern casual clothing drinking from cans of beers, and such was Jared's tiredness that he sat on the platform leaning against the fence while the young woman stood beside him.

"The train won't be long," she said to him. "Are you changing at Hereford, too?"

"Yes." The three young men were staring at the young woman, and then at him, and he turned away. Her could hear the men talking among themselves, although he could not make out the words, but their laughter, their looks directed at the young woman, made him nervous, so nervous that when their train arrived, he suggested he and Hester go to the front of the train.

"No. I'm sure this will be alright," she said.

Jared was not surprised when the men followed, and sat in seats three rows behind, but he was surprised when - over an half an hour into the journey - Hester excused herself, saying she needed to go to the lavatory. Jared felt he should escort her, but he was trembling, his mouth was dry, and all he could say was, "OK."

She smiled at him, and left. The three men got up and followed and as they passed where he sat Jared made a half-hearted attempt to rise from his seat, but the look from one of the men was enough to dissuade him, and he slunk back into his seat, staring out of the window. But after less than two minutes, he could bear it no longer and - still trembling - he got up.

Whatever he expected, it was not the scene that greeted him in the narrow corridor that housed the train's small lavatory between the vestibules of its two carriages. The three men lay on the dirty, stained, floor of the corridor, slumped in various postures of unconsciousness, with Hester standing near them.

"Drunk too much beer, I suppose," she said, with a charming and disarming smile. "This is our stop, I believe." As the train slowed, she collected her heavy rucksack, and it was a somewhat dazed Jared who followed her out of the train onto the platform of Hereford Station.

They spent their short wait sitting on a wooden bench on the Station platform while Jared answered Hester's questions about his interests and past. Not that he was forthcoming about his involvement with the dark path he had chosen to follow over a year ago. Instead, he spoke then and on their shared train journey of his interest in computing, and regaled her for most of the time about that subject. For him, the time of that journey past quickly, and she was preparing to take her leave as the train approached Oxford when he blurted out: "Can I see you again?"

"Would you like to?" she smiled.

"Yes!"

Quickly, he wrote his address and telephone number on a page torn from her notebook, and sadly watched her descend from the train and walk toward the Station exit, hoping that she would turn round and look at him. She did, and smiled, and this image of her lasted until his own journey of another hour was over.

The city days passed slowly for him after that, and even his return to his work as a Night Porter in a small central London hotel did not please him, and he was thinking of her on that wyrdfull night when a young man with a pierced nose and lip walked to the hotel reception desk, and, brandishing a gun, demanded money.

"There is no money here," Jared said, his voice trembling.

"Then down on your knees, or I'll kill you!"

Jared did as the man said, and by the time he had the courage to move and creep to look over the top of the desk, the man was gone. Relieved, he was surprised when his own mobile telephone rang.

"Hello?" In his haste and nervousness he almost dropped his telephone.

"Jared? It's Hester. Can you meet me?"

"Of course!" Suddenly, his world did not look so bleak.

She named a place - not far - and a time - half an hour, and it only took Jared an instant to forsake his job for the pleasure a meeting with her would afford. The meeting place was a street corner of shops and offices, and only a few cars passed in the humid heat of the sodium-lit city night as he waited. Then, nearly half an hour beyond the appointed time, a black taxi cab stopped. Hester opened the door for him and he had hardly stepped inside when her skillful blow rendered him unconscious.

Jared awoke to find himself seated in and strapped to a chair in a large vaulted cellar, lit by subdued bluish light, although a few feet in front of him a perfect circle of bright white light had been projected onto the stone floor. Faintly, as if

from an adjoining room, he could hear what sounded to him like Arabic music. Several people were present in the cellar, but the subdued light made them indistinct, mere shadows.

"Let this Sunedrion begin," a male voice said. There was something familiar about the voice, and Jared was trying to recall where he had heard it before when the shock of seeing Hester walk into the circle of light erased all his thoughts.

Barefoot, she was dressed only in a long purple robe fastened in two places in such a way that most of her breasts and her pubic hair were exposed. Her long blonde hair had been loosely tied at the back of her head by a purple band so that many strands of hair fell around her face and ears. This, combined with her red lipstick, her painted nails, her exotic perfume, overwhelmed Jared more than finding himself tied to a chair in some cellar.

"Do you accuse him?" the male voice said.

"Yes," Hester replied, "I accuse him."

"Proceed."

"I accuse him of cowardice in the face of the enemy. I accuse him of submitting to the decadent and the ignoble. I accuse him of betraying the dark quest he swore with an oath to undertake, whatever befell him."

"And if found guilty," the male voice said, "what penalty would you, our Mistress of Earth, impose?"

"Opfer!" she shouted with joy in her voice, and there was a faint hissing sibilation emanating from the indistinct shadows.

"Do you deny the charges?" the male voice demanded.

"What?" Jared said.

"Do you have anything to say in your defence?" the male voice asked.

It was then, only then, that Jared understood. "I failed the tests, didn't I?" he said to Hester.

"Yes!" Her smile was not one of kindness.

"Three?"

"Yes."

"So you admit," the male voice said, "the charges?"

"This is another test, right?" Jared said, trying to laugh.

"We await your answer."

"OK. So I failed. Big deal. I was wrong. It won't happen again. You've made your point."

"Opfer!" Hester shouted.

There was a faint hissing sibilation emanating from the indistinct shadows, after which the male voice spoke again. "It is decided. It is as you wish. He shall be your Opfer."

"AgiOS O Baphomet!" Hester chanted.

"AgiOS O Baphomet!" came the sibilating reply.

"Wait - " Jared began to say, but two tall men with the gait, build, dress and looks of professional bouncers came to hold his arms while Hester untied him. Then, they forced him to his feet and she kissed him, briefly and on his lips, before the two men led him away.

He was taken to a large windowless room somewhere nearby and still underground, furnished only with a bed and lit with the same subdued bluish light. There was a metal door, the top of which was formed of a steel grille. Jared sat on the bed and waited. All he could hear was the faint music he had heard earlier, and all he could think of was that this was some new kind of test.

It was not long before Hester - accompanied by the two tall men - came to see him, although it seemed a long time to him.

"You have a choice," she said through the steel grille, still barefoot and still dressed in her robe. "We will give you a sporting chance, so you can freely go

from this place, knowing that sometime, maybe soon, maybe not, we will seek you out and, one way or another, bring your causal life to an end as has been decreed. It could be weeks, months, a year; maybe more. Or - or, you could stay here, willingly, for seven days, during which time, for seven nights, I shall be yours. You should know that it is my time to conceive, and that our child would be raised among us according to our ancient ways, as you yourself would be revered." She smiled, then. "I shall return, at Dawn, when you can tell me what you have decided."

He did not sleep, and the large gourmet meal, the fine wine, he had been given he left untouched. He had no idea of the time, and spent an hour or so pacing up and down between the walls of his cell, trying to work out what was going on. Of course, he smiled to himself, several times during the hours of that night - or what he assumed was the night - he would not really be an opfer. This was just another test. But what was the right thing to do? Pretend to accept his fate, and make love to the beautiful, sexy, Hester? Or opt to go, and possibly never see her again?

Then, with her guards, she was there, still clad in her robe, watching him. "Have you decided?" she asked.

"Yes. I'll stay."

She smiled, this time quite kindly. "Gather round, all you here." And there were indistinct shapes that seemed to haunt the shadowed spaces beyond Jared's cell. "Witness that he, named Jared, has agreed of his own free will to be our opfer. Thus shall I for seven nights be his bride before our deed of sacrifice is done."

She unfastened her robe and let it fall to the floor. One of her guards unlocked the door and she came toward him, naked, as a lover might, smiling, enticing. Jared did not see, not hear, the door being locked, as he did not see nor hear the guards move away to leave them alone in the blue, subdued, light.

Her passion of hours exhausted him, and she left him sleeping, dreaming, happy, content. He awoke alone to find fresh food, new wine, and he ate and drank, and waited, dreaming, happy, content. Then she was with him again, soft, gentle, passionate, shouting in her ecstasy. Then as the hours quickly, slowly, passed, she was gone, and he ate and drank the gourmet food, the fine wine, and waited, happy, dreaming, content.

Soon, he had lost count of the days, the nights, and weary but pleased, waited

as he had waited. But she did not arrive. He fell asleep, to be awakened by the guards who carried him out from his cell through a sinew of dark corridors to the dark chamber of his accusers. But there was a not quite elliptical altar there, swathed in reddish light, and an ellipse of indistinct robed figures hugging the shadowed darkness beyond that swathe of light. And there was music, the subdued strange music of his past seven days and nights.

Bound by leather thongs, he lay naked and helpless upon the altar, while, out of the darkness beyond, a beautiful Hester in a crimson robe approached him, holding a curved, sharp-bladed knife.

She circled around Jared, saying: "Before you - we were.
After you - we shall be, again.
Before us - They who are never named.
After us - They will be, waiting."

Then she turned toward the shadows. "What is it that you seek?" she chanted.

"It is the protection and milk
Of your breasts that I seek, " a voice replied.

Hester, as Mistress of Earth, moved toward Jared, revealing her breasts, before laughing and moving out from the ellipse of reddish light toward the shadows.

"I put my kisses at your feet," a male voice said,
"And kneel before you who crushes
Your enemies and who washes
In a basin full of their blood.
I lift up my eyes to gaze
Upon your beauty of body:
You who are the daughter and a Gate
To our Dark Gods.
I lift up my voice to stand
Before you my sister
And offer my body so that
My mage's seed may feed
Your virgin flesh."

Hester laughed and her two guards raised her until she lay upon Jared. Then she was arousing him with her hand and he did not, could not, resist as she guided his erection into her warm, moist cleft.

"Kiss me," she said as she slowly moved upon him, " and I shall make you
As an eagle to its prey.
Touch me and I shall make you
As a strong sword that severs
And stains my Earth with blood.
Taste me and I shall make you
As a seed of corn which grows
Toward the sun, and never dies.
Plough me and plant me
With your seed and I shall make you
As a Gate that opens to our gods!"

Then, as Jared's body spasmed in his ecstasy, she intoned the last part of the rite.

"So you have sown and from your seeding
Gifts may come if you obedient heed
These words I speak."

The guards came, then, to lift her from the altar, and she circled around Jared, before speaking to the shadows, beyond.

"I know you, my children, you are dark
Yet none of you is as dark
Or as deadly
As I.
I know you and the thoughts
Within all your hearts: yet
Not one of you is as hateful
Or as loving as I.
With a glance I can strike
You dead."

She smiled, and twirled around, three times. "No guilt shall bind you, no thought restrict! Feast then and enjoy the ecstasy of this life: but ever remember I am the wind that snatches your soul!"

Jared tried to turn to see her, but she swiftly slashed his neck with her knife, and it was not long before the fountain of his life, his spurting blood, ceased to flow.

"Agios O Baphomet!" Hester cried, in triumph. With bloodstained hands and face, she went to kiss every member of her Temple reserving her last, and most passionate kiss, for Lars.

"So it has been, so it is, and so shall it be again," she said, before leading Lars up, toward the light of day, leaving her guards to do their work of cleaning and disposal.

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Nythra

A Sinister Concerto in Three Brief Movements
by
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Lars smiled. The bullet had done its work, and his victim - his third offer in as many months - toppled over backwards by the force of the impact, lay on the dark green late Spring grass, eyes open, limbs akimbo, and quite dead.

His vantage point had been the old Quince tree on one side of the ornamental lawn of the large Edwardian house, and he was soon back, past the wrought iron railings, on the pavement and walking under the bright May sunshine toward where he had parked his motorcycle, the wide ring road a few streets away making his escape from the town quite easy. Less than three hours later

he was back in his own city, in his own modern, small, if expensive, Apartment overlooking the river. The smallness, the uncluttered clean newness, the view of the river, all pleased him, and, opening a bottle of Chablis, he raised his glass and gave his customary toast: "To presencing the Dark."

For Lars - not quite twenty-three years of age, of medium if muscular build and with a mane of not quite curly almost long chestnut-coloured hair - was entering the second year of his dark, sinister, quest.

Months ago he had shed the once obligatory black clothes for stylish wear obtained through his new hobby of credit card cloning, just as he had exchanged the room he shared in a rented house with friends for his pleasing Apartment, and just as he had given up his dreary city office job. It was meant to be new start, after his successful completion of the Rite of External Adept, and it was. Even his own sinister group had begun to flourish, and tonight, his dark gods willing, there would be a new woman for him to sexually initiate.

The small bookshelf near his plasma screen contained a large quartz crystal and only a few books, all of which dealt with his dark quest, and he sat in his comfortable chair - set to give the best view of the river - to read from his favourite book, a compilation of Satanic articles.

"It is of fundamental importance - to evolution both individual and otherwise - that what is Dark, Sinister or Satanic is made real in a practical way, over and over again. That is, that what is dangerous, awesome, numinous, tragic, deadly, terrible, terrifying and beyond the power of ordinary mortals, laws or governments to control is made manifest. In effect, non-Initiates (and even Initiates) need constantly reminding that such things still exist; they need constantly to be brought "face-to-face", and touched, with what is, or appears to be, inexplicable, uncontrollable, powerful and "evil". They need reminding of their own mortality - of the unforeseen, inexplicable "powers of Fate", of the powerful force of "Nature".

If this means killing, wars, suffering, sacrifice, terror, disease, tragedy and disruption, then such things must be - for it is one of the duties of a Satanic Initiate to so presense the dark, and prepare the way for, or initiate, the change and evolution which always result from such things. Such things as these must be, and always will be, because the majority of people are or will remain, inert and sub-human unless changed. The majority is - and always will be until it evolves to become something else - raw material to be used, moulded, cut-away and shaped to create what must be. There is no such thing as an innocent

person because everyone who exists is part of the whole, the change, the evolution, the presencing of life itself, which is beyond them, and their life only has meaning through the change, development and evolution of life. Their importance is what they can become, or what can be achieved through their death, their tragedy, their living - their importance does not lie in their individual happiness or their individual desires or whatever."

Slowly, as Lars read, drank his wine, listened to his favourite modern music, twilight descended as it does in England, bringing a strange aethereal beauty to the river and the mutely lit buildings on the opposite bank, and he lay down his book to begin to plan his next deed. For there grew in him even then a desire for something beyond the clean almost emotionless efficiency of his killings, and he stood, outside, on his small balcony, glass of wine in hand, wondering what he might do.

His assignation with his sinister group was still some hours away and he spent one of those hours walking along by the river in the warmth of the early evening, half hoping that someone, or some gang, would attack him, for he had yet to try out the swordstick umbrella he carried. But all the people he passed seemed happy or absorbed in their own affairs, and he returned to the large, new, building that housed his own Apartment still considering what his new plan of action might be. Maybe it was this which made him err. Or maybe it was something else.

There was music in the room of a type he had not heard before, and he was scrutinizing the pile of CD's which lay beside the player when a female voice surprised him.

"It's Schubert's Piano Trio in E-flat."

She did not seem concerned to find a man in her Apartment, and stood, by the door to her bedroom, slightly smiling, her long auburn hair trailing over her shoulders, her nipples straining against the thin fabric of her revealing purple dress.

In control again, Lars said, "Beautiful."

"Yes, what a tragedy he died so young."

He was referring to both the music and the woman. "I believe I'm in the wrong Apartment." He guessed her age to be early thirties, and it was his turn to smile.

"Surreal."

"What?"

"This."

"I must be on the wrong floor."

"You are. You're right at the top, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"Better view?" She gestured toward her window and balcony.

"A little. Would you like to see?"

"Yes."

She was on his balcony, intently gazing across the river, and he stood so close to her their shoulders were touching. His dark quest had given him a confidence with women that his previous years lacked, and he allowed his hand to briefly touch hers as he turned and said: "Would you like some wine?"

"Yes," she smiled and followed him back inside.

He noticed her interest in his small pieces of electronic equipment, resting on the glass table he used as a desk. But she surprised him again by knowing what they were. "Cloning. Interesting," she said as she took the glass of wine he offered.

"It's just a hobby," he said and tried to hide his smile behind his glass as he drank.

"And one which can be quite useful. To interesting hobbies!" She raised her glass.

"To interesting hobbies!"

"You have a contact, I presume, who supplies some useful and necessary details."

For a few moments he looked at her suspiciously. Jared, one of the members of his sinister group, had indeed proved quite useful, employed as he was in an hotel. "Well..." he began to say in reply, trying to make some reasonable answer or excuse.

"Don't worry!" And she came toward him and touched his arm. "I've been looking for someone like you."

For a second he found her confidence, her attitude, her interest perplexing, but it was only a second. She was waiting, and he knew she was and he did not disappoint, taking the glass from her hand and placing both his and hers on the glass table. She did not resist his embrace: instead, she welcomed it, pressing her body into his and embracing him with a strength which surprised him. Then they were kissing, tongue to tongue, and removing each other's clothes.

Soon, they were on the floor, her dress pushed up around her shoulders, his shirt undone, his trousers and underwear removed. She was naked under her dress, and their sexual passion was intense. And when they were satiated, they sat, stretched out on the floor leaning against his sofa, drinking wine.

"You must have some interesting friends," she said.

"Not as interesting as you," he quipped, then winced at his use of a cliché. But before he could make some clever riposte in compensation, she spoke.

"You enjoy it, then?" she asked, "the game?" And she gestured toward his electronic equipment.

Her perspicacity amazed him and as he looked into her azure-coloured eyes he felt a brief contraction in his stomach as if she had reached out to him on another, darker, level. "Yes! Care to join the game?" He said the words quite without thought, instinctively, his face flushed with excitement.

"I would love too!" she replied, and kissed him. "When can we start?"

"Now?"

"Excellent! Anything in particular in mind?"

"Well, there is this meeting, tonight."

The Temple of his sinister group was a large converted room of a large house in Lars' chosen city, and it followed the precepts laid down in the Black Book of Satan as did the ritual of Initiation. Unusually, Lars did not participate, but sat with Arleen, his new lover, on cushions to one side of the altar, and as the ritual progressed Lars knew Arleen was unimpressed. So was Lars, despite the dramatic rendering of the ritual, and for the first time it occurred to him that such theatrical games had served their purpose and belonged to his past. He must quest forth into new realms, new sinister experiences.

It was many hours past midnight and Lars and Arleen left to stand for a while, in the garden of the house, in the still warm air of the night.

"You found it boring, then?" Lars asked.

"Yes."

"It lacked that vivifying ecstasy - that excitement, that danger - we need and crave."

"Most certainly."

"It's still early."

"My thoughts exactly!"

She stood smiling at him, and her presence, her eyes, the memory of their passionate, sexual, encounter earlier that evening, affected him in a reckless way. "I've got an idea," he said, satanically.

"This one," she said with an air of knowledge.

She had broken into, and started, the car parked in some nameless city street, in only a few minutes. "A youth, well-spent," she smiled as he looked at her quizzically.

Their target was several miles away in the sodium-lit darkness - an all-night garage on the edge of the city - where they, both dressed all in black, stopped, away from prying surveillance cameras, to assume their disguise of demon masks which Lars had borrowed from one of the members of his sinister group. There were no other customers, a tribute perhaps to the lateness of the

hour, and Lars brandished his revolver while the thin, gaunt, and male keeper of the till with the face and clothes of a student, went even more pale. Lithe, Arleen vaulted over the counter, pushed him aside and took what cash there was. Less than a minute later, their first deed was done.

The money was irrelevant. It was the sheer excitement that roused them, that captivated, exhilarated, and after they had abandoned the stolen vehicle they sat in her powerful, sleek, car, laughing. Then they kissed, passionately, before she speedily, recklessly, sped them back to his Apartment and a night of physical passion.

2

It was only the beginning. For some reason Lars did not understand, but did not then bother about, he and Arleen not only inspired each other in a sinister way, but also complimented each other. He knew little about her beyond the few unimportant things she said about her past and present circumstances, but the truth was he was not that interested. What mattered for him was that he found her company vivifying. He felt stronger, more confident, more Satanic, as he knew she did. Quite without expecting to, or even wanting to, it seemed to him that he had found his perfect sinister partner, and he felt that with her he might Presence the Dark in exhilarating practical ways, bringing dark magick to the Earth in a manner far beyond the mundane rituals, and cullings, he had previously used.

They spent the morning of that cloudy, rainful day, in his Apartment planning their next deed. Once, after they broken bread and drank wine, she browsed through his small collection of Satanic literature, all of which emanated from the Order of Nine Angles and all of which did not seem to interest her.

Taking down one of the books, he read for her his favourite quotation, and, after he had finished, she smiled and said: "That certainly expresses the essence. We two are more than mortal, for we are ready by our combined will and life-force and through our deeds to forge the next link in our evolution to inspire those who will admire us."

It did not seem a pompous thing for her to say given the circumstances, for Lars knew then with perfect clarity that she understood and it seemed to him for one indefinite, although brief, moment that she was darkness come alive.

"We might even become infamous," she added as a coda to his thoughts.

Now that, thought Lars, would be good. With this, his conversion was complete, and he showed her, locked away in aluminium cases and hidden behind a false back to his wardrobe, his small collection of guns, collected and bought from his sinister friends and contacts over the past two years. She said nothing, but the way she touched them pleased him.

Their planning completed, they left in her car to purchase the few items, and extra clothing, they needed, returning only to change into their new black outfits and affect a minimalist, but reasonably effective, disguise. They kissed passionately before setting forth into the typical rain of typical English middle afternoon.

An hour, and one stolen car later, they arrived at their destination: a Building Society in a fairly prosperous suburb. Three customers of indeterminate personality, and several staff, were inside. From his bag, Lars produced a shotgun, firing into the ceiling. One stocky middle-aged man, in a checked shirt and jeans, rushed toward Lars as a hero might, and Arleen drew the pistol Lars had given her, and shot the man dead.

"Money!" Arleen demanded to the terrified woman clerk nearest her, who duly if nervously obeyed, stuffing the small bag Arleen held out with a collection of banknotes.

Then they were gone, amid the sound of an alarm and a delayed, female, scream.

That night in Lars' Apartment - after a celebratory meal in an expensive restaurant paid for by Lars' hobby, and the customary toast to Presencing the Dark - their sexual passion and excitement attained new levels, binding them even closer together.

The morning sun found them tired, but joyous, and they lay together a long time in bed, drinking wine, touching, and talking of deeds they might - and should - do. Once, Lars left to return with one of his books, from which he read, and once they wandered to his sitting area to watch the news on his plasma screen. Their deed was there, if only briefly reported, and both smiled when they heard their deed described: "...callous...cold-blooded..."

"Those people, at that ritual, would they dare to do what we have done?" she

asked.

"Probably not."

"Then they are still in chains; held back by their own feebleness, their inertia."

"Probably."

"So, it's only a pose for them, is it?"

"Probably."

That day of dark joy, killing, exuberance and passion became the archetype for the next part of their life together. Their next plan took them away, to another city, and although their modus operandi was almost the same, the dark intensity of their deeds increased.

This time, there was a long queue of non-descript people waiting patiently in the non-descript area marked out for such waiting, with the three non-descript serving staff of the chosen Bank seemingly secure behind their screens. The vestibule was large, if poorly lit by high modern lamps, and a non-descript kind of tribute to the time when the Victorian Bank building itself was a symbol for its times. Arleen and Lars, in their now customary black clothes and minimalist disguise - a wig, Egyptian style make-up for her; a flat tweed cap and a moustache for him - energetically entered the building, their guns ready. Arleen shot the last person in the queue - an elderly man - and gestured for the remainder to lie on the floor, which, obedient to her gun, they did as the body of the man lay bleeding and dying near her feet.

The cashiers swiftly handed over money, and it was all over in a minute with Arleen and Lars calmly walking out of the building into the street where oblivious people, and traffic, passed. Over the road, and two side-streets later, they were back in their stolen car as, in the distance, a Police siren wailed above the city vehicle noise, lyingly proclaiming a kind of mastery of the streets.

Three days later, Lars and Arleen ventured forth again, to a city even more distant. The drab, dreary building was almost the same, and it seemed to Lars that he already existed on some higher level, taut, waiting, like some dark predator, ready to lunge, to kill. There was no queue, this time, on that dreary rainfll morning in that dreary city of copycat shops and traffic - only one customer with a face like an artists' blank canvas, leaning against the counter

while a young woman Bank clerk talked trivia to him, half-smiling. Lars pointed his gun, but it was Arleen who shot him, once while he stood, and twice after he had fallen to the floor. A young man pushed opened the glass door as she did so, and he stood there, unmoving, his hand, knuckles-white, still holding the handle of the door. Arleen turned, raised her gun, pouted a kiss at him, and the young man fled with memories, a face, to haunt his dreams for years to come. Then she was smiling, waiving at the surveillance camera while Lars collected money.

Once outside, several people stood watching them - uncertain what was going on or what they should do - but Lars and Arleen walked calmly away not even bothering, this time, to hide their guns. They had not gone far along the street with its passing traffic when a Police car skidded to a halt.

"Armed Police!" a Police Officer shouted as he swiftly in a trained and masterly fashion exited the car, brandished his gun while using the open car door as a shield. "Put down your weapons!"

Lars turned and in an even more masterly fashion shot the man in the centre of his forehead. Around them, people ran, cowered, sheltered behind anything they could, astonished, afraid, amazed. The other Police Officer, about to aim, was forced to move away from his position beside the bonnet of the car as Arleen fired three times in his direction before brazenly walking around the back of the vehicle toward him as he crouched on the pavement that stood in front of a row of drab High-Street style retail shops. It might have been a scene from some film - except the dead body of the Policeman, the terror, the astonishment, of the people, were real. For a brief moment the Police Officer and Arleen looked at each other, weapons raised, and it was this look that doomed him. He could have fired at his closing target. Instead, he stayed crouching, looking into her eyes, looking at her smiling face, until the first of her two bullets impacted - one in his head, the other in his chest - when he tumbled awkwardly backwards yet sideways before the stillness of death overcame him. The rain had stopped as she had walked toward him, and a small swathe of bright, warm, sunlight came to relieve the scene of its repetitive city-drab greyness.

Lars gestured toward Arleen, who understood immediately and she fastly, recklessly, drove them away from the scene in the Police car which, a few minutes later, they had abandoned in favour of another hijacked vehicle.

Hours later, back in their lair, the television news had pleased them - "...cold-

blooded.....ruthless..." but Lars sensed Arleen was restless as they sat on his sofa, having toasted their latest triumph.

"If what you say - or rather, what those books of yours say - is true," Arleen said, after Lars had read another extract from his book, Grimoire of the Dark Gods, "why don't we just bring these entities who can cause chaos, disruption, back to Earth? Wouldn't that be fun! Watch all the morons scurry about in their terror."

Lars smiled, and continued to read aloud. "I quote: The Dark Gods are means to self-fulfillment, self-understanding and self-divinity.....According to Sinister tradition, it is possible to "open a nexion to the Dark Gods" by certain sinister rites. Some of these rites involve such things as esoteric chant (for which see Naos) combined with a large, clear, pure quartz tetrahedron, while others involve ceremonies of blasphemy, excess and human sacrifice." He paused to look at her. "We would need a sacrifice, or two."

"Or three!" she laughed. "We should really change our tactics - keep one step ahead. I know, why not a bomb?"

"Or two."

"Why stop at two?"

"One small technical problem."

""You don't know how," she said.

"You guessed it."

"Can't be that difficult. Are we above mere mortals, or what?"

"I suppose the Internet would be a good place to start."

A meal, a bottle of wine, and several hours later, they had their answers. "All we need now are the materials, and ingredients."

A week later, they had their materials. Two days later, they had their bombs. They had slept little, and had ventured forth into the real world only to purchase or acquire the materials, the food, the wine, they needed. Their hours were spent studying the texts - the manuals they had acquired via the Internet -

talking of deeds they might do, and satiating their sexual desire for each other. Those nine days had affected them both, although in different ways. Lars looked older, and somewhat tired, while with every passing day Arleen seemed to become more passionate, more energetic, more needful of physical passion.

Their city targets were chosen quite at random - a Bank, a street of shops, an Inn - and they left their deadly explosive devices, packed with long nails, in three stolen cars, with their timers set one hour apart. Lars and Arleen were not disappointed by the chaos, the death, the terror, they caused, and they sat avidly watching the television reports of the explosions in Lars' Apartment, smiling, and making toasts with their glasses of wine to strange-named Dark Gods as the toll of their sacrificial victims rose: Shugara, Azanigin, Gaubni..

Lars was visualizing their victims - past and present - exulting in his deeds, and imagining the life of their lives seeping into, seeding, the large quartz tetrahedron he held in his hand. Arleen was beside him, pressing her warm thinly clothed body into his, and it seemed to him then that her nearness, her warmth, her very presence, not only strengthened him, overcoming his tiredness, but also seeped somehow into the crystal, warming it and his hand.

That night they ventured forth into the darkness of the rural English countryside, traveling hour upon tedious hour until they reached their destination. Lars had been there, already, in the first keen months of his dark quest, and he was not disappointed as they left their car in the lane by The Marsh to walk in the almost full moonlight to the top of Corndon Hill, for it was there that their simple ritual began.

Arleen held the crystal and he chanted his first chant: Nythra kthunae Atazoth. She lay down then, naked, still holding the crystal, and he stood over her, chanting his second chant: Binan ath ga wath am. He lay with her then, naked body to naked body, while a cool breeze came to dry a little of his sweat as he moved upon her. Was there really a change in the light? Or was it just the intensity of his visualization? Was there really something there, seeping through the nexion of their ritual, their crystal, their visualization, coagulated by the blood they had shed, and their own, cold, sinister, desire?

She was reaching her climax and as she did so her shout became a dark exultation: Aperiatur terra, et germinet Chaos. Then, there was stillness.

3

He had been a little ahead of her as they descended the hill, clothed, and happy, and he had to will himself to stop from laughing, loudly, raucously, for in the moment of her climax he had sensed the worlds, the beings, the dimensions, beyond. So little; so puny - we are..... He wanted to run, to jump - to shout, scream, to share, the truth, and he was nearing the bottom of the hill when he turned around. But she was gone, nowhere to be seen.

Calmly at first, he walked back toward the top, as - calmly - he walked back down again. He waited, then, a long time, before returning to the top. He waited even longer by the car; in the car, even as Dawn arrived to bring the warmth of the Sun to dispel the chill of the last hours of that night. Once, twice, in the bright morning light of that warm morning he ascended that hill; wandered around it, and it was only many hours later that he willed himself to leave, wondering, hoping, she would be there on his return, having played a lover's jape.

But she was not there, in his Apartment, and he found himself - surprised by his nervousness - knocking on her door, several Apartment floors below. There was no response to his insistent rapping. Her door was unlocked, as he half expected, and he stood inside the completely bare, empty, spaces, not knowing what to think, and drained of all feeling.

The days, the weeks, past, grave-worm slowly, and even the news of chaos spreading across his planet did not please him, at first.

[Fini]