

# Angel of Christ?

My Little Tom Tom

Book 3

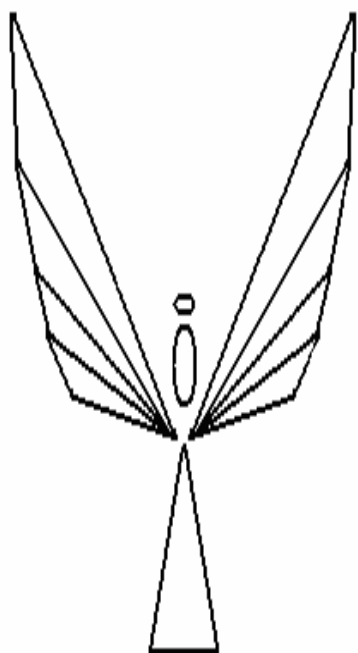
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## ARCHANGEL

An archangel was sent by God from heaven.  
Her wings were strong as steel,  
and she possessed the courage  
of a great warrior.  
The archangel was fearless.  
She survived the war, epidemics  
and various calamities.  
Years passed...  
the archangel raised a family.  
She guided and protected her children.  
She unselfishly gave them the best  
she could in her own simple ways.  
She brought light to their paths.  
She shared with them tears and joys,  
sorrows and hopes, love and compassion.  
Years passed ...  
the archangel had grandchildren.  
These little angels served as her inspiration.  
She was kind and loving,  
but taught them strength and courage..

More years passed...  
The archangel is now old and fragile.  
She's weak and slow in her movements,  
yet her spirit and will power  
remain strong as ever.  
The archangel sent by God is ...  
my mother.  
She was my guide and my protector.  
She is my light and my joy,  
and she will always be the source of  
my hope and strength.









# 1

Meg was giving birth inside a church tower. She was lying on the floor with her abdomen undergoing violent spasms. She felt the pain shooting up her spine. She massaged her abdomen and pushed her hands downward to facilitate the birth of the baby.

Meg had no friends and family. She was emotionally unstable. She grew up to be highly volatile, easily angered under slight provocation. She could not tolerate the company of others. She was unable to sustain a good relationship with anyone.

Meg was living alone. It was better this way, no one to fight with, no one to argue with, no trouble at all in terms of relationships, just she and herself.

Meg felt empty. She was longing for companionship. Deep inside, she was envious of other people's capacity to

laugh and enjoy with friends. She too wanted to initiate friendship. However, her stubborn nature forced her to withdraw during the initial stage of camaraderie. She found people to be superficial. She maintained her distance.

She hated her job. She could not tolerate her lady boss. She saw her as mean, manipulative and inconsiderate. Her lady boss remembered Meg's birthdays and never failed to greet her during this special occasion as well as Christmas, New Year, Valentine's Day and others yet Meg remained aloof.

One evening Meg was walking home coming from work. A young teen age girl approached her.

"Hello ma'am would you like to buy fresh flowers?"

Meg ignored the girl, and walked faster. The girl followed.

"This flower is for the salvation of your soul."

Meg stopped and looked at the girl straight in the eye. "What?"

"This flower is for the salvation of your soul. If you buy one, you will be redeemed." The girl's eyes burned with compassion.

"Are you redeemed?" Meg asked.

"Yes I am. Father Robert saved me as well as the others?"

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“And who is Father Robert?”

“He’s our leader. He gives so much hope. He saved me, the others, and he will also save you?”

Meg got curious. “Okay I will bargain with you. I will buy all your flowers on one condition.”

“What is it?”

“I want to meet this Father Robert. I want to talk to him. I want to know if he could save me from my miseries.”

“Yes he will.” The girl gave the assurance.

Meg found out that the girl’s name was Wendy. She was in high school. Wendy was bored with her daily activities and decided to join Father Robert through the invitation of another girl.

As agreed upon, Meg bought all the flowers. She also treated Wendy to a nice dinner. At first Wendy refused. She needed to go back to Father Robert where food was served for everyone.

Meg felt odd about herself. She never enjoyed the company of other people. She found them shallow and insensitive. However, Wendy was different, when Wendy talked about Father Robert, Meg was all ears and wanted to absorb all information about the man.

Wendy brought Meg to Father Robert to meet him and the Redemption – organization found by Father Robert.

“Welcome to your home and the Redemption is your family.” Father Robert embraced Meg as soon as they met. The other members of the family embraced Meg as well.

Father Robert was a fifty year old man. He was thin and below average in height. There was nothing special with his physical appearance but when he talked, there was so much charisma. Father Robert can stare anyone in the eye with hypnotic gaze.

“We are one and we are all equal. We are one with nature. We are one with the universe. No one is better than we are, and we are no better than anyone. Let’s all celebrate life. And life will celebrate with us.” Father Robert talked with magnetism.

Meg was enthralled.

There was singing and dancing, there was a celebration. For the first time, Meg felt a sense of belongingness. Meg spent the night with the Redemption, Father Robert and all members slept together side by side.

The Redemption consisted of people from all walks of life and various ages. There were teen-agers, middle aged, old ones and even children.

Meg decided to join Father Robert’s Redemption for good. Meg kept her job. Coming from work, she went directly to her new found home and family.

Meg gave her monthly salary to the Redemption. She got no qualms or hesitations. The Redemption treated her as

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its own. Other members were doing the same. They kept their job but surrendered their earnings to Father Robert.

Before, Meg was annoyed of other people, she hated their presence. Now she could dance. She could sing. She could pray with Father Robert and the Redemption members.

Meg was contented. At her job, she gave an aura of joy, and her co-workers noticed immediately.

“You look different.” Meg’s lady boss said.

“Do I?” Meg responded with a smile.

“Yes you do.”

“Well it’s me.”

“I’m curious. What happened?”

“Happened with what?” Meg asked.

“Happened to you. Is there anyone special in your life?”

“There’s none.”

“Common you tell me.”

“There’s really none.” Meg responded happily.

Meg and her lady boss engaged in a nice conversation. The lady boss felt weird. This was the very first time she and Meg had a nice talk. Meg often times responded with a nod for a yes. Other times, she shook her head if it’s a no. She

was giving out the signal that she was not interested to talk with anyone. However, Meg did well with her job, never failed to submit reports beyond deadlines. The lady boss despite Meg's cold behavior was satisfied. It's the quality of the job not the person's character that matters.

Meg responded from the greetings of her co-workers.

“Hello Meg.”

“Hello.”

“Hi Meg.”

“Hi.” Meg was projecting warmth. Her co workers were now willing to establish friendship with her.

Meg was projecting a friendly nature. However, she was cautious and managed to stay detached. She wanted no connection with anyone.

Her membership with the Redemption was a well kept secret. This was the rule she instigated to herself.

Months passed and Meg was happy.

Meg learned that the Redemption was performing certain rituals she found confusing. At first she refused to participate, but later she gave in.

Slowly, Meg grew weary. Bitterness was getting into her system once again.

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Meg found out that she was pregnant. She realized why Robert was addressed as Father. He was the father of the young children at the Redemption. She also learned that Father Robert was accused of various crimes.

There was uncertainty, Meg wanted to leave, but she also wanted to stay.

The warmth she was projecting at her place of work was transformed into confusion.

“Do you have a problem? Is there anything I can do?” The lady boss with her usual kindness asked Meg.

Meg shook her head. Meg reverted back to her previous character.

The lady boss noticed that Meg’s tummy was growing bigger. It was obvious that Meg was pregnant. However, how hard the lady boss tried to ask Meg about her situation, Meg refused to share anything.

The Redemption house was a large wooden structure set against a huge lot surrounded by twenty feet concrete walls. There was a rumor that the property was given by one of the rich members who was so engrossed with Father Robert’s charisma.

Meg was not sure who the rich member was. When she asked members of the Redemption, she was told it was not her concern.

There was a guard house at the gate and uninvited guests were allowed no entry. An altercation happened

before when some teen age boys got inside the redemption house, seeking for fun and thrill. Father Robert shot one of the boys dead while the others escaped.

Father Robert was tried in court. However, several members of the Redemption stood as witnesses informing the court that the teen age boys tried to rob the Redemption house. Father Robert shot the boys as a self defense when they tried to attack him.

Meg despite her confusion stayed.

There was another celebration at the Redemption. Everyone was singing and clapping their hands while dancing.

“Tonight will be the night you will remember for the rest of your life.” Father Robert told Meg.

“What?”

“Ask no question, just celebrate.”

Meg was told that her unborn child would be offered as a sacrifice. Meg was very scared. Meg sought the help of Wendy, the girl who sold her flowers.

“What shall I do?” Meg asked.

“You don’t have to do anything. This will be your salvation. Father Robert will save not only you but your baby as well. Ask no question, all you have to do is follow. You will not regret it Meg. No one did.” Wendy gave the assurance.



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Meg sought the help of other members.

“It will be for your own good. It will be for the good of your unborn child.” One member told Meg.

“Father Robert promised everyone happiness. You and your baby are no exception.” Another member said.

There was so much pressure from Father Robert and the other redemption members. Meg was scared but she gave in.

Meg was brought to an altar, there was a big picture of father Robert hanging on the wall. At the middle was a wooden bed where Meg was asked to lie down while the members surrounded the bed with lighted candles.

The family members started chanting incomprehensible words which Meg could not understand. As the family members were chanting, Father Robert appeared with his two arms raised up in the air. He looked different. He was wearing a black gown and a mask. It was a demon mask.

Meg felt that Father Robert was Satan and the sacrificial offering was for Satan. It was only now that Meg realized that the Redemption was a satanic cult.

Meg heard horrible sounds coming from the members. The incantation was for Satan’s adulation. Meg felt she was in hell surrounded by demons.

Days after the sacrificial offering, Meg could not sleep. She suffered from horrifying nightmares.

Meg's tummy was growing bigger. There was trouble within the cult system, trouble with money, with food. Arguments were everywhere.

Members were forced to surrender their properties to Father Robert. Meg knew it was wrong. However, the members were obedient. They followed blindly what was told to them.

“What will I do?” Meg asked herself. Again she suffered attacks of emotional instability. She became bitter and angry at the satanic cult family.

“Once a member will always be a member, there will be no escape. You can never dissociate yourself.” Father Robert often said to all members. “Whoever walks away will be in great danger. That person will be cursed for life. The physical body will suffer as well as the soul. The Redemption will be your family for life. There will be no turning back.” This was the continuous threat of Father Robert.

## 2

One night, Meg took her chance and ran away. She traveled long distance from one location to the next. She was making sure she will never be traced.

Meg during her stay with Father Robert did not give her full salary. She only gave half of it, the other half she kept to herself in case something happened.

Meg felt she wasted her life. She got no friends to cling to. She got no family of her own. The family she found at the Redemption was a hoax. Her anger and bitterness got directed to her bloating tummy.

Meg rented a room and tried to look for another job but unable to find one. She grew depressed.

“I have to get rid of you!”

Meg punched her tummy for days to remove the unwanted baby inside. She took various medicines and concoctions bought from quacks to remove the baby, but it stayed intact. The pregnancy persisted.

Meg went to a doctor.

“It will be too risky. It will either be your life or the baby’s life. Or it could be both of you.” The doctor warned Meg.

Meg did not give up. She climbed up a tree, hurled herself from a two story building, her back broken but still, the baby stuck like glue. Meg got more depressed, bitter and angry.

Meg became disoriented, unable to determine her whereabouts. She was going everywhere. She was going nowhere.

One late afternoon, she was walking unable to decide where to go. She passed by a church. She looked up the church tower with a big bell hanging.

The church was old and built during the seventeenth century. It was a medieval work for the religious with deep veneration to God.

Meg went inside the church and walked through the aisle. She barely noticed the parishioners seated on the pews while praying.

There was a song coming from the choir but Meg did not hear it as a song but a plain noise with no meaning. The

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song was magnificently sung by a group of boys and girls with an old female conductor at the middle.

At the Sacristy, several altar boys holding sacred vestments and liturgical vessels noticed a pregnant woman looking tired and confused, but they were preoccupied. They were busy in preparation.

It was a common sight inside the church when beggars, paupers, or people from various walks of life came in order to pray, and asked spiritual guidance. Even thieves took the opportunity in grabbing people's belongings while these people were busy communing with God.

Meg found a stair, climbed up until reaching the top of the church.

"This is the way to end up everything..." Meg told herself. She prepared to throw herself off when she experienced a sudden pain shooting up her spine.

"Aaaaaahhhhh..."

Meg collapsed on the floor and went into labor. Her pain mixed with the deep anger she felt to the baby inside her tummy.

"I'll kill you. I'm gonna kill you myself. I promise!"

Meg was going delirious due to the pain and anger she was feeling.

Meg remembered Father Robert and the redemption. The various rituals they performed as a sacrificial offering to

Satan. She was told that her unborn child will be offered as a sacrifice. She could hear the horrible chanting of the redemption members. Once a member will always be a member, it's for life. Anyone who walks away will be cursed.

Meg saw Father Robert in front of her wearing black gown and a demon mask with both hands raised up in the air as she underwent the unbearable pain. She was scared of Father Robert but felt deep hatred towards the baby. It was this baby, who was the root of her suffering. She was happy living with Father Robert and the Redemption but when she got pregnant, it changed everything. Her contentment turned into chaos.

Meg's labor lasted for hours. Her entire body was covered with perspiration. She felt like losing her senses.

The moon in the sky was bright and full providing a mocking brilliance, giving illumination inside the church tower. The moon was watching Meg's every movement as she underwent the agony of child birth.

Finally, the baby was born.

Meg was very exhausted, there was blood scattered all over the floor. Meg heard the baby cried, but it didn't sound like a crying baby. It sounded like a tiny hoarse coming from an animal.

Meg looked down between her legs and was shocked.

“Oh my God.” She remembered God.

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The baby was horrifying. It was tiny, thin and skeletal. The skin was dark red.

*It's the color of hell.* Meg thought.

The baby's gums were rotten with small pointed teeth like nails. The eyes were green. The whole body was covered with blood.

This was the curse.

“Whoever walks away will be in great danger. That person will be cursed for life. The physical body will suffer as well as the soul. The Redemption will be your family for life. There will be no turning back.”

Meg remembered the exact words of father Robert.

This was the child of Satan. It was offered as a sacrifice. And Satan was the father. The child was evil.

The baby's horrible appearance could be due to the various concoctions and mixtures taken by Meg as well as her hateful acts to remove the baby.

“What will I do? What will I do?” Meg asked herself as she lied on the floor, weeping and perspiring.

The ghastly baby was crying out loud. It was the sound of a small animal Meg was hearing.

There was a procession down the church tower. A large image of The Black Crucified Christ was the center of the

procession. Members of this Catholic Church were gathered to venerate the Religious event.

The Large Black Crucified Christ almost ten feet tall was set on a wooden stand with four wheels. Male parishioners took charge in pushing the wooden stand where it will be marched within the various areas of the parish.

Other church members, men, women and children held lighted candles and sang hymns of praises for the Black Crucified Christ. This was their way of expressing their religious vow.

“When the Light shines out for you, walk on it while you can and go where you want to go, before it’s too late to find your way...”

Several young men were strumming their guitars providing acoustic music to the melody and lyrics of the religious song.

It was said that the Black Crucified Christ could perform miracles and heal the sick, especially those who believe. Many believers had turned to the huge icon seeking refuge and their prayers were said to be answered.

Meg could hear the hymns and praises of the parishioners down the church tower. She held her two hands against the floor and stood up slowly. She got curious as to what was going on.

“He’s the Light of the world. He comes and shines, this dark wild world. So that everyone may walk, the path laid by the Lord...”



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Meg peeped from the tower and saw lit candles held by the parishioners. One group was singing while another group was reciting the Holy Rosary.

“Hail Mary full of grace the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb Jesus. “

“Holy Mary Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death Amen. “

It was a large gathering.

Meg looked at the crying baby. It was like a tiny goblin, a thin skeletal croaking animal. Blood was all over its body. It had huge green eyes, and dark red skin. Teeth were pointed like small nails. Gums were black and rotten. There was blood oozing from its mouth.

While crying, the baby’s arms and legs were extended seeking motherly comfort. It wanted Meg’s milk for nourishment. It was hungry and severely malnourished.

Meg grabbed the baby. She raised it above her head and without hesitation threw it towards the crowd.

The baby plummeted down fast like a stone and hit the Head of the Black Crucified Christ. The two tiny palms of the baby by instinct clasped and held tightly on the Crown of Thorns. The soft flesh of the baby’s two palms was pierced by the Crown of Thorns, and blood oozed from both palms.

“What was that?!” One of the men responsible for pushing the platform said as he heard something hitting the

Crucified Christ and felt an imbalance of the wooden stand they were pushing.

The other men looked up and saw something moving on the head of the Black Crucified Christ. It was clinging on the Crown of Thorns. Then it dropped down bouncing on the wooden stand first until finally landing on the ground.

The singing, praising, rosary recital stopped as the parishioners heard a tiny hoarse voice crying.

Men, women and children extended their neck. They saw a dark red tiny creature squirming on the ground crying.

“Oh my God what is that?” A woman with a rosary necklace around her neck said as she took a closer look, she bent down, her two arms set against her two knees.

“It’s a demon. A baby demon fell from the sky!” A young boy said.

There was a commotion, everyone panicked as they tried to run away from the ghastly creature.

“This could be the day of judgment.”

“God have mercy on our souls!”

Every man, woman and child ran for safety. Was this a sign of an impending calamity? Or maybe something worst to happen.

The small horrifying creature was left wailing on the cold ground.

3

Five years after.

In an affluent village, this is where the rich and well to do reside. People in this village wore expensive clothes and drove luxurious cars. Houses were mansions most of them several stories high.

There was a large field at the center of the village where the rich play and perform sporting events. Youngsters participated on these events.

The horrifying baby had grown but still tiny, thin and skeletal. The girl had a name, it's Charity. She was seated at the corner of the large field.

As hideous as ever, she was uglier now. The hair was shoulder length with molds sticking. Her body was dark red, eyes wide and round burning like green balls of fire, her nose

flat. Lips were thick, and her teeth were like small fangs, her gums rotten. Her dress was in tatters. She was barefooted.

Charity's left foot was injured. Looking for food on a garbage can, she stepped on a pile of broken glass. Tiny pointed pieces of the glass got embedded inside her flesh.

Charity using her long and dirty finger nails was trying to remove the tiny pieces of the glass. She was restless. Charity was looking for food and got lost inside the affluent village and had this injury.

Despite the village being an affluent one, there was garbage outside the huge houses. They were collected at night by the garbage collectors.

The rich were no exceptions to litters. It was common to people from all walks of life.

One household of the affluent village had a light bulb broken and shattered. It was not disposed properly, and got scattered on the ground outside the house beside the garbage can. This was where Charity had her injury.

Charity looked up to heaven as if seeking for help. It was painful.

A group of five teen age boys were walking towards the center of the large field to play baseball. They carry bats and balls. Two of them wear gloves. The boys were ranging from fourteen to seventeen years. These were the sons of the well to do.

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The boys were laughing as they exchanged a funny story. They watched a common show on T.V. the previous night, a comedy.

The boys prepared themselves for the game. It was not an actual baseball game. They will just hit the ball with their bats and run around the field to have fun.

Denver, fifteen years old, 5'10" in height, ruggedly handsome, blond hair and blue eyes, well built and athletic stood at the middle. He raised his bat at the right angle and prepared to hit the ball.

The ball was hurled towards Denver, but he failed to hit it.

"Hey what's up?" Jimmy, sixteen years old, the boy who threw the ball asked. He was getting irritated, thinking Denver was into something again.

Jimmy and Denver had fistfights before, an argument over something silly. However, they remained as playmates. The two boys failed to see each other eye to eye but during games, they played together for good sportsmanship.

Denver was bigger than Jimmy in height and physique. During fistfights, Jimmy always lost and found himself with a broken lip or lying on the ground.

Denver was staring at something. "Look." Denver said.

The other boys turned their heads.

"What the hell is that?" The boys said in unison.

On the corner of the large field, Charity was seated, trying to pull the tiny pieces of broken glass from her left foot.

Denver and the other boys were curious. There was a dark colored red tiny creature moving. They can't decide what sort of animal it was. They saw hands and feet. However, they were not sure if it was human.

Denver and the boys moved slowly towards the ghastly creature, to take a closer look. They were like soldiers moving carefully.

Charity sensed something. She moved her head and saw the boys approaching. As a defense, she opened her mouth showing her rotten gums and pointed teeth to scare the approaching boys.

Denver and the boys stepped backward.

“What the hell is that?”

“Is that human?”

“It stinks!”

The boys covered their noses with their hands. Charity had a foul smelling odor. Her perspiration emitted an obnoxious scent that can be smelled feet away.

“I'm gonna throw up.”

The acidic bile from Jimmy's stomach moved up towards the esophagus. The boy threw up on the grass for

several minutes. Jimmy loved to engage in a fistfight with Denver but could not bear the smell of Charity.

The other lads ignored Jimmy.

The boys were aware about freak characters. They saw it on television, circus and other forms of media but Charity was really unique. Not sure if she was a freak animal or a freak human.

“Let’s leave now.”

“Damn cowards. What are you scared of?” Denver was the brave one, scared of nothing, feared no one. Aside from fighting with Jimmy, he’s a notorious school bully. He was often engaged in a brawl and would not hesitate to confront bigger boys.

In the past, Denver managed to prove his brave character. During the school’s recent visit to the zoo, the school authorities were horrified when Denver tried to insert his right arm inside the lion cage. He was teasing the lion with a piece of stick trying to check the lion’s reaction.

The lion was agitated and tried to grab Denver’s arm with its massive jaw but Denver was fast in pulling his arm’s away.

“Could you do that?” Denver teased his male buddies in school. “Could you do that? I know you can’t. You’re all cowards.”

Not one among his school buddies dared to do what Denver did.

This was Denver's way of exerting authority. Going beyond the limit, pushing his self against the boundary set by human standards.

"Let's stone it." Denver told his friends.

The boys looked at Denver.

"What are you waiting for? I said let's stone that hellish thing. You're scared. I'm not." Denver took several tiny stones, and the other boys did the same. However, they all waited who will be the one to throw first.

Denver made the first move and threw a tiny stone to Charity. The other boys followed. This showed who the group leader was.

Charity covered herself with her two arms to shield her head and body from the stones that were coming one after another. Some of the tiny stones were now sticking on her long coarse hair covered with green molds.

The boys became bolder and kept throwing the tiny stones tormenting the little girl. Charity may look appalling but she was unable to fight back and defend herself.

"Move your ass you filthy animal. I'll smash you with my bat." Denver took his bat which he put on the ground when he took tiny stones, he ran back towards Charity.

"Scram before I crack your head open." Denver threatened. He raised the bat above Charity's head.

Charity was unable to move. Her left foot was in pain.



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“I told you to move scum-head.” Denver was ready to smash Charity’s head.

Charity stood up and walked like a crippled dog. She took one step, then another step. When she felt the pain, she hopped using only her right foot.

Denver thought of something. “Hey wait, don’t let her get away.” Denver’s whole body trembled, he was filled with excitement.

Jimmy recovered after throwing up. He wiped his mouth and hands with his handkerchief. He joined his buddies afterwards. However, did not participate in the casting of stones. He was still feeling weak.

“Just a second. I’ll be back” Denver gave his baseball bat to Jimmy then scampered away fast. “Don’t let her get away!”

“What will I do with this?” Jimmy threw the baseball bat to the ground.

Charity hopped forward. A stone hit her face. She turned left and hopped. A stone hit her.

“Look at the hair.”

The boys were amused over the tiny stones sticking on Charity’s hair. One boy took several more stones pouring it on Charity’s head. Her hair was now full of stones.

“You can’t get away you hellish thing.”

Charity was like a dwarf cornered by the boys who were like giants.

Charity turned left. A stone hit her. She turned right and there was the stone.

The boys were surrounding Charity but would not dare go nearer due to the stinking odor coming from her body. They were still scared, they maintained a certain distance. The hellish thing might suddenly jump to them, bite their necks and eat them alive.

Charity was moving in circles, and the stones were coming all around her.

Several minutes passed and Charity was merely standing. The boys were around her observing her every movement.

Hundreds of feet from Charity and the boys, Denver was running fast holding the chains of his two black Dobermans. The dogs were massive and vicious. Saliva was drooling from their fangs.

Charity's eyes widened in panic when she saw the dogs, she ran away fast ignoring the excruciating pain coming from her left foot.

The boys laughed.

“She looks like a frightened midget.”

Minutes after, Denver was now standing beside his buddies pulling the dogs' chains to refrain them into running.

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The two Dobermans were going crazy. They smelled the stink coming from Charity.

“I’ll ask Ringo and Paul to bite her.”

The boys were uneasy.

“I’ll release my dogs.”

The boys were speechless, not sure if Denver will push through with the threat.

“Don’t do it.” Jimmy said.

“Why not?!”

“Let her go.” Jimmy said.

“I don’t care about you.” Denver and Jimmy were looking at each other ready to engage in another wrestling match. “It’s either I ask Ringo and Paul to bite that hellish thing. Or I’ll ask Ringo and Paul to devour you. What do you think?” Denver threatened.

Jimmy moved backward. The two huge dogs were going crazy, barking and growling like hell.

Nobody thought Denver to be serious.

“Common soldiers go get her!” Denver released the chains of the two Dobermans. The dogs were trained to follow the fifteen year old boy.

Ringo and Paul ran fast towards the little girl.

Charity heard the barking and looked behind. The two dogs were coming fast. She ran faster but her tiny feet intertwined. She tripped then stumbled. Her face hit the ground.

Charity locked her palms in prayer, closed her eyes, and waited for her fate.

An expensive van blocked the two big dogs. Ringo and Paul stopped running and looked for a way to avoid the obstruction. They ran around the van. However, the window of the van's driver seat opened.

“Ringo! Paul!” A lady yelled, and the two dogs stopped. The voice was familiar. Ringo and Paul sat on the ground and looked at the lady with deep reverence.

It's Jane Sunshine. Rich, smart, beautiful, she's the loving and kind hearted mother of Denver. She's a medical doctor.

Jane Sunshine had black shiny hair and brown eyes. She was stunning, poised and slender. She was forty five years old. She carried herself with grace and confidence.

Jane Sunshine got out of the van and opened the van's passenger door. “Get inside!” Jane was angry. Ringo and Paul followed without hesitation. They hopped inside the van's passenger side with their tails behind their legs.

Charity grabbed her chance. She stood fast and ran like a gazelle. Despite her tiny structure, Charity was a speedy runner under certain circumstance.

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Jane drove the van towards the boys. She gave her son Denver a stern look giving a strong message that she was disgusted over her son's misbehavior. "What are you trying to do?" Her voice raised an octave higher.

"I was only teasing her mom." Denver was guilt stricken giving out the most appropriate alibi.

"Are you out of your mind?! What if she was bitten?!"

"It wouldn't happen. I won't let Ringo and Paul."

"What has gotten into your head again?"

"I told you, I won't let Ringo and Paul. Besides the hellish thing smells so bad."

"Get inside!" Jane was controlling her temper, she was ready to explode, but she can't. Sometimes Jane was thinking if she was raising a monster.

Denver got inside the car beside his mother. He was acting like a meek lamb. Minutes ago, he was this crazy kid gone wild. With his mother's presence, there was a sudden transformation.

Jane took her hanky, and wiped her son's face filled with perspiration. "Look at you, just look at yourself." Jane kept wiping until all the sweats from Denver's face and neck were dried.

Jimmy was tempted to relate what happened to Jane. However, this might instigate another fist fight between him and Denver. He also did not want to be branded as a

squealer. The activities of the boys were kept within themselves. It's confidential, especially from parents.

Jane saw her son Denver took the two dogs from their cages. She was alarmed. Her son might get into trouble again. She took the van and chased Denver.

It was only a matter of seconds when Jane Sunshine came and Charity would have been torn into pieces.

“Hi Dr. Sunshine.” The boys greeted Jane with respect.

“Hello boys. Hi Jimmy.” Jane greeted the boys back and Jimmy in particular.

The boys and Jimmy waved to Dr. Sunshine. Jane was aware of Denver and Jimmy's fist fights. There were occasions when Jimmy's parents called the attention of Jane Sunshine due to Jimmy's broken lip. Jane was always apologetic and humble. She knew that Denver was the instigator and Jimmy was merely defending himself.

Jane was well known in the village for doing charity works. Despite having a spoiled brat son who loved trouble, Jane was known for being kindhearted, compassionate and lover of the poor.

“Want me to drive you home.” Jane offered.

The boys peeped inside the passenger seat where Ringo and Paul were seated. Both were calm.

“Common boys, Denver and I will drive you home.” Jane reiterated the offer.

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“No thanks we’re fine.” Jimmy and the boys declined. They’re scared of the two dogs.

There was an instance when Jimmy was almost bitten. Luckily, Dr. Sunshine stopped the two dogs in attacking Jimmy. Jane had a hunch that Denver intentionally asked the two dogs to attack Jimmy.

“Hey dude go get my bat!” Denver asked Jimmy.

Jimmy felt the sudden palpitation on his temple. His nape was getting hot. He was irritated. However, he was shy with the presence of Dr. Sunshine.

Jimmy ran towards the grassy field where the bat was left. He took it and run back to Denver and gave him the swing bat.

Jane noticed the stern expression on Jimmy’s face. “Thanks Jimmy. Don’t let Denver get into your nerve.”

Jimmy smiled. He understood. He liked Dr. Sunshine so much.

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Charity was running and gasping for fresh air. She looked back then stopped if she was on a safe distance. She was trembling, scared and tired. She felt the excruciating pain from her left foot. The tiny pieces of the glass got deeper into her flesh.



4

Dr. Jane Sunshine worked in a government hospital. She's the doctor of the sick, the hungry and the destitute. She was also the director of Sunshine Charity, an institution founded by her late husband Steve.

Jane did charitable works at a slum area located near their affluent village. She and her staffs performed free medical assistance for the people who lived in shanties earning their livelihood on garbage.

Sunshine Charity received contributions from the rich. Jane could be ruthless when asking for donations, funds, food, clothing from people overflowing with worldly possessions. She knew the ways and means on how to exhaust resources. Jane could make the rich guilt ridden as if blatantly slapping their faces as how lucky they were to have more than enough food and shelter while the poor suffered from hunger and disease.

She felt it was the responsibility of the rich to feed the poor, since the rich were in control of stock, money and economy. The affluent members of society were in excess of financial resources. A little help from their personal treasury will not affect their assets.

Jane never touched any of the donations. All donations go directly to food, clothing and medicines for distribution.

Dr. Steve Sunshine, the late husband of Jane, also a doctor left behind huge wealth and stocks for Jane and son Denver.

25% of the earnings from the huge stocks go directly to the poor. Despite the donations Jane gave annually, the stock grew bigger.

The law of equilibrium tilted its balance to Jane, the more money she gave, the wealthier she became. It was never an intention for Jane to make her wealth grow bigger. Her intention was pure in extending charity to others but the stock worked its wonders for Jane and her son Denver.

“You never grow tired, ain’t you.” A friend said.

“I won’t grow tired if it’s for the sick and the hungry. It gives me deep satisfaction. I’m also doing this for my son Denver.” Jane’s personal conviction was, if she extended charitable work, it will make Denver pleasant in the eyes of the Lord. It will transform her son into a respectable young man.

Steve Sunshine, the late husband of Jane came from a wealthy family. His parents and grandparents were part of a

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business conglomerate, a department store chain with children's clothing as its specialty.

Steve came from rich ancestors. Clothing, food, canned goods were the various areas of Steve's ancestral business domain.

Steve Sunshine was to manage the business enterprise of his parents. However, his heart was in the medical field. After graduating from a prestigious business school, Steve was given a position in the family enterprise.

One, two, three years of ledgers and accounting stuffs and Steve felt business was not for him. He took up a medical course until he became a doctor.

Steve met Jane. They fell in love, got married and had a healthy son Denver. Despite Steve unable to acquire his parent's business acumen, he was given his share of the assets.

"How lucky I am. I got my inheritance. I got you, and I got Denver." Steve often told his wife Jane.

"Which do you treasure the most?" Jane teased her husband.

"It's you and Denver of course."

"More than the material wealth you have?"

"More than anything else. You and Denver are my most prized possession. Without you and Denver, I'm nothing."

“Really?”

“I’m willing to give up everything, money, career, everything I have as long as I have you and Denver. I’m the luckiest man alive.”

“You’re willing to become a beggar and beg on the street.”

“Yup. I’m willing to do anything you ask me to do. I am your slave, you and Denver are my masters, my most treasured masters.”

Jane laughed over Steve’s silly jokes. It was really corny but she liked it. It sounded like heaven in her ears.

Steve put up Sunshine Charity. It was he who started the benevolent undertakings.

“We’re lucky to be blessed. We have to spread the love and blessings to others.” Steve often told his wife during the initial stage of their charity works.

Steve lacked Jane’s drive in asking for donations. He was embarrassed to seek help from the rich. Most of the goods for distribution came from Steve’s own pocket. However, he got no misgivings. He was more than willing to extend a helping hand.

“Why don’t we ask help from rich donors?” Jane asked her husband.

“Well.”

“Well what?”

“I’m embarrassed.”

“Embarrassed?”

“Can you do that?” Steve asked.

“Of course I can.”

Jane sent letters, did phone calls, talk to various organizations, launched Sunshine’s Charity’s campaign and was victorious.

“Just what I told you. It’s only a letter and phone call away.”

“Okay I agree. You’re the best. What can I say?” Steve said.

When Steve died, Jane continued her husband’s philanthropic vocation. Jane knew that if her husband was alive, he will be extra proud of her accomplishments as the champion of the poor.

The slum area where Jane performed her charitable works was only kilometers away from the affluent village where Dr. Jane Sunshine and Denver lived. Members of this rich community had petitioned for years in the eradication of the slum area. However, the poor people fought for their rights.

Jane Sunshine was one of the strong defenders of the poor. She managed to coerce the government for the

maintenance of the slum area. She was the champion of the poor and will fight for them until the very end.

Jane together with her charitable staff came at least once a month with truck loads of medicines, foods and clothing.

The slum area housed hundreds and hundreds of families living in small shanties. People earned their living collecting garbage and others scraps. The place was infested with crime. Jane and her staff were well respected so they were never bothered.

During Jane's medical works, people came by the hundreds. Those who were seeking assistance with various ailments were attended by Jane and her staff.

A huge tent was built to accommodate the sick. Some doctors, nurses and those under allied medical fields volunteered to help but none possessed Jane's drive and passion.

"What's troubling you grandma?" Jane asked an old woman. Several tables were set with chairs inside the huge tent for volunteered doctors and especially for the patients seeking treatment and medication.

"I'm having a hard time breathing."

Jane examined the old woman and used her stethoscope to listen from the chest and back of the octogenarian.

"Don't worry you'll get well." After the examination Jane wrote down the medicine on a prescription pad, gave an

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instruction to the old woman on how to take the medicine. She also instructed the octogenarian to get the medication from the pharmacy area set up within the huge tent.

The pharmacy area comprised a wide variety of tablets, capsules, pills for various illnesses. These medicines were provided free from the different pharmaceutical companies earning millions from patients with the capacity to pay. The other medicines were provided by the government. Jane had strong connections and she was well known in the medical fields as a poor man's advocate.

"Thank you so much Dr. Sunshine. Thank you so much." The old woman was filled with gratitude.

Jane smiled, embraced the old woman tapping her back as a sign of motherly comfort. The octogenarian was several decades older than Jane yet Jane acted as a surrogate mother. Her strong maternal instinct was not limited to her son Denver but to others, especially the needy.

Outside was a truck for the people's ration of foods like milk, bread, cheese, canned goods. People lined up to get their shares.

A family had to be a member first before getting the ration. Membership was easy. A form will be filled up regarding personal information, if they were married, single mom, number of children, ages, etc. A background check will be conducted. If a potential member passed, an ID will be provided, that member will have the right to get a ration of food once a month but he or she needed to present his or her ID.

Some of the needy were single living alone especially the old ones. They too have the right to be a member for the food ration. It was the same process of filling out the form and an ID will be given.

There were instances when individual seeking membership will be rejected if discovered upon background checking that the spouse was already a member, and this individual was just seeking another membership for additional ration. Another reason for rejection was non residence of the target slum area. As much as Jane wanted to help, there were limitations. She could not provide food rations for everyone.

For those seeking medications, there was no exception, everyone was welcome. The sick had the right for medical assistance to get well and feel better. This was another of Jane's list of convictions.

Jane felt lucky, being wealthy with a high level of education and respect. Jane could never imagine as to what will happen if she and her son Denver were members of the destitute falling in line to get food and medicines. They were blessed by God. They needed to share these blessings with the others as what her late husband Steve often said.



## 5

A big crowd gathered inside and outside the huge tent that could accommodate a hundred people. Not everyone was ill. Some were merely onlookers, curious as to how the medical work was being conducted.

There was a commotion outside the tent. The crowd saw something.

“What is that?”

“Oh my God.”

“It’s gruesome.”

“A tiny monster.”

Charity was standing near the tent but was hesitant to approach. She was a distance away staring at the crowd. Her dark red skin was covered with perspiration. Her long coarse

hair was covered with green molds and tiny stones. Several flies were buzzing above Charity's head.

"It's awful."

"It stinks."

The destitute were poor and penniless. Some were physically handicapped, deformed, crippled and even one eyed with a harelip. But for them Charity was appalling to their taste.

"She's so ugly!" Jerry, a horrible one eyed fat man with a bloated stomach, harelip and rotten teeth stated. He can't take Charity.

Charity was perspiring profusely and her foul smell filled the air. Garbage was everywhere but none of these could out smell the very foul odor coming from Charity.

"Oh my God she's coming."

Charity moved slowly forward. She was limping and could barely walk.

"Don't let her get inside the tent, Dr Sunshine will get scared."

"Block the way."

"Hey you get away." Jerry, the ugly one eyed fat man warned. "Tiny devil!"

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Jane sensed the commotion. She stood up and went out of the tent to investigate. “What was that?” Jane asked the crowd.

“There’s a tiny monster.”

Charity was standing at the middle surrounded by the crowd, but she was several feet away. The crowd would not go nearer.

Jane squeezed herself into the crowd and saw Charity. Jane heard the crowd mumbling and saying nasty things to the little girl. “She was the girl Denver was teasing yesterday.” Jane said as she recognized the dark red skin girl.

The people were familiar with Jane’s son Denver. He occasionally came with his mother. The people didn’t like Denver. They hated him. Denver was engaged into trouble before with several male youngsters. The youngsters would have beaten Denver to pulp if he was not the son of Jane Sunshine. The area was crime infested and Denver took the risk in testing the limits of the slum dwellers.

“Everyone here looks awful, smells awful. This place is a huge garbage. The people are garbage and everyone smells like garbage.” Denver stated within the hearing distance of the male youngsters.

One of the youngsters grabbed Denver on the collar, and another youngster holding a thick wood joined.

“What’s your problem?”

“I don’t have a problem. You’re the problem, you all piece of shit.” Denver was fearless, he was on unfamiliar ground yet he was unable to control his spiteful behavior.

The scene got heated. Several other male youngsters joined in the squabble and were ready to pound Denver.

A middle aged man witnessed the altercation. He immediately jumped in the middle to stop the ongoing fight.

“He’s the son of Dr. Sunshine.”

“I don’t care he’s nasty.” One kid took a knife and was to slice Denver on the face.

“Stop it. He’s the son of Dr. Sunshine, be cool boys common. Spare him.”

Luckily, the male youngsters were calmed down.

Denver was notorious in giving nasty remarks. If he was present, the slum dwellers feigned deaf to the negative comments he was saying. Denver was the son of Dr. Jane Sunshine. They have to be tolerant.

Dr. Sunshine walked slowly towards Charity.

Jerry, the ugly one eyed fat man with a bloated stomach, harelip and rotten teeth hit Charity on the head using his knuckle. Charity almost stumbled on the ground.

“Don’t hurt her!” Jane looked sternly at Jerry.

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“Sorry Dr. Sunshine. I was just trying to protect you.”  
Jerry reasoned.

“You don’t have to protect me. She’s only a girl.” Jane  
was mad.

Jane approached Charity.

Jane was wearing a white medical dress but knelt on the  
ground, so she could be face to face with the girl. “Hello my  
little friend.” Jane was to pat Charity on the head when she  
was appalled by the stink. She almost threw up but tried to  
appear normal.

The girl looked like a small monster, a freak of nature.  
There were flies swarming over Charity’s head.

Charity looked frightened.

“Don’t get scared. What’s your name?” Jane asked.

The little girl did not answer.

“Come on don’t get scared. What’s your name?”

“Charity.” A tiny voice said.

“Charity?” Jane asked.

The little girl nodded.

Something touched Jane’s heart. She remembered  
Steve, her late husband, the founder of Sunshine Charity.  
Jane was face to face with a girl named Charity.

What a coincidence, a tale of two Charities.

“You have a beautiful name.”

Jane was tempted to embrace Charity, hug her to give comfort. However, she really can't, there was the stink, the site as well and the green molds on the hair, and the flies.

*Is she human?* Jane thought because the skin was colored dark red. How did she have that skin? Jane was tempted to ask. Was it genetic or just an abnormality?

“Where do you live?” Jane asked.

Charity did not answer.

“Do you have parents? Where's your mother, your father?”

Charity did not answer.

Jane was thinking. The girl failed to answer the questions because there was no answer at all. Maybe Charity got no home, no father and no mother. Jane felt pity.

“Ok how can I help you?”

Charity hesitated.

“Don't worry, I'm your friend. I won't hurt you. How can I help you? Please tell me.”

Charity lifted her left foot sideways showing the wound. There was gangrene and pus was oozing from it.

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“Dr. Sunshine she’s gonna bite you.” Someone from the crowd stated.

Jane ignored the sarcasm. “What happened to your foot?”

Charity did not answer.

Jane held Charity’s hand. The crowd gave way as Jane guided Charity towards the tent. Jane using her hand tried to get rid of the flies swarming on Charity’s head.

There was a long table inside the tent that was set and was used for treating patients. Jane lifted Charity and the girl was laid down on the table. Jane was no longer affected by the stink. She got used to it.

Jane rinsed Charity’s wound with water and alcohol to disinfect any virus or bacteria. She then proceeded with the treatment which lasted for a while. The onlookers gathered around the table to observe.

After the treatment, Jane covered the wound with a bandage.

There was mumbling from the crowd. “If I had a girl like that, I’ll throw it away. We won’t be able to eat, she smells so bad.”

“Where’d she come from?”

“I saw her once, rummaging through the garbage.”

“I’m sure you’ll be fine now.” Jane said to Charity.

Jane contemplated for a while as she looked at Charity.

Jane took a pail which was full of various medicines. She asked a staff to remove the medicines and filled the pail with water. Jane took a large basin which was used in disinfecting wounds.

Jane lifted Charity and asked her to stand at the middle of the basin. Jane took off Charity's very dirty clothes and in front of everyone, Jane bathed Charity, she washed Charity's whole body, soaped her thoroughly, removed the green molds from the girl's hair. It took Jane 30 minutes to wash Charity and the girl was now clean.

After the bathing, Jane toweled Charity until she was dry. Aside from the medicines and food rations, there were also used clothes being given. Jane found a girl's dress and put it to Charity.

Jane checked Charity's wound. The bandage was wet due to the bathing. Jane rinsed Charity's wound once more and disinfected it with alcohol. Jane covered the wound with a fresh bandage. However, Charity was barefooted.

Jane sought help. "Who would be kind enough to give her slippers?" It was a request from a highly respected lady.

"My girl has an extra pair. She can have it." A woman said. She ran from the tent to her nearby shanty. Minutes after, she returned carrying an old pair of small slippers.

Jane took the slippers. "Thank you so much." Jane gave the slippers to Charity to ensure that the wound will not get infected if she walked barefoot.



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Charity's hair was in tangles. Jane took her comb and combed the girl's hair.

"You looked beautiful." Jane complimented the girl.

Charity despite being cleaned wearing better clothes was still ghastly. The stinking odor stayed.

"Where do you live my little friend?" Jane asked again.

Charity shook her head. She got no home.

"How old are you?"

Charity shook her head. She didn't know.

There was a snack for the medical staff, Jane took a sandwich and gave it to Charity.

"Here you must be hungry."

Charity was hesitant.

"Common don't be shy. It's for you."

"Thank you ma'am." The tiny voice of Charity responded, and she took the sandwich.

Jane took more sandwiches. She placed it in a plastic bag and gave it to Charity. The sandwiches could serve as sustenance for the girl.

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Charity was walking carrying her sandwiches. She was about to eat a sandwich when a female middle aged slum dweller grabbed the sandwich from Charity's hand as well as the plastic bag of sandwiches.

"This is mine!" The middle aged woman wolfed down the sandwich fast while Charity watched.

"Move your ass or I'll slap your face, you filthy animal!" The woman threatened. She was not scared of Charity. She was hungry and greedy. She wanted the sandwiches all for herself.

Charity left limping. She felt a violent spasm in her stomach. She hadn't eaten for two straight days.

## 6

### DAWN

A huge rat was rummaging through a heap of garbage. The rat was preoccupied. It gnawed on a plastic with a hamburger inside. This could satisfy the rat's hunger. The rat created a hole on the plastic bag. It moved faster as the hamburger was now within the reach of its snout.

Presto, the rat got the great tasting hamburger. It nibbled and ate the meat with pleasure. It was a very late dinner for the rat as the small creature took time in satisfying its hunger, what a great night.

Being an outcast, it was hard for the rat to survive. There was a scarcity of food and a battle between other rats as well as humans.

Suddenly, the rat was grabbed. The rat's body wiggled left and right trying to escape. The rat felt the suffocation. Its

body was held tighter to ensure it will not jump away. The rat's head was bitten until decapitated. Not contented the rat's body was gobbled down until only the tail was left.

Days after, the slum dwellers noticed something bizarre.

“Dead rats are everywhere and they're headless.” A young boy said. He was holding an iron stick, the lower third was bent. The tip was pointed like ice pick. This tool was used to rummage through garbage at a faster rate, to sort out the more important items against the least ones. The boy through the iron stick was examining the dead rats.

“What could have happened to them?” An old man with the name Bela Lugosi said.

“The question is who could have done it?” A heavyweight lady with an apron wrapped around her tummy said. She was to fry a fish preparing food for lunch when she saw a commotion. She postponed what she was doing and ran towards the crowd to know what was going on.

“And who did it?” Bela Lugosi asked.

“Who else but that group of drunkards who can't live without alcohol, they take rats as appetizers.”

“But this was the first time this happened.”

“There's always a first time. Who do you think will take rats as a side dish for alcohol but these mad drunkards?”

“I do take alcohol once in a while, but I'll never eat rat as an appetizer.”

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“Rats or no rats it wouldn’t matter if they’re drunk. They can’t do anything useful. They waste their lives and they don’t care about these animals.”

“They’re just rats.”

“What do you mean they’re just rats? They have the right to survive. We all have the right to survive. We’re all creatures in this world.”

“I just can’t imagine.” The old man said. He was branded in the slum village as Bela Lugosi because of his strong resemblance to the late actor who played the role of Dracula in the movies. He did have a real name, but he preferred to be called Bela Lugosi. He was a big fan of the legendary actor. The old man also played extra in the movies but was not given a chance to portray leads or even supporting roles.

The old man labeled as Bela Lugosi was a man without drive. He failed in every pursuit and always ended up broke and penniless.

He was still a young man then.

“What do you plan to do with yourself?” His former wife said.

“I got no plan.”

“So you got no plan for your family.”

“Whatever comes its gonna be fine.”

“So you don’t have plans for your children, for their future.”

“They’re lucky to be alive.”

He separated from his wife who took the children with her. He never learned of his family’s whereabouts. He didn’t care. He failed to sustain any jobs. He lacked the patience and hard-work. When his buddies told him he looked like the legendary actor who played Dracula in the movies, he took his chance. He tried to establish connections with people involved in movie making. He was given small parts. However, the opportunity in making it big never came.

He was told he lacked originality, there was already an actor by the name of Bela Lugosi yet he insisted to be called Bela Lugosi. He said he was the reincarnation of Dracula. He became the laughing stock of the movie production people. He was having a hard time memorizing simple lines.

Years passed. He grew older. He was penniless, and he was homeless. He managed to settle at the slum village and became part of its dwellers in which garbage became their main source of living.

Bela Lugosi was contented, no pressure, no lines to memorize, no role to interpret. However, he was still hoping that maybe someday. A movie mogul will drop by the slum village looking for actors in a horror movie. He will be willing to take whatever part, even if he was already eighty years old.

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The young boy carrying the iron stick noticed there were several rat tails scattered. He examined it one by one. Members of the crowd took a closer look then stared at each other.

“Only the tails were left.” The heavyweight lady said and heaved out a deep sigh of dismay.

“Oh God.” Bela Lugosi said.

A month after, another bizarre incident happened. A crowd gathered around the carcass of a stray dog. The dog was disemboweled.

“Quite a number of stray dogs were victims.” Bela Lugosi was again part of the crowd.

“I saw a group of teen age boys the other day making fun of a stray dog. They were slapping it with rolled newspapers.” The heavyweight lady had another story to tell. She was always the center of gossips. “Those teenage boys should be sent to the rehab, so they’ll be useful members of society.”

Teenage boys at the slum area were mostly drug users. Without receiving proper guidance and education, they got hooked on illegal substance.

“I pity those dogs. They’re men’s best friend. Why did they have to suffer from the hands of these foolish youngsters?” Bela Lugosi said. He got asthma and often suffered from attacks. However, he needed to be updated to the recent developments within the slum village. He also

enjoyed bizarre stories, since he had acted on several horror films.

“I told you they have to be sent to the rehab. They’re hopeless.” The heavyweight lady said.

“Do you have coffee?” Bela Lugosi asked the heavy weight lady.

“What?”

“I said do you have coffee? Maybe you want to give me. I ran out of coffee at home.”

“You always ran out of coffee?”

“Common be kind to share whatever you have. I’m old I can’t work.”

“You can’t work. You can’t work. You always tell that. You’re just lazy.”

“I’m eighty years old. What can you expect from an old man like me?”

“I had a great grandfather before. He was more than ninety yet he always managed to find something to do, doing house repairs, cleaning, even cooking. You’re only eighty and my late great grandfather was several years older than you are.”

“Common I don’t wanna argue, just give me coffee.”



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The heavy weight lady signaled Bela Lugosi to follow her to her shanty, so she could provide him coffee. Just black no creamer.

The other members of the crowd remained gathered around the dead carcass.

At the heavy weight lady's shanty, Bela had his free black coffee. He sipped the hot coffee, enjoying the aroma and bitter taste.

The heavy weight lady continued with her cooking. She loved to cook as she loved to eat.

The two were outside the shanty. Bela was sipping his black coffee, the heavy weight lady was cooking while they were talking.

"I've been living here for years. What's happening to our village? We're poor. We're penniless, but we're happy and contented."

"You're the only one contented. I'll never get contented living in this miserable place."

"Then why are you here?"

"I'm just learning the trade, someday I'm gonna build by own garbage business."

"What garbage business?"

"Waste disposal. I'll buy several trucks to collect garbage. I'll be my own boss."

“Don’t you ever forget about me if you become rich.”

“We’ll I’m gonna think it over.”

“If you become rich maybe you could use your money to find out the recent happenings here.”

“I don’t need money to find out. I told you there’s an explanation to these events. The rats, the dogs, it’s the work of people who got nothing to do.”

“I myself is doing nothing. But I don’t do things like that. Maybe that’s the work of the devil.”

“Could be.”

Bela consumed the whole cup of black coffee. “Could I have another one?”

“No you go home.”

Bela stood up. He was sitting on a stool. “Ok. But I’ll come back tomorrow.”

“No you won’t. You’re not welcome no more.”

“But where will I get my black coffee?”

“That’s your problem.”

“Common. I’ll be back tomorrow.”

“No you won’t I’ll shut the door.”

“You can’t do that.”

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“I will for sure. You can’t have the black coffee no more.” The heavy weight lady stated these several times yet when Bela Lugosi asked for a cup of coffee she always gave the old man. Bela reminded her of her late grandfather. However, her great grandfather was a hard working man. Bela was not. The two men were opposites. Although, they have one thing in common the heavy weight lady found amusing. The two men loved to listen to her stories. The heavy weight lady had a soft spot for both men, to her great grandfather as well as Bela Lugosi. If Bela asked for a coffee, she can’t refuse.

## 7

Bertha, a thirty year old woman, lived in one of the shanties at the slum village. She just woke up and rose from the mat where she slept crumpled together with her three children. Her husband was on graveyard shift working on a construction site. Bertha together with her children was left at night.

Bertha took a kettle, went outside the house, and put water in the kettle for boiling. She lighted the fire of the stove made of stone and placed the kettle on the top of the stove. The boiled water will be used for the milk of her newly born baby. It's 3:00 am.

Bertha was still sleepy. However, she had an internal alarm clock that dictated the time she needed to wake up. She told herself before going to sleep the time she should be awake, and it was automatic. No clock was necessary. It was

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an alarm within her system. It was helpful to her, to her children as well as to her husband.

Her husband worked on a night shift with a variety of schedules.

Bertha gave birth to a healthy baby boy several months ago. Before the delivery, Bertha was apprehensive her baby could be malnourished. She was not taking proper nutrition during pregnancy. Living at the slum village, it was normal for Bertha and other pregnant women not to receive vitamins and the right food, since they got no money. Most of them rely on government support.

Bertha gave birth in a government hospital and was surprised that the baby was healthy and heavy. The baby was adorable. Men, women and children stopped by to appreciate the baby's bubbly nature.

“You got yourself a nice cute kid.”

“Oh thank you.”

“He's so lovable.”

“Oh thank you.”

“Here's a coin for him.”

“Oh thank you.”

Bertha took the coin. Neighbors were delighted with the baby's animated character. Neighbors sometimes gave the baby coins which Bertha kept. She will use the money for

the baby later. She and her husband were planning for the baptism, surely her baby will receive lots of gifts from the neighbors. It's just that they still didn't have enough funds for the baptismal expenses.

Bertha got back inside the shanty to attend to her baby sleeping beside her two other children. The baby could be awake by now. Her newly born baby was not prone to crying, there were times when the baby will just play with whatever it could hold.

Bertha's two other children aged six and four were sleeping on the mat, but she could not find her baby.

"My baby, where's my baby?"

Bertha panicked. She searched every nook and cranny of the small shanty but the baby was nowhere to be found. Bertha ran outside the house. Her baby could have crawled. She looked around the lighted stove.

"Where are you? Where are you?!"

Bertha looked everywhere but still there was no baby.

"Where are you?! Oh God where are you?!"

Bertha ran into one of the shanties and saw her neighbors together with their children sleeping on a mat. They were dirty and dressed in rags. She looked at every corner. Her baby was not there.

Bertha went out of the shanty and entered another one. There were a group of men who had a drinking session, all

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were sleeping, snoring. Five big bottles of liquor were empty. Bertha's baby was not there.

Bertha entered another shanty, then another shanty, then another shanty.

Bertha went into hysterics.

“My baby's gone. I can't find my baby!!!”

The neighbors were awakened. Window and doors of the nearby shanties opened one by one.

“My baby's gone! My baby's gone.”

A group of neighbors gathered around Bertha.

“Help me please.”

“Where did the baby go?” A female neighbor asked.

“Help me find my baby. Please help me!” Bertha approached each and everyone pleading for help.

Neighbors helped in searching. Hours passed and the baby could not be found. There were speculations.

“Maybe Bertha's baby was kidnapped and sold.”

“Sold where?”

“There are syndicates snatching babies and selling them to rich folks with no babies.”

“That's possible.”

“Oh God, what’s happenin’? Babies being kidnapped, babies being sold.”

“That’s why I’m on a tight guard of my children. I watch their every movement. You’ll never know what’s gonna happen.”

“It’s scary.”

“I’m gonna die if I lost even one of my children.”

“Yeah me too.

“But how much is the cost of babies?”

“Could be thousands or more.”

“Wow that’s a lot of money.”

“Poor Bertha, she lost her baby. She should have sold it herself and earned thousands.”

The neighbors shook their heads unable to do anything.

The news spread and reached the keen sense of hearing of the heavy weight lady.

Bela Lugosi was fast with his response. He went directly to his friend’s house to get his free black coffee and gossip from his heavy weight lady friend.

The heavy weight lady was disappointed. She wanted to get the news fresh. However, it happened at dawn. She was



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fast asleep on her big mattress inside her shanty. She failed to notice the ongoing commotion.

“I’m so disgusted. I feel like a failure.” The heavy weight lady said as she gave Bela Lugosi a cup of black coffee with a very nice aroma.

Bela Lugosi reached for the cup and sipped it. The bitter flavor tasted heavenly. “Why?”

“I should have gotten the information first hand. It should be I who was spreading the news to our neighbors and not anyone else.” The heavy weight lady was in tears. She wiped her eyes using the apron wrapped around her.

The heavy weight lady woke up at 7:00 in the morning and heard about the news. Bela Lugosi woke up almost the same time. When he heard about the news, he knew exactly where to go.

“Common, don’t feel like a failure you did well with your other gossips. You’re pretty good at it.” Bela Lugosi tried comforting his friend patting her on the back.

“But it should have been me.” The heavy weight lady kept crying.

“There’s always the next time.”

“I hope so.”

Four days after, the heavy weight lady was rummaging through a heap of garbage almost five feet tall. This was also

her main source of living, collecting garbage, selling those with value at a very low cost.

The slum area served as the dumping site of garbage collected from various areas. Heap and heap of filth and garbage were dumped here. People living at the slum area made the garbage as their main source of living. Whatever they collected, they sold it at a very cheap price.

There were people within the slum area who bought the collected garbage. They sort the garbage accordingly, like papers, metals, etc. The sorted garbage was recycled and sold again. This was how the business worked.

The heavy weight lady was merely using her two hands. She was an expert in rummaging and managed to get valuable items. There were occasions when she found a golden ring, a necklace. She sold them at a high price. The money earned was put safely in the bank. She was dead serious with her ambition of putting a garbage disposal business and become a wealthy woman.

The heavy weight lady touched something inside the heap of garbage, using her two massive hands. She made a quick pull and was horrified to see the missing baby, dead.

The heavy weight lady went into hysterics and attracted the neighbor's attention.

“The missing baby is here. I found the missing baby! O God Oh God! Who did this, who did this?”

The others rummaging through the garbage approached. The heavy weight lady found herself surrounded

by the onlookers. They all wanted to catch a glimpse of what she found.

The heavy weight lady was on her knees, sobbing uncontrollably. Her two hands raised high towards heaven.

“Oh God! O God, why did this terrible thing happen? Why? Why?”

The heavy weight lady felt triumphant. She will be in her full glorious self, surely neighbors will ask about the details, and she will be more than willing to share how she found the missing baby. There will be exaggerations. She intended to spice up the story to make it more dramatic.

“You’re great. I admire your guts.” Bela Lugosi said as he sipped on his cup of free black coffee.

“Thank you.” The heavy weight lady bowed her head. She was cooking dinner outside her shanty with an apron wrapped around her. This was her usual attire. She ate several times a day. She needed to cook to sustain her daily chores of eating and eating and eating. Gossip was another source of leisure.

“I told you, it’s only a matter of time.” Bela Lugosi did not hesitate to provide the compliment. This was his way of getting his free black coffee.

When the heavy weight lady went into hysteria as she found the missing baby, she failed to notice the baby’s internal organs were missing.

## 8

On a far and remote country side was a vast agricultural land, consisting of thousand and thousand acres of rich soil. A group of men were digging and they sowed corn seeds that were one inch deep and five inches apart. These corn plants were watered once a week and were fed with organic fertilizers. Harvesting will be done when the corn husks were dark green.

Corn picking was done when the silk at the top of the corn plant already had a dark color. The men regularly check if the corns were already ripe. The kernels were punctured. If the liquid was cloudy then it's ripe. If the liquid was clear then it's not yet ready.

The men removed the ripe corn from the plant. This was done carefully to prevent ruining the stalk.

Planting was done every two weeks to ensure a regular harvest which is by ninety days.

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The men were cautious of four legged animals that loved to eat corn. Men were scheduled to overlook the corn plantation.

Everyone loved to eat corn, boiled and buttered.

“I love corn mamma.” A young boy said to his mother.

“Oh yes you do. Everybody loves corn, young and old. It’s everyone’s favorite.”

“What if we don’t plant corns?”

“Then we’ll die. We got nothing to eat. We’ll earn nothing.”

“Then I’ll help you and papa in planting corns.”

“When you grow older.”

On other acres of land, several men were creating compost. This was an important ingredient for growing tomatoes. It was made from old tomato plants mixed with soil and animal manure. The men knew that creating the right compost was the key for growing.

Soils were mixed with compost. Tomato needed soil rich in organic matter. A soil was dug with the size of a large ball then compost was added. Each plant was set approximately fifteen inches apart. Tomato plants were watered weekly. When ripe, they were ready for harvesting.

On other acres of land, there were fruit bearing orange trees set twenty feet apart against each other. These orange

trees were easy to manage, almost pest free. They were perfect for juices. With the right care and climate, oranges created productive juicy fruits as well as fast cash.

Orange trees produced fruits after only three years and they could live up to one hundred years. Oranges were picked only when they ripened. Unlike other fruits, oranges will not ripen if they were already picked.

First were corns, then tomatoes and oranges. There was also livestock created from the toils and labors of hardworking men and women, young and old, hundreds of them. The work was back breaking, the salary too meager.

At the center of this agricultural conglomerate were the Rangers, Martin and Louise, the most powerful couple in the land.

Louise Ranger was specific with details. She kept records such as planting date, maturity, records of the weather which all served as her point of reference. She was very shrewd.

Louise Ranger managed the recording while Martin Ranger was in overall command. He was focused on the financial aspect, money, money and more money.

Martin and Louise were unkind and ruthless. They were hated and defiled by their subjects. The workers got no choice. Working with the Rangers were their main source of living.

The fruit bearing trees, corns, tomatoes, and livestock were also the workers source of food. However, they have to

pay for the price. The market prices were the same for the workers. They were given no discount.

The workers lived in shacks scattered all across the huge vast land of the Rangers. Some were almost penniless. The money earned were just enough for daily sustenance. The workers were not given a chance to improve their ways of living.

One afternoon, Martin and Louise were having a nice talk at the house veranda. Martin was taking a cup of black coffee. Martin was enjoying the bitter taste while Louise was sipping her fresh orange juice.

They were seated on a wooden antique couch. The furniture's color was faded brown. It belonged to Louise's grandmother. The furniture was handed down to her as a wedding gift. It had a sentimental value. The furniture provided recollections of the past when Louise's grandmother used to comb Louise's hair when she was still a little girl.

Martin and Louise both belonged to a family of aristocrats. There was no courting that transpired. The marriage was arranged by both families. Louise being smart and shrewd agreed. She knew that marrying Martin was a clever move.

Martin was strongly money oriented. Louise was a perfect choice. Their combined inheritance made them wealthier and powerful.

Martin and Louise lived in a rural villa that stood erect in a landscaped plot ground. It was the symbol of grandeur and power.

There was a garden made of ornamental plants with a variety of flowers in distinguishing colors. It was very pleasing to the eyes and a form of relaxation to Louise Ranger to set a certain time of the day, took her granddaughter Pauline and tell her stories while they were seated at a stone bench in the middle of the garden.

Louise and Martin while relaxing were engaged in a business talk. They were calculating the possible profits to earn after the corn harvest.

From a distance, Louise saw one of the male workers walking towards the villa. The worker entered the wooden entrance, passing beside an old tree. The worker walked straight towards the veranda.

“There’s trouble.” Louise said to her husband. She sensed the need of the male worker. The shoulder was hunched. The eyes looked teary. The worker was seeking sympathy.

“Sure there is.” Martin said. He knew that Louise was good in reading body language. He agreed when he saw the male worker.

Martin wanted to acquire the skill of Louise in terms of her ability to interpret movements, especially among the workers, but he failed. With that aspect, he just relied to his wife. He got his own talent anyway. He was skillful in



generating money, lots of them. He and Louise was a perfect match in heaven, as per his wife's notion. However, behind their backs it was a match in hell according to the workers.

"Mr. Ranger, I came to ask for some help." The male worker said. He stood outside the veranda. He was embarrassed to talk personally with the Rangers. He felt so small. The Rangers were rich and powerful. He's poor and almost penniless, relied solely on a very small salary to support his family.

"What help?!" Martin sounded annoyed. The message he was conveying was an instant no.

"My little boy is sick. I need money to buy medicines for him."

"I can't help you. You should be saving the salary you're receiving so when the need arises, you have some money, and you don't go out begging." Martin was sarcastic. It was his nature.

"I'm not begging Mr. Ranger. I'm only asking for some consideration."

"It's the same. You're begging for alms. You shameless fool." Louise Ranger interjected. She stood up but was still holding the glass of orange juice she was sipping. This was from the orange plantation. It possessed a distinct taste. The Rangers were very proud. They produced products of high quality.

The slit of Martin's eyes narrowed while looking at the male worker. Martin was thinking of something.

The male worker felt like shrinking.

“I’ll give you an option.” Martin offered.

“What option?”

“I’ll lend you the money you need but this will be deducted from your weekly salary with interest.” Martin was very calculating with his words. He did not want to commit an error.

“That’s a real good option Martin was offering. In fact, we don’t care whether your children will get sick or die. It’s not our concern but Martin is giving you an option. You accept it or you don’t, it won’t matter.” Louise explained. The workers meant nothing to them. They were valuable because they generated money for the Rangers but other than that Louise and Martin felt the workers were worthless.

Louise and Martin’s perception was without them. The workers will never survive on their own as they got no brains, and relied solely on the Ranger’s capacity to think the right strategy in developing high quality products. For Louise and Martin, the lives of the workers will collapse without them.

The worker was perspiring, using the hem of his faded shirt, he wiped his forehead. He was also trembling in anger. He was at the mercy of his masters.

“You’re wasting time. If you don’t want my option, you can go back to work now!” Martin threatened. “You’re a parasite, just like the others.”

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“You’re being paid and you’re merely standing here doing nothing.”

“But my son is sick. I’m doing something for him to get better. I needed your help, so I could bring him to the doctor. He needed medication, so he’ll get well.”

“That’s why Martin is giving you an option. It’s either you take it, or you leave now!” Louise exploded. She held the glass of her orange juice tightly. She was tempted to smash it against the face of the male worker.

“With interest?”

“Yes with interest. I told you.” Martin said.

“He can’t understand. He’s a moron. These workers are nothing. They can’t think properly. I’m fed up and tired with them.”

The Rangers had a psychological hold on their workers. The Rangers felt they were indispensable. Without them the workers will die of starvation. The Rangers were the provider of food and money for everyone.

“I’ll take it.” The worker was in rage. *Your time will come, you old greeds.*

“You have any problem?” Louise asked.

“What?” The worker asked.

“I’m asking, do you have any problem?”

“My son is sick.”

“I don’t mean that you fool. I don’t like the way you’re looking at us.” Louise was quick to interpret the facial expression.

“I’m so sorry. I’m just tired and confused because of my son.”

“I don’t believe you.”

“Please I need the money for my son’s medication. If it’s with interest that’s fine.”

Louise was torturing the male worker, and he was biting it. “Before we give you the money, I want you to kneel in front of us.”

“What?”

“I said you kneel in front of us before we give you the money.”

“You heard what Louise said, kneel!”

The male worker knelt.

“Now I want you to ask for mercy.” Louise said.

“What?” The male worker said.

“One more what and I’m gonna throw this glass to your face. I’m warning you.” Louise was trembling in anger.

However, she was just faking it. Deep inside, she was filled with so much fun.

“Beg for mercy, Louise wanted you to beg for mercy.”

“You beg for mercy or you’ll go home without the money you need.”

The male worker heaved out a deep sigh and clasped his two hands. “Mercy, I’m begging for mercy. Please it’s for my son. He’s very sick.” He felt so humiliated.

“Now you know.” Louise said.

Martin and Louise were pleased. It was easy for them to control the minds of their subjects. They were the gods. The workers will do anything for them. With a very meager salary, the Rangers can do whatever they want to the workers. It’s a strategy, a tactic. The more they dictated, the more submissive the workers became. The workers were like puppets. They were so foolish, unable to determine if they were exploited.

It was always the survival of the fittest. The Rangers’ plantation was a jungle. The Rangers were the predators, and the workers were the prey, always ready and willing to be devoured.

Louise went inside the house and got the money. She was the keeper of the Rangers’ treasures. It was kept in a tightly locked vault inside the master’s bedroom under the bed. Martin and Louise had the master key.

Both in their 60's, the Rangers got their one and only heiress, a granddaughter, the young and beautiful Pauline. She's only fourteen years old. Blond and blues eyes, her skin was soft and silky. She was breath-taking.

If Pauline reached the age of eighteen she will be given access to the vault inside the master's bedroom. Louise was starting to teach Pauline the trade. Pauline will inherit everything when her grandparents die.

Louise came out from the house. She extended her right arm. "Here's the money."

The male worker extended his right hand in return to reach for the money.

Louise pulled her hand away.

The worker was not sure if it was a joke.

"What do you want me to do?" Louise asked.

"What?"

"I'm asking what do you want me to do?"

"You answer her!" Martin said.

"We had an agreement. You'll lend me the money for my sick son. It'll be deducted from my salary with interest."

"So you had a good memory. You remember. When it comes to money you become sharp. I thought you have the brain of a cockroach."

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“Please I need to bring my son to the doctor.”

Louise threw the money against the face of the male worker. The money got scattered on the ground.

The male worker knelt and took the money one by one. He left with his shoulder hunched.

“Hey bastard you got what you want. Now you’re leaving without saying a word.” Louise shouted.

The worker stopped walking and looked back. “What is it?” He murmured.

“I can’t hear you.” Louise said.

“I’m so sorry.” The worker said.

“I can’t hear you. Now you come back here you idiot. You come back here. You want me to take the money back!”

The worker returned. “I’m so sorry. What is it?”

“I said, you’re leaving with our money without even saying a word.”

“What word?”

“You’re a real moron. No thank you.”

“Oh I’m so sorry. Thank you so much.”

Louise took her glass of orange juice and hurled the juice on the face of the worker.

The worker took the hem of his shirt and wiped his face, then left.

“That’s what you call control!” Louise said to Martin.

“I know.”

“You’re real smart. I would not have thought it myself, the interest thing.” Louise was proud of her husband.

“You’re real smart yourself. And I’m proud of the way you handled him.”

“We’re both smart and I’m sure Pauline is smart like we are.”

“Sure she is.”

The worker brought his son to a doctor then talked with his fellow workers to broadcast the incident. “Those Rangers are so damn greedy. Without us, this plantation will earn nothing.”

“Yeah, they’re just using us for their own good.”

“I knelt, I begged for mercy. My face got wet with orange juice just for the small amount of money for my sick son.”

“What happened to you will sure happen to everyone.”

“It’s exploitation.”

“They’re becoming richer and we’re becoming poorer.”



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“They can’t bring the money with them when they die.”

“It’s only a small damn favor, just a small damn favor, not for me but for my sick son.”

“Not a single drop of kindness runs inside their veins.”

“The color of their blood is not red but black.”

“Black as their souls.”

“They got no conscience.”

“How can they have conscience when they all think about is money, money and more money.”

“They will rot in hell when they die.”

“Nope they don’t need to die. They’re rotting in hell right now.”

“They’re still alive but their souls are now burning.”

“Right.”

“They should provide us lands, share whatever they got.”

“If that happens, that’ll be a damn miracle from heaven.”

“Hope Pauline won’t be as greedy as her old folks.”

“Pauline got the same flesh, same blood. She’ll end up like them.”

“Sure she will.”

“Poor Pauline, she’s a damn rich kid. However, her soul will burn in hell just like her old folks.”

“They will all burn in hell.”

The workers shook their heads in anger.

## 9

Martin and Louise were extra strong for their age. They knew how to maintain a well balanced diet. They also exercise to keep their muscle tone.

The Rangers lived in a huge house. Compared to the shacks of the workers, the Rangers' rural villa was like a palace, a dirty palace.

The Rangers were not used living in a clean environment. There were filths all over the place. Rats and cockroaches were everywhere.

“The Rangers are filthy.” One female worker said. She was given the opportunity to get inside the Rangers' house to wash their clothes. The laundry woman visited the Rangers every other day to wash clothes. She was not allowed to get inside the house. During that time, Louise was sick and confined on the bed. It was Pauline, who asked the laundry

woman to get the clothes. The clothes were washed and hung outside the house. There was an area for washing.

There were occasions when some female workers were asked to clean the Rangers' villa. However, Martin and Louise preferred to live with filths all around them.

The Rangers' rural villa consisted of several rooms most of them empty and a basement. There were times when Louise had a hard time looking for her grand daughter.

"Pauline? Pauline where are you my sweetie?"

Louise searched the rooms but can't find her little one.

"Where are you my lovely Pauline?"

Pauline was truly beautiful. She had long blond bouncy hair and deep blue eyes. Her skin was soft as silk. She had pearly white teeth. She was graceful in her movement. She's like a princess. She was breathtaking.

Louise went to the basement hoping her lovely Pauline was there. And she was right.

"So here you are, just what I thought." Louise saw her lovely grand daughter on one corner busy with something. "What are you doing?"

Pauline ignored the old lady.

Louise approached her little one. Pauline was slumped on the floor having a good time. Louise tapped Pauline on the shoulder.

“Hey I’m talking to you.”

“Grandma I’m busy.”

Louise saw her granddaughter eating a small rat. Louise got envious. “Would you give your old granny a small portion? Can I have a bite?”

“You can have this one.”

The small rat was decapitated. The head was gone, eaten by Pauline. Pauline gave the rat’s body to her grandma.

Louise swallowed the whole rat. “Hmmm... this is real good. Black rat tastes a lot better than the white ones.”

“Grandma you ate everything.”

“Oh I forgot. I’m sorry.”

“Now there’s nothing left for me.”

“I’m real sorry my lovely Pauline. Wait, just stay here.” Louise’s eyes moved fast. “Wait I see one. I see one.” Louise leaped like a predatory cat grabbing a rat biting it on the head. The rat’s body was flapping in between Louise’s teeth.

Louise ate the head and gave the body to Pauline. “I ate the head. You can have the body. You already had your share of the head with the other rat. But, leave the tail for me. ”

Pauline was delighted. “Thanks grandma.” Pauline ate the body of the rat voraciously but left the tail. “This is for you, grandma.”

“How sweet.” Louise took the rat’s tail, raising it. She closed her eyes, slowly put down the tail to her open mouth then swallowed it. “Tastes like noodles.”

Martin Ranger came holding a bottle. “What are you two doing?”

“Taking a snack.” Louise replied

“You’ve taken your snack. So what are we going to do with this one?” Martin raised the bottle he was holding filled with cockroaches.

“I want some grandpa.”

“I thought you’ve taken your snack.”

“I’m not full yet.” Pauline reasoned.

“Me too.” Louise took the bottle from Martin, opened the cap fast and grabbed a handful from the bottle and put it inside her mouth. “It’s crunchy.”

“I want some grandma.”

Louise grabbed another handful from the bottle and gave them to Pauline.

“It’s yummy.”

“You have to give me too.” Martin said.

The Rangers had a very good time with the live cockroaches.

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Aside from being greedy, the Rangers had a peculiar eating habit. They feasted on rats, cockroaches, lizards, dogs, cats and many more.

“We’re very unique.” Martin often told Louise and Pauline.

“Oh yes we are.” Louise reiterated.

“I agree grandma and grandpa. We’re truly unique.”

“Nobody lives like we do.”

“This is our kingdom and we are the rulers.”

“Right. I am the king. You are the queen, and Pauline is the princess.”

“I’m a princess grandpa?”

“Yes you are. You’re so beautiful you looked like a real princess.”

## 10

The Sunshine mansion was the epitome of wealth and prosperity. The house was made from the toils and kindness of Steve Sunshine, the late husband of Jane. The total costs ran millions and millions.

The Sunshine mansion was made of splendid colonial architecture. There were four stories. The floor was made of marble colored very light brown. Windows were from floor to ceiling encased with steels.

There was a grand staircase with handles made of brass. The staircase was also made of marble colored gray with brownish streaks to compliment the color of the floor.

On the second floor was the master's bedroom occupied by Jane and her late husband. It was the largest room of the house. Denver's room was on the third floor. It consisted of baseball paraphernalia and other sporting stuffs.



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The rooms at the fourth floor were all empty but kept immaculately clean. In case there were visitors, the rooms were ready to accommodate.

A library was located on the second floor of the house. Being doctors, Jane and her late husband Steve spent time at the library to read the medical books and journals that will enrich their knowledge regarding their profession.

Denver was encouraged to do the same. He was given various books that were mentally stimulating, science, encyclopedia, geography and others.

Denver refused. He found reading to be boring. He preferred to engage in baseball and other physical pursuit. This was his main interest.

Dr. Jane Sunshine was okay with that, Denver became a scholar not in academics but in athletics. Jane was proud of her son's accomplishment. Denver was not inclined in intellectual pursuit, but he promised his mother, he will become a success in baseball someday, and she will be extra proud.

A music room was located on the first floor. However, Steve, Jane or Denver was not into music.

The living room area hung several paintings of the masters. Steve loved paintings. Jane was not into art. However, she loved the paintings as well. It was a reminder of her late husband.

When Steve Sunshine died, Jane did everything to maintain the vitality of the house. Friends were always

welcome. Denver himself invited his buddies. Being an only child he needed company.

"Mom, Mom! Come here quick!" Denver was shouting at the top of his lungs as he got inside the huge mansion.

Jane heard her son screaming and ran down the stairs towards the living room area. "What was that!?"

"I want you to meet someone."

"You scared me!" Jane held her chest with her right palm. She thought something serious happened. She was alarmed. She never got used of her son's over the edge character. Jane occasionally complained to her medical colleagues that one day she might suffer a heart attack.

When Denver's father died, Jane took charge in caring for her son. Jane was an ideal mother but at times was over doing it. Denver got spoiled. However, the relationship between the mother and the son was harmonious.

"I want you to meet Jeff Michael Cruz. The kid I was telling you. I want you to see his toy puppy. It's amazing. He could make it move."

Jane smiled. "I'm glad I finally met you. Denver tells a lot about you. He said you're so brilliant. You could become a great inventor someday." Jane had long wanted to meet Jeff in person.

Jeff smiled too. However, he felt embarrassed.

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“You’re a shy little kid. And where’s that toy puppy Denver told me?”

Jeff showed Tom Tom, a mechanical toy puppy, seven inches tall. Tom Tom could follow Jeff’s command of forward, backward, bark, tumble (falls on the floor), jump, wag (tail moves), somersault (rolls on the floor).

Tom Tom could follow two to three commands simultaneously like forward, bark and wag. Tom Tom would walk forward barking while wagging his tail.

Tom Tom was a mechanical toy puppy bought by Jeff’s mother from a toy store. Through the spiritual intervention of the real puppy Tom Tom, the mechanical Tom Tom transformed into a magical toy puppy.

“Know what Jeff. Denver is so proud of you.” Jane said.

Denver was fifteen years old and in high school while Jeff was nine years old and in grade school. Jeff earned Denver’s admiration. The two became buddies.

“Show your stuff kiddo, let Tom Tom do his tricks.” Denver told Jeff.

Jeff put Tom Tom on the floor.

“Forward Tom Tom, forward.”

Tom Tom moved forward but stopped.

“Common Tom Tom forward.”

Tom Tom moved several steps then stopped again.

“Backward Tom Tom, backward.”

Tom Tom moved his right hind leg just one step then stopped.

“I think something is wrong with the battery.”

Jeff took Tom Tom from the floor, opened the battery compartment, took the battery out and rubbed it against his pants to create friction. Jeff placed the battery back into the compartment. Jeff put Tom Tom again on the floor.

“Bark Tom Tom bark.”

Tom Tom opened his mouth, giving out a sound of barking but was not completed. He stopped midway.

“Common Tom Tom bark you little dog. You’re embarrassing my friend here.” Denver was getting annoyed.

“Common Tom Tom bark.” Jeff said.

Tom Tom gave only a halfway bark.

Jeff took Tom Tom again. “I think something is really wrong with the battery.”

“It’s fine. Your toy puppy was good. And you’re really good.” Jane was amused. The toy dog’s act was incomplete yet charming.

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“I’ll get Tom Tom a new battery, and he’ll do his tricks next time.” Jeff gave the assurance.

The toy puppy was under the spiritual guidance of the real puppy Tom Tom but a battery was needed for the toy puppy to perform and obey Jeff’s command.

Tom Tom only followed and recognized Jeff’s voice and never from anyone else. Just like the real Tom Tom.

“And mom would you believe. Tom Tom would only recognize Jeff’s voice. He would not follow the others.”

“Really?”

“Yup.”

Denver took the small dog and tried to make it move.

“Forward.”

The toy dog did not move

“Forward!”

The dog did not move.

“Backward.”

Tom Tom remained motionless.

“Backward! Move backward you little puppy.”

Tom Tom stood still.

“See mom, just what I’ve said. Tom Tom would not move, unless Jeff tells him to do so.”

“Maybe there’s a trick.” Jane said.

“There’s no trick mom.” Denver said.

Tom Tom already underwent Denver’s close scrutiny. He examined Tom Tom’s battery compartment. The on and off at the belly portion. There was no trick whatsoever. Tom Tom with the right battery will move and execute his tricks if Jeff told him to do so. With the command from others, Tom Tom will remain motionless.

Tom Tom showed some more tricks but only halfway completed.

“You’re a genius Jeff. You’re a real genius.” Jane gave her compliment.

Jeff smiled. However, forced, he was stricken with fever, he just can’t say no to Denver, who was so persistent. Denver had long wanted his mom to meet his brilliant friend Jeff.

“How’s Denver in school Jeff?” Jane took the opportunity in asking.

Jeff was hesitant. “Well... Denver is fine Dr. Sunshine. He’s part of the baseball team.” Jeff was looking at Denver as if seeking for approval if he was giving the right answer.

“I don’t mean that. Was he engaged in... school fights?” Jane asked.

“Well.”

“Well?”

“Well, not that I know of. I’m not really sure.”

“So you’re not sure.” Jane was embarrassed to interrogate the boy.

“Well..., maybe you have to ask Denver Dr. Sunshine. We’re only school mates, not classmates. We’re not together ...at all times so... I’m not sure.” Jeff was not good in giving lies. He was pausing while talking, thinking what to say next.

Denver was the notorious school bully who loved initiating trouble. Small kids will do but bigger kids were not a threat. Denver was never scared of anyone or anything, big or small. He always found ways to justify his misdemeanors.

Jane was called by the school administrator a few times.

Jeff was lucky. Denver was drawn and had a deep admiration to him. Denver never picked on Jeff.

Emilia, the house servant entered the living room. She sensed there was a visitor. She pretended to pass by the living room area holding a mop for proper introduction.

“Hey there’s a cute doggie here. Whose doggie’s this?” Emilia asked as she mopped the marble floor.

“That’s Jeff’s.” Jane answered.

Emilia was thirty two years old, small, thin, frail, and almost unrecognizable. Her presence could only be known if she talked, she's comical.

“Oh so you're Jeff. Denver tells a lot about you. He said you created a toy puppy. So this is the puppy. What's his name?” Emilia stopped mopping.

“It's Tom Tom.” Jane answered.

“Oh what a cute name Tom Tom. Can I hold him?”

“Yeah, sure.” Jeff lifted Tom Tom from the floor and gave the toy puppy to Emilia.

“Oh my goodness, he's a real cutie.” Emilia dropped the mop. Her right hand took Tom Tom while her left hand was on her chest feeling amazed.

“Hey moron, go get us somethin' to eat.” Denver said.

Emilia felt embarrassed. She looked alternately to Jeff, Denver and Dr. Sushine. She was tongue tied in front of the young visitor.

“Didn't you hear? I said go get us something to eat, you stupid moron.” Denver said louder.

Emilia looked at Dr. Sunshine seeking for help.

“Move your ass!” Denver shouted.

“Denver stop it!” Jane intervened.



## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

Emilia was helpless.

“She’s too goddamn stupid!” Denver reiterated.

Emilia gave Tom Tom back to Jeff. Looked sternly at Denver, left the living room area mumbling and went to the kitchen.

Dr. Jane Sunshine herself was embarrassed. She felt like a weak mother unable to control her son.

Denver was annoyed at Emilia because of her attention grabbing antics. With the presence of visitors Emilia engaged in silly acts to draw the attention to her. Guests were entertained. Denver was irritated.

“Common Jeff let’s go play computer.”

“Huh!?”

“I said let’s go play computer.”

“I wanna go home.”

“It’s too early to go home.”

“I have to go home now.”

“No you can’t. I want you to stay here.”

Jeff was feeling dizzy but can’t refuse. Denver might do something violent as he often did in school.

A computer was located at one corner of the living room area. Denver pulled the computer table towards the

couch. The computer table had four rollers so Denver did not have a hard time.

Some of Jane Sunshine's female doctor friends spent the night with the Sunshine. However, they opted not to return. Denver loved to embarrass people, young and old, regardless of social stature.

A year ago, a female colleague decided to spend the night for a medical project with Dr. Sunshine.

Denver stated that the female doctor looked like a squid.

The female doctor colleague left at that instant. Dr. Jane Sunshine apologized. The female colleague understood. Denver was young and immature, unable to control his tongue.

When castigated, Denver insisted that he was just being honest. The female colleague of Dr. Sunshine looked like a fresh water squid.

"Physical appearance doesn't matter. It's the attitude and outlook in life." Dr. Sunshine told Denver.

Denver agreed. He promised to behave next time.

It was just a promise uttered in words but never in meaning. Denver kept repeating his misdemeanors. However, what can he do, as he reiterated over and over. He was just honest, kids were told not to tell lies.

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

“You don’t have to be vocal. You have to be honest when asked to tell the truth. When nobody’s asking, never volunteer information that will embarrass others.”

Denver understood clearly. Or pretended, he understood.

\*\*\*

The back part of the house had a large swimming pool. Tiles were colored aqua blue with designs of assorted fishes. At the top view, the swimming pool looked like an aquarium.

The Sunshine’s hardly use the swimming pool. Denver and his buddies occasionally took a dip, especially during summer. At most times the swimming pool was untouched.

Sometimes Emilia took a dip which immensely annoyed Denver. Emilia will contaminate the water, filling it with bacteria.

There was an instance, Denver arrived together with Jimmy and other neighbor buddies. They were to take a dip in the pool. Denver was horrified. He saw Emilia performing a back stroke.

“Mom! Mom!” Denver called his mother.

Jane arrived and found Denver ready to explode.

“Look at Emilia.”

Jane saw Emilia having a wonderful time backstroking. Emilia was a good and fast swimmer.

“Tell her to get out of the pool.”

“Why what’s wrong with that?” Jane almost laughed when she found Emilia was wearing a house dress.

“Get out of the pool you moron!”

Jane pulled Denver inside the house. She can’t castigate Denver in front of the boys.

“What’s wrong with you? It’s hot. Emilia was merely taking a dip.”

“I don’t care! Tell her to get out of the pool.”

Jane refused. She wanted no control from his son. When Denver was having his usual tantrums, the best thing to do was ignore him.

Jane went up the grand staircase and locked herself inside the room. She looked at herself in the mirror. Her black shiny hair was in tangles. She took a comb to fix it and hummed a tune. She took a novel she was reading for three days. She lied down on the bed. She was having a migraine attack.

Denver called his neighbor buddies. “We can’t swim, there’s an iguana in the pool.”

“What are we gonna do now?”

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

The boys were willing to take a dip in the pool regardless if Emilia was swimming. Emilia never posed a problem to Denver's buddies. The boys liked Emilia. She often cooked pasta and other delicious preparations for them. They were amused over Emilia's comical antics. She always made them laugh.

Denver had an idea. The boys being visitors went along with Denver.

Denver and his buddies went into the kitchen, took soy sauce, vinegar and other kitchen stuff for cooking. Denver asked his buddies to pour the soy sauce and vinegar into the swimming pool.

Emilia was not aware. She was busy swimming, doing the butterfly.

Not contented, Denver went to his room, took the garbage pail full of litters. He went back into the swimming pool, poured all the litters into the pool.

The boys were laughing and rolling on the ground.

Emilia found herself surrounded by litters. With her usual attention grabbing antics, she cried and was hysterical.

"I'll tell this to Dr. Sunshine. You and your friends, you always picked on me."

"We're just having fun!"

"It was Denver's idea not us."

The boys reasoned when they saw Emilia in tears.

“She won’t cook no more pasta for us.” Jimmy said.

“Who cares? You go tell mom. I’m not scared.” Denver told Emilia.

Emilia ran inside the house up into the grand staircase with her house dress dripping with water. She pounded on Dr. Jane Sunshine’s door and told her what happened.

Dr. Sunshine was mad but what can she do. It was the same process over and over, Denver misbehaving, Dr. Sunshine castigating. Denver’s promise to behave never happened.

Jane Sunshine was dead tired. She wanted to relax to lessen the tension within her system, her son, Emilia, Sunshine Charity and other matters. Jane Sunshine raised her two hands in surrender.

“I don’t know what to do. I don’t know.” Jane lied on the bed and covered her head with a soft pillow.

Emilia called the maintenance service to clean the pool. Emilia also cleaned the house and the staircase.

Days after Denver and his neighbor buddies had a wonderful time in the pool, as if nothing happened. Denver had forgotten the incident and not once mentioned it.

Emilia was waiting for Denver to apologize. She cooked better, cleaned harder, made the house sparkle just to get the sympathy from Denver.

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

As a sign of remorse, Denver threw his dirty clothes on Emilia's face. The clothes were soaking with mud when Denver had a baseball game during a heavy downpour.

Emilia went to Dr. Sunshine to relate what happen.

“Dr. Sunshine, look what Denver did.”

Emilia's face was drenched with mud.

Jane heaved out a deep sigh. “Common you just wash your face.

Emilia washed her face with soap and water.

When it comes to foolishness, Denver was on the A list.

11

Emilia was only sixteen years old when she ran away from home to escape the physical abuse from her father. Jane's husband Steve saw Emilia wandering the street confused and disoriented. Steve being a charitable man brought Emilia to a center for abused women. Emilia was taken care of.

When Steve and Jane visited, Emilia expressed her desire to work for the Sunshine household. Steve consented. Jane was already pregnant, and they needed household help.

Emilia gave her full loyalty to the Sunshine. When Steve died, Emilia's loyalty remained strong. Emilia promised she will stay with Jane for as long as she lived.

Emilia did the cooking, cleaning, washing of clothes and overall household works. She woke up early in the morning,



started the day with cooking breakfast. Afternoon she tidied the house she kept immaculately clean. With the Dobermans Ringo and Paul, she never dared touch. It was only Denver, who took charge of the two dogs.

“You’re very hard working.” Dr. Sunshine often said to Emilia.

“I just loved doing something. I can’t spend the time doing nothing.”

Emilia received the salary of an ordinary employee, including benefits and overtime. She’s happy living with Dr. Jane Sunshine. She was contented. With Denver, she just shrugged her shoulders off. Jane was her master and not the fifteen year old bully.

Jane Sunshine took two additional housekeepers to help with the house works. The two helpers were just visiting with alternate schedules, cleaning the house and washing the clothes.

Emilia had proven her loyalty and good work ethics, and Jane was satisfied. It was something of a promotion. Emilia supervised the two visiting housekeepers. If they were not around, Emilia took charge of everything.

Emilia maintained the personal belongings of Dr. Sunshine. She never allowed the two housekeepers to touch them, from Dr. Sunshine’s clothes, to her shoes, slippers.

Emilia was not only hard working but trustworthy. Jane considered Emilia as part of the Sunshine family, a much

older sister of Denver. She wanted Emilia to take an adult education class.

“Why don’t you go to school and study? I’ll take charge of the expenses.” Dr. Sunshine offered.

“I can’t.”

“Why not?”

“I’m not fond of going to school, since I was a kid. I’m having a hard time concentrating. It’s hard for me to absorb the details.”

“You can if you will try.”

“I can’t do it. It will only be a waste of time and money.”

“I’ll guide you. Don’t you worry?” Dr. Sunshine was in her usual benevolent self extending help for the needy.

“It’s no use Dr. Sunshine. I do appreciate your offer, but it will be useless.”

Already in her 30’s, Emilia felt schooling was no longer important. She only wanted to serve Dr. Sunshine.

Emilia also acted as Jane’s secretary. Emilia did not finish high school. However, she became smart living with the Sunshine. Jane and her husband were both doctors. Emilia learned the basic medical terms, learned to read journals. Serving as Jane Sunshine’s secretary was not a difficult task. She kept track of Dr. Sunshine’s schedules. She

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

even served as her driver once in a while. She was a jack of all trades.

\*\*\*

Denver and Jeff were immersed in the computer game called Nomadic Heroes. Jeff temporarily forgot his fever. The game was interesting. A good strategy was needed to earn points.

Jeff played Vonn, a dwarf with psychokinetic powers. Denver played Lurky, a mighty warrior adept with all kinds of weapons, sword, axe and sling-shot.

The two nomadic heroes battled various elements like, wild animals, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, thunderstorms, tornadoes. They needed to survive the elements to score points. Vonn and Lurky were sometimes allies and occasionally nemesis battling each other.

They swam on rivers, lakes and seas. They climbed on trees, hills and mountains. They slept under dark clouds, looked for edible foods they could cook in order to survive.

Emilia came with a tray containing two plates. There was a bowl filled with pasta, two glasses and a big bottle of coke.

“Hello boys here’s your food. I cooked the pasta myself.” Emilia was proud of her cooking expertise. Emilia put the tray on a small table beside the couch. The food was within reach of the two boys. Denver and Jeff barely noticed. Their attention was on the computer game.

Vonn, Jeff's hero was using his psychokinetic powers, swirling rocks around himself to protect him from the powerful tornado. Jeff scored almost a hundred points. Lurky, Denver's hero was manipulating five axes all at the same time juggling them and hurled them against a huge leopard ready to attack. With this maneuver, Denver scored fifty points.

The tornado was a greater task. Jeff's score was higher. It all depends on the element encountered with equivalent scores based on the level of difficulty.

Emilia moved her head towards the computer screen to check how the game was going. Emilia's eyes widened. "Jeff is doing great. You're losing Denver."

Denver gave Emilia a stern look.

Emilia's sarcasm was intentional.

"Jeff's score is real high. Denver you have to quit and you have to quit now." Emilia continued with the mockery. She knew the soft spot on how to attack Denver. "You got no chance at all."

Denver took the fork from the tray of food and threw the fork to Emilia. "Get lost!"

Emilia moved fast when she saw the fork flying towards her, she bent down and was safe from the fork.

"Jeff is far better than you are!" Emilia was not to give up.

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

“I said you get lost!” Denver stood up with a clenched fist.

“You’re nothing compared to Jeff.”

“One more talk and I’ll strangle your neck!” Denver was fuming. He wanted to take the bowl of pasta and throw it to Emilia.

Jeff stood up to calm Denver. “Hey, cool down.” Jeff saw the palpitation on Denver’s temple.

“I’m gonna strangle your neck you god damn moron.”

“You think I’m scared. I’m not.”

“You go to hell!”

“You go to hell yourself. Dr. Sunshine is the master of this mansion you’re only the son.”

“Move your ass!”

Jeff was trying to calm Denver down. Denver remained agitated.

Emilia was not ready to surrender from the teenage bully.

Jane came running down the grand staircase. “What was that again?!” She was inside the room taking a rest when she heard the loud argument.

“This moron talks a lot.”

Jane stood at the middle.

“You’re miserable because you’re losing.” Emilia said.

“Would you stop it please! I’m going insane! Stop it the two of you!” Jane said.

Emilia took the fork from the floor and left the living room area grumbling.

Denver and Emilia were often engaged in arguments. A slight provocation will initiate a verbal fight. A few times they acted like buddies when they talked or saw something funny. These were the healthy occasions when Denver and Emilia treated each other like a family.

Denver always felt Emilia was only a house servant. He was treating Emilia the way he felt Emilia should be treated.

Jane managed to play fair. Emilia had been a long time nanny of the Sunshine. She became part of the family when Jane was pregnant with Denver. Emilia helped in taking care of Denver when he was still a baby.

Denver and Jeff went back to play while Emilia returned to the kitchen, washed the used cooking wares and scrubbed the floor kitchen. Emilia never engaged in futile times.

Vonn and Lurky, the two nomadic heroes were now engaged in a battle. Lurky took a sling shot with a ten foot rock and hurled it against Vonn. The dwarf through his psychokinetic powers lifted a tree that served as a shield.

Vonn escaped and earned points while Lurky lost the points that Vonn earned.

Denver heaved out a deep sigh of dismay and put the game on pause. He was hungry. “Wanna eat Jeff?” Denver asked his friend.

Jane was already inside her room, lying on the bed. She suffered from a mild head ache.

“Common, you take this pasta. Emilia’s a good cook.” Denver took the opportunity in giving out the compliment. Denver got a plate filling it with the pasta from the bowl.

Jeff was surprised. He did not expect good words from Denver towards Emilia.

“Common you taste this. It’s very good.” Denver started eating and had already taken several spoonfuls.

Jeff did not have the appetite. He was not feeling well.

“I’ll just take a coke.”

“Okay.” Denver took a glass and poured the carbonated beverage.

Several minutes after, Denver was done with his pasta. He consumed everything from the bowl.

“I ate all of it, since you didn’t want it.” Denver was proud, he was a fast eater. He put down the empty plate on the small table, took the coke drinking it direct from the big bottle. “I’m full. The pasta tasted so damn good.” Denver

put his right forefinger on his lips. "Don't you ever tell Emilia. I don't want her to get swell headed."

Denver wanted to maintain his antipathy to Emilia. He would never give Emilia a chance to have an affinity with him.

The two boys resumed their computer game.

"I can't beat you. You're so damn good."

Jeff was now several hundred points ahead of Denver.

"It only takes practice." Jeff said.

The two boys played for another hour until Denver finally gave up. Denver lost by a landslide. Despite Denver not winning, he never lost his cool to his buddy. He liked Jeff so much. He would not even dare to raise his voice to him. Denver wanted to keep Jeff's company. Jeff offered no competition. Their computer game was a mere play.

Jeff never boasted his talents to anyone. He was down to earth, humble, a really nice kid.

"Okay I'm done. You won again." Denver raised his two arms as a sign of surrender. "Common I'll show you something."

"What is it?"

Denver guided Jeff into the backyard. Ringo and Paul were inside two separate large cages.



## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

Ringo and Paul stood more than two feet in height. Ringo weighed ninety five pounds while Paul a hundred. They're colored black with pointed ears. They got muscular chests and powerfully built. The two dogs were highly intelligent. They knew how to follow instructions from Denver.

They got a keen sense of smell. They could recognize the scents of Denver, Dr. Sunshine and occasionally Emilia.

Denver enjoyed the full company of the two Dobermans in terms of bathing and feeding them. He fed them three times per day through home cooked meal courtesy of Emilia. The nutritional diet of Ringo and Paul consisted of chicken, beef, pork, potato, cheese, wheat, and vegetables.

Emilia prepared the food on a Sunday that was good for one whole week. She put them on plastic wares and labeled them as Monday, Tuesday and so on.

Emilia experimented on various food mixtures. She delivered her cooking expertise not only for Jane and Denver but as well as for Ringo and Paul.

She kept a handbook for dog foods that offered a variety. With that, Denver got no complaints over Ringo and Paul's diet courtesy of Emilia, there was never an argument.

Denver took charge in reheating the food in the microwave oven prior to giving them to Ringo and Paul. Each dog has his own stainless bowl for food and mineral water.

The two dogs were brought to the vet for regular check ups and medications to stay healthy and strong. They took their vitamins regularly.

If Jane Sunshine considered Emilia as a younger sister, Denver considered Ringo and Paul as his brothers and allies. He was aware of Ringo, and Paul's loyalty to him.

Their mere appearance could evoke fear and horror. Just like Denver, Ringo and Paul possessed volatile temperaments.

From the distance, Ringo and Paul saw their master Denver and became agitated. They moved around their cages wanting to break free. When they saw Jeff, they became vicious, saliva drooled from their mouths. They barked furiously, showing their sharp fangs.

Ringo and Paul were trained to hate strangers.

Ringo and Paul's cages were custom made. They were spacious so the two dogs could move freely inside. The cages had two doors for easy access in case Denver will be putting in the food and water bowl. The cages were made of heavy duty coated steel wires and were locked by a huge padlock.

Ringo and Paul wore leather spiked collars. They looked like gladiators ready for battle.

Jane insisted on Ringo and Paul to wear leather dog muzzles so there will be no accident in case visitors were present. But Denver refused. It would be hard to feed the dogs when they were wearing the muzzles.

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

Denver and Jeff approached the two cages.

"Jeff I want you to meet my dogs. Ringo and Paul."

"Hi Ringo. Hi Paul!" Jeff greeted the two dogs.

The two dogs went crazy. The two cages rocked back and forth. They could only recognize Denver, Dr. Sunshine and sometimes Emilia.

"Hey Stop that! Behave yourselves boys, behave!"

There was an immediate transformation, the two dogs acted like meek lambs. Their tails moved under their hind legs. Denver was showing Jeff, who the boss was.

Ringo and Paul were caged at the backyard in the morning so visitors like Jeff won't get scared. This portion of the backyard was isolated away from the swimming pool. At night, they were released and wandered around the front and back yard. Any intruder who gets into the house could be eaten alive.

The sunshine mansion was surrounded by a steel fence for the purpose of security. However, Ringo and Paul provided full protection.

"They look scary."

"Don't worry they won't harm you."

"Why do you take care of huge dogs?"

"Burglars got inside the house before. Mom called the cops so nothing was stolen. We decided to adopt two Dobermans to get rid of unwanted visitors."

"Isn't it risky?"

"What do you mean risky?"

"They might bite you." Jeff read about incidents of animal attacks, dogs devouring their own masters.

Jeff read a story of a Rottweiler devouring the three year old daughter of its master to death. It was not just one story but several of them with various breeds so Jeff was scared.

However, for sure, dog remains to be man's best friend.

"Nope. My dogs are trained. They won't touch me. I'm their master. I could even ask them to kill someone if I want to."

Jeff was taken aback. Was he frightened of Ringo and Paul or was he frightened of Denver? He was not sure.

"I won't do that. I'm not a murderer. But if provoked, I might become one."

Jeff became uneasy.

"You're scared?"

Jeff failed to answer.

"You're scared?"

Jeff nodded his head.

“You don’t have to be scared. As I said I’m the master of Ringo and Paul. They won’t kill, unless I ask them to do so. So they won’t kill you, unless I tell them.”

Jeff felt his throat was dry.

“Say something.” Denver said.

“What will I say?”

“Anything.”

“I can’t think of anything.”

Denver put his arm on Jeff’s shoulder. “Don’t get scared. It’s only a joke. I can’t do that and I will never do that.”

## 12

Late afternoon, Jeff was walking home. He was not feeling well. He was running high with fever. Denver insisted on bringing him home but Jeff refused.

Jeff felt the burden of his back-pack. He was holding his toy puppy with his two hands. Jeff felt dizzy. He collapsed and lost consciousness.

An hour passed. Jeff was still sleeping. Minutes after, he slowly regained consciousness. He felt something was touching his forehead. He stirred and almost jumped when he saw the face of a very ugly girl.

Jeff stood up fast, took Tom Tom from the ground. His backpack was heavy but Jeff barely noticed. He walked rapidly away. Then, he stopped and looked back. He saw the ugly girl was also looking at him.

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

The girl's appearance was horrifying. The skin color was dark red. The eyes were blazing green. The lips were very thick. The hair was long and sticky. Quite unusual, this was the first time Jeff saw something bizarre in person. However, despite the girl looking horrible, Jeff felt the girl was nice. She touched his forehead while he was unconscious.

Jeff decided to approach the girl.

"Hi." Jeff said. He smelled the stink coming from the girl but ignored it.

The girl was like a dwarf. She was so tiny.

"What's your name?" Jeff asked.

"Charity." The tiny voice said.

"Charity?"

The girl nodded.

"You got a nice name"

Charity's green eyes were fixed on Tom Tom. She was curious about the mechanical dog. Jeff noticed there was an aura of innocence from the girl's expression. He was not sure what the girl's age was.

"This is my toy doggie. You wanna see it?" Jeff offered.

Charity smiled, nodding with enthusiasm. Jeff saw the rotten gums and black teeth. They were sharp like little nails.

Charity looked gruesome but due to unexplained reason Jeff never felt scared. He was comfortable with the girl's presence. Jeff gave the doggie to the girl.

Charity took Tom Tom. With her two tiny palms, she examined the mechanical puppy in all angles.

"You know my toy puppy could do tricks. You wanna see it?" Jeff said with pride.

Charity nodded.

"But he can't do his tricks right. His battery needs replacement. But, I'll still show it to you."

Jeff took Tom Tom and put him on the ground.

"Forward." Jeff said.

Tom Tom leaped and run like an antelope forward. Jeff was surprised.

"Stop!"

Tom Tom stopped.

"Backward."

Tom Tom ran backward leaping.

"Stop!"

Tom Tom stopped.

"Somersault!"



## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

Jeff was astonished when Tom Tom jumped up and did acrobatic acts in the air several feet from the ground.

Charity clapped her hands. "He's good."

This was the first time Tom Tom showed this kind of energy. *How did it happen?* Jeff asked himself.

Tom Tom was still leaping, jumping and doing acrobatic tricks in the air.

"Tom Tom stop. What's happening to you?"

Tom Tom stopped and stood still on the ground. Jeff took his toy puppy and examined him for minutes. It's unusual.

Jeff remembered that he was already hours away from home. He came from school, went to Denver's house and slept on the ground. He looked at his watch then turned to the ugly girl.

"I'm going now. My mom might be looking for me". Jeff was to step forward when he contemplated for seconds. He inserted his right hand into his pocket and got several bills.

"I got some money here, maybe you wanna buy some food." Jeff extended his hand with the money. Charity was only looking at Jeff's hand.

"Common don't be shy it's for you."

Charity shook her head.

“You don’t want it?”

Charity moved closer to Jeff, touched Tom Tom but did not take the money. Charity left waving her hand. She smiled exposing her teeth pointed like nails and her gums in putrefaction.

“Common you take this.” Jeff extended his right hand with the money. “You may want to buy food.”

Charity waved her hand as she walked away.

Jeff waved back then looked at Tom Tom. He was wondering. Tom Tom was malfunctioning just a while ago, suddenly he was filled with energy. He was not only moving forward or backward. He was also running and jumping high up in the air.

Jeff felt his nape with his right palm. His fever was gone.

*It's strange I was running high with fever just a while ago. Now it's gone. Tom Tom as well is suddenly filled with lots of energy.*

Jeff wondered.

Jeff went straight home.

13

Charity's wound on her left foot was already healed, no pain at all. She was limping no more, unlike the previous days when she had a hard time walking.

“La la la la la la la.” Charity was singing a melody. She could feel the sweet and cold breeze on her face.

Charity saw a bouquet of white carnation. It was already wilted. The bunch of flowers fell from a speeding garbage truck.

According to legend, carnation blossomed from the ground when Mary Mother of God shed tears of sorrow during her son Jesus Christ's crucifixion.

White carnation is ideal for mothers as it symbolizes purity and love, the unending dedication of a mother to her loved ones. It is an emblem of a mother's love.

Charity took one piece of the wilted white carnation and put it on her hair above her right ear. She opened her two arms wide, closed her eyes then turned around. She turned herself around in a whirling motion.

She imagined herself on top of a cloud, her feet resting on the soft cushion. Charity got dizzy and fell on the ground. She felt the quick beating of her heart.

Her eyes were closed. She breathed the cold air in and out of her lungs.

She was being cradled left and right, there was a slow rhythm. She took the white carnation from her hair and brought it towards her nose to smell the fragrance. It was heavenly.

The memory of her grandma Joan returned. The flower was a reminiscence of the old woman.

\*\*\*

Dawn, there was a heavy down pour of rain, the wind was blowing strong. Thunder roared with a deaf defying sound. The sky was filled with electrical charges as lightning struck.

Charity was crouching beside a huge garbage can that served as her refuge. She was seated under a plywood that covered the garbage can. The plywood was Charity's roof, but she was soaking wet. She was trembling with cold. Her fingers had creases. It was raining for almost an hour.

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

Charity moved her right hand towards her hair above her right ear. The wilted white carnation was still in place. She wanted the flower to stay intact to where she put it.

It kept pouring and Charity kept trembling. She saw something, moving towards her.

*A cat.*

It's a stray kitten, colored white but dirty and soaking wet. The kitten moved towards Charity seeking for company.

"Hi!" Charity greeted trying to smile. She was trembling in cold. "You can stay with me." Charity took the kitten embracing it. "I'll take care of you." Charity's tiny voiced said.

The kitten was gasping for air, fighting for life.

"Don't you worry." Charity covered the kitten with her two arms providing heat.

Charity took the white carnation from her hair and put it to the body of the white cat. She had a wilted white carnation and a white kitten, nice combination. Her dark red skin and burning green eyes did not blend well with the kitten and the flower.

The rain poured heavily, Charity bent her body tightly with the kitten on her chest to stimulate heat.

It will be difficult to sleep.

Hours passed.

Charity was sleeping, something leaped on her face. She opened her eyes. The sun was shining brightly.

Something leaped on her face again.

“Oh...hi...” Charity greeted the kitten. It was playing. “You woke me up.” Charity’s tiny voice said.

Charity sat on the ground and took the kitten.

The white kitten smiled to Charity.

“You know how to smile. You got lovely white teeth.”

The kitten smiled proud of its white teeth.

The kitten licked Charity on the face. The tongue was red and soft.

“You’re so cute.”

The kitten’s fur was already dry.

“You got lovely furs.”

Charity and the kitten was a contrast. The kitten was all white. Charity was dark red. The kitten had pearly white teeth. Charity’s gums and teeth were rotten.

Charity looked for the white carnation. She found it and put it back on her hair.

“I have a flower on my hair. It’s nice. Look and see. You’re so cute. What do I call you?” Charity thought fast, but can’t think of anything. She thought harder and harder.

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

She closed her eyes for minutes. Finally, she came up with something. “You’re so cute so yes... I think I’m gonna call you Cutie Pie. Right? Would you like me to call you Cutie Pie?”

The kitten licked Charity on the face.

“You like your name?”

The kitten kept licking.

“Yes you like it.”

Charity stood up and ran. The kitten ran after her.

“You like to play don’t you?”

Charity tumbled on the ground, Cutie Pie leaped on her. Charity rolled her body on the ground. Cutie Pie rolled over with her.

Charity and Cutie Pie played for hours. They never felt tired.

Charity now had company, a friend. They could stay together. She will take care of Cutie Pie. The kitten looked happy too. She kept smiling to Charity showing her pearly white teeth. Charity was amazed over the smiling kitten.

Charity embraced Cutie Pie tightly. The kitten closed her eyes and using her two forelegs embraced Charity back. Charity’s tattered dress was still wet and really smelly.

Charity and Cutie Pie grew hungry.

“Maybe you’re hungry I’m gonna feed you.” Charity told her white kitten.

Charity rummaged through garbage cans. Cutie Pie was behind her. While Charity was looking, the kitten was doing the same. Using its nose, smelling the garbage cans for left over.

The kitten found a friend. She felt secure with Charity.

Charity found left over foods. “Hey Cutie Pie, here, there’s something for us.”

Charity and Cutie Pie shared the left over foods. It’s not edible but it satisfied their stomach.

Charity and Cutie Pie ate fast. They were very hungry.

After eating, the two rested.

“You’re gonna stay with me. We’re gonna play everyday. Would that be okay?” Charity said.

Cutie Pie gave a big smile to Charity. Charity in turn gave Cutie Pie a kiss. “HMMMM you smell so good.”

Cutie Pie with her two forelegs embraced Charity.



14

Jane was driving an expensive van. This was the latest model of luxury vehicles equipped with amenities and comforts.

This van was personally handpicked by Denver. Her son saw the van in a car catalogue and pestered Jane endlessly until she finally gave in and bought the van. They already had several cars parked at the garage. However, Denver wanted another one.

This is one of Denver's demands that Jane yielded. For so many times, Jane promised herself never to surrender from her son's whims.

At first Jane refused. "We don't have money for the van."

"We do have money for sure."

“Where will I get the money?”

“I don’t know. I don’t care.”

“Denver I’m trying to save for your college education.”

“Then I won’t go to college.”

Denver locked himself inside the room refusing to eat. Denver knew that Jane was being irrational. He knew his mother was very rich as he heard from his neighbor buddies told to them by their parents.

Finally, just to have peace of mind. Jane bought the van. Denver was jumping for joy.

Jane refused to provide the van’s cost when asked by her colleagues.

“The price was just right.” Jane managed to say.

“But what was the price?” Several of her colleagues in the medical field asked.

“I told you it was just right.”

Denver made another demand. He wanted a car for himself, but it was impossible. At the age of fifteen he was not yet allowed to have a driver’s license. Denver could no longer wait. If given the chance, he was driving the van and the other cars if Jane was not present. Jane of course was aware of her son’s antics.

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

Jane brought Denver to school and was to go to the government hospital where she worked when she saw Charity at a distance carrying a dirty white kitten.

*It's the girl Charity.* Jane thought as she stopped the van to observe Charity. *She has a kitten?* Jane felt pity for the little girl but also felt a sense of repulsion. She wanted to bring Charity to the Children's Welfare Center. The center took care of lost kids. It was a place for stray children to find their biological parents or foster homes. If she brings Charity to the center, the other children might get scared. The big question is would a foster parent had the guts to take a horrible creature into their home?

Jane was disgusted to herself. She was passing judgment to an innocent child. Jane was highly educated, a charitable woman. She needed to extend understanding and compassion to the less fortunate.

Jane was to open the car's door to call Charity when she stared at the white seat cover. She really can't.

She drove straight to the government hospital where she worked.

During meal time, Jane took her packed lunch prepared by Emilia to eat but lost her appetite upon recalling the filthy child with an equally dirty kitten. She was getting annoyed at herself.

Hours passed. Jane had several patients until it was time to go home. She decided to pass by a church first to pray.

Jane was deeply religious. In times of crises, she sought spiritual guidance.

She made a vow, a promise, next time when she sees Charity. There would be no feeling of revulsion but rather compassion. The little girl needed shelter and care.

After coming to church, Jane felt peace.

She was happy when she arrived home.

“Hello Emilia.” Jane greeted Emilia upon seeing her at the living room area dusting the couch.

“Hi Dr. Sunshine. How’s your day?”

“Just fine. I have something to tell you.”

Jane related the incident.

Emilia listened in silence. She asked no question. Jane was talking. Emilia was listening.

Emilia also served as Dr. Sunshine’s confidante. There was strong bond between the two of them, a sisterly affection.

15

Pauline was studying in a county school. She was brought and fetched by the Ranger's car. Pauline had her own driver. During school hours, the car stayed at the school yard. Pauline kept the car keys with her. The driver was not allowed to drive the car, unless Pauline was with him. He had to walk back to the Ranger's mansion to report Pauline was already in school then walk back again to school to fetch Pauline.

The driver was a worker allowed to work half of the time compared to the others, half of the time he was Pauline's driver. There was no additional salary. However, it lessened the burden of doing back breaking work.

Pauline's school was surrounded by a working farm and organic gardens. The school land was donated by Pauline's paternal grandmother. It was a strategic maneuver. The

school children will learn to cultivate corn and fruit bearing plants, an early preparation.

The school was a thirty minute drive from the plantation. On foot, it would be two hours of walk. The children being poor were used to it. Some developed holes under their shoes.

Part of the children's daily chores aside from academic was gardening, planting of corns and fruit bearing trees. Children were excited in learning the basics. Some became experts as taught by their parents.

The school consisted of one old building. According to rumors this was also a donation from Pauline's paternal grandmother. During summer, the children were given an opportunity to plant trees and cultivate corns at the Rangers. In exchange of their hard work, they were paid and children being children were delighted.

"I earn something momma!"

"You might as well save your money for the rainy days."

"Yes I will."

"Good child."

Some parents were glad, others were dismayed.

"It's exploitation. The Rangers are exploiting everyone, men, women, children, everyone."

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

“We should not allow this to happen. Children should engage in games and fun, not exposed to back breaking work at the plantation.”

“To hell with the Rangers. How long are we gonna allow ourselves to be used? First was us, now our children.”

“We should do something about this.”

However, it was an option. Children were never forced. It was up for the parents if they preferred their children to stay home during summer or send them to the Rangers to earn meager.

The school’s curriculum aside from academics was athletics. Pauline was very active in the track and field and was a really fast runner. She could even outran some of the boys. During school competition, she always grabbed top medals.

The Rangers were proud of their little girl.

Louise developed Pauline’s talent when she noticed Pauline’s potential. At the early age of three, Pauline was showing interest in running.

“Grandma I wanna run.” Pauline often said.

“Oh my lovely Pauline. Sure you can.”

Pauline ran around the house daily under the guidance of Louise. The old lady was amused in watching. Pauline had endurance. This was good for her health.

Louise occasionally ran with Pauline but was not strong enough. She preferred walking. Louise was contented as Pauline sprinted around the huge villa. The old lady knew that Pauline was special.

Aside from athletics, Pauline excelled in academics. Each year she was on the honor roll. It was an added pride for Martin and Louise. The Ranger's living room area hung Pauline's various medals, numbers of which built up every year.

"My lovely Pauline, your grandpa and I are having a problem."

"What is it grandma?"

"Where do we put your medals? Look at the walls, it's full. For sure this year there will be some more."

"That is right Pauline. You're giving us a problem."

"Oh I'm so sorry grandma and grandpa."

"My dear child, what a proud headache you're giving us."

"But I'd rather have this kind of headache than a headache due to lost of earnings from our plantation."

"Oh me too, I preferred Pauline giving us the head ache with her medals in academics and athletics. It's more than welcome."

"Is that true grandma?"



“Oh yes it is.”

“You know Pauline, once you reached eighteen you’ll start receiving your share. Not all of it but little by little.” Martin said.

“Share of what Grandpa?”

“Your share of the fortune.”

“What fortune?”

“Our family fortune.”

“But I’m scared.”

“Scared? Scared of what?”

“I don’t want it.”

“You don’t want what?”

“I don’t want the share of fortune.”

“You don’t have to be scared. This will all be yours.” Martin reiterated.

“I don’t want it.”

“You have to start learning. I’ll teach you or just observe.” Louise stated.

Pauline was a witness of her grandparent’s ruthlessness. At an early age, she was taught never to feel compassion, to be cold and distant.

“They’re nothing. You have to remember that.” Louise often said.

“We are the gods here. We rule. We dictate. We are the law.”

“That is absolutely right. You must learn the trade, you must learn control. You must learn how to maneuver people to your advantage. Do not give them the chance to grow. It has to be just us, you, me and your grandpa.”

Pauline was absorbing the unending litany. She was not sure if it was right or wrong, it was told by her grandparents, it could be right. They are the laws. They are the rulers. Everything revolves just around the three of them.

Sometimes Pauline wanted to raise questions but what for. She was well fed. They had all the money, the house, although filthy, cars, the workers at their disposal.

\*\*\*

At school, Pauline was the favorite topic of her girl classmates.

“Pauline is strange.”

“She sure is.”

“She’s different.”

The girls were in their home economic class. They were busy knitting. They were allowed to choose whatever type

they wanted. It could be mittens, socks, scarf. Some were bold enough to knit shirts.

“She’s always alone.”

“She wants nobody with her.”

“She’s a rich kid. Her old folks don’t want her messin’ with nobodies like us.”

“But she’s one hell of a beauty.”

“Right.”

“Look at her deep blue eyes, her blond hair, her skin. She looked like a goddess.”

“And she’s damn rich.”

“Who cares about being a goddess and being rich if you got no friends with you.” Karen said.

“You’re just envious.”

“I am not.”

“Common Karen, you’re nothin’ compared to Pauline.”

“Fine, if I’m nothin’ compared to her. I’m not competin’ with Pauline. I’m not competin’ with anyone.” Karen’s eyebrows were raised towards her hairline.

Pauline was seated on one corner, alone, away from the others. She was knitting a scarf for her grandma Louise. She chose orange. Pauline knew that it was not good. However,

she's sure her grandmother would love it. Whatever Pauline did, it was always the best based on her grandmother's taste.

If she finished the scarf, Pauline planned to knit a sock for his grandfather. Martin requested for a brown color. Home economics was never an interest to Pauline. She was bored with the subject but managed to comply with all projects. Pauline would rather excel in athletics and even academics. These she liked so much.

The girls while knitting were taking glances at Pauline. They used yarns and knitting needles. Loops were pulled through each other as they were held on a needle until another loop was passed through them.

The girls were sharing murmured chitchats.

I think Pauline is hiding something.”

“Hidin’ what?”

“Something. I feel that she’s hiding something.” Karen was highly sociable. She could relate well with boys and girls, younger or older. She was the head of the rumor mongering club in school. Students and even teachers consult to Karen for the latest news. Karen was an expert. Her favorite subject was Pauline.

Karen raised her masterpiece. “What do you think?””

“It’s awesome.”

“So colorful.”

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

Karen was knitting a sweater, colored red, white and blue. Karen like Pauline also excelled in academics. However, unlike Pauline she was poor in athletics but very good in home economics class. She always got the highest grade. She was very artistic.

Pauline knew that the girls were talking and looking at her. However, she didn't care. She didn't socialize. During breaks, she stayed inside the car, until it's time to go back to class.

"I'm always watching Pauline." Karen said.

"Why?"

"I told you, she's keeping a secret."

"What is it?"

"That's why it's a secret, so we don't know what it is?"

"Be sure to tell us if you find out what it is."

"Don't worry. I'll share everything, all bits and pieces."

"We're countin' on you."

"You can always count on me."

16

Pauline's car was old provided by her grandmother's father. This was used by Martin for years and decided to give it to Pauline.

*I'm hungry, hope Grandma packed a real nice snack for me.*  
Pauline went inside her car, and locked it.

Pauline opened her lunch box and inside was lizards. Pauline took the lizards putting it inside her mouth then swallowed. Whenever Pauline was eating, she made sure the car's doors were locked.

The Rangers ate regular food. Lizards, cockroaches and small animals were exotic foods they gobbled occasionally. Pauline often had a chicken or ham sandwich she ate during breaks. Exotic foods she had them either every two weeks or even once a month. The Rangers were not too greedy with their luxury meals.

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

One morning, Pauline was in a hurry to go to school and forgot to take her breakfast. Break-time, Pauline went to her car only to find she forgot her lunch box.

The car was always parked hundreds of feet away from the school building. Pauline got no qualms in walking or running to and from the car, she was an athlete and enjoyed the perspiration and energy consumed.

This time she had a dilemma. She was so hungry. *What am I gonna do?*

Pauline went into the school canteen. However, did not have the appetite to take the foods served. She was used of her Grandmother packing the foods for her, either the regular foods or the exotic ones.

She decided to return to her car just to wait until the break was over.

Pauline was threading through the grassy lot. Her car was twenty feet away from her when she saw a salamander. Pauline salivated.

*The intestines would taste yummy for sure.*

The salamander was slender with eel like appearance. It was a foot in length, including the tail. The salamander was looking for food, unaware that another predator was lurking behind.

Pauline looked around. No one was in sight. Pauline jumped like a cat grabbing the salamander by the tail then she bit it on the neck. The salamander was caught by

surprise. It was looking for something to eat but ended up being a snack of a more intelligent predator.

Pauline crouched, hiding behind the car tearing the salamander's flesh by her teeth. She was so hungry. Her eyes rolled upward in ecstasy while gobbling the fresh flesh.

Pauline sensed footsteps. Someone was coming or a group of people were coming. Pauline saw an old newspaper and covered the salamander. She wiped her mouth with a handkerchief.

She stood up acting composed, saw her female classmates approaching. They were led by Karen.

Pauline and Karen's eyes met.

Pauline hated Karen. She hated her guts.

Pauline's classmates were intimidated of Pauline's stature in school. The Rangers were highly influential and respected. Pauline knew she was special. When she walked at the hallway, the students gave way as if she was a princess. Pauline always held her head high filled with pride, dignity and honor. Tall, blond, blue eyes, rich, athletic, member of the honor roll, Pauline possessed everything. Students were scared to approach more so talk to her.

However, not Karen, she was friendly and had a sense of confidence. Karen always initiated a conversation with Pauline. She was giving Pauline the signal she wanted to be her friend.



## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

“Pauline sweetheart, why don’t you join the choir? We need additional members. We’re gonna be conducting an audition.” Karen saw Pauline walking at the school hallway and approached her immediately.

Pauline shook her head.

“Common Pauline, it’s gonna be lots of fun. There’s gonna be lots of singing. I know you’re busy with your academics and athletics but for sure you can find time for the choir don’t you?”

Pauline kept walking and Karen kept following.

“Common Pauline. You’ll gonna love it so much.”

Pauline ignored Karen.

“Pauline?”

Pauline walked faster and Karen was left behind.

Karen tried to find ways in eliciting Pauline’s attention, especially during home economics class.

“Hi Pauline, that’s a lovely scarf you’re knitting. Would you teach me how to do it?”

“No.”

“Why not?”

“I just don’t want to.” Pauline stated directly. She was seated on a chair, stood up then left Karen.

“She’s a real bitch.” Karen told her girl classmates.

“Why do you have to mess with her? Leave her alone.”

“Yeah, she doesn’t like you. She doesn’t like us. She doesn’t like anyone.”

“I won’t stop until I know her secret.”

“There you go again.”

“I could sense something nasty.”

“You don’t need to sense something nasty. Pauline and her old folks are real nasty.”

“It’s more than that.”

“You stop that. You’re getting yourself into trouble.”

“No I’m not.”

“Karen, they’re rich. They’re powerful. What can you do?”

“Just wait and see.”

“Stop being foolish.”

“I’m not being foolish.”

“Alright we won’t argue with you.”

Karen was not to give up. She wanted to prove something.

Now, Pauline was trapped.

“Hi Pauline. What are you doin’ out here?” Karen asked in a friendly tone. Her facial expression failed to deny she was suspicious.

“Nothing.” Pauline turned her back from the rumor mongering youngsters. She was really hungry. She could not get inside the car. The young gossipers stood next to the parked car waiting.

“What’s troublin’ you Pauline? Is there somethin’ we can do?” Karen asked. Her eyes were looking at the newspaper Pauline was holding.

“Nothing!” Pauline’s knees were trembling in hunger.

Pauline remembered the school storage room. Surely, nobody was in there. It was prohibited to students. Only the school janitor had access.

Pauline left fast. She walked briskly away from her classmates until she reached the old school building. She was oblivious of the other students at the hallway and went straight to the storage room.

Pauline had another dilemma. The storage room could be locked. The janitor, a seventy year old man always locked it. When Pauline opened the knob of the storage room it was open. This was one of the rare occasions when the old janitor, Mr. de Mesa forgot to lock it. He was to go out of the storage room when called by one of the teachers to repair a broken mirror at the hallway.

The storage room consisted of the garden tools used by teachers and students for planting and gardening. It also contained materials used for cleaning the school.

The janitor, Mr. de Mesa was working in the school for fifty years. He started with his janitorial job when he was twenty years old. He raised his family from his meager salary.

The Rangers was convincing the janitor to work at the plantation, but he refused. Mr. de Mesa was hard working, no qualms with his job or whatever duty assigned to him. The Rangers wanted him.

“You work at the plantation.” Martin offered so many times in the past. Pauline was not even born yet.

“I can’t leave the school. I’ve been part of it for so many years.

“You’ll earn better working with us.”

“It’s not the earnings. It’s just that I love the school so much.”

“If you change your mind, just come see me.”

“I’m flattered by your offer but thank you Mr. Ranger. I can’t imagine myself working outside the school. The kids, they need me.”

The janitor, Mr. de Mesa was a respectable man. He was honest and well liked by everyone, teachers, students, even the Rangers. Mr. de Mesa preferred to clean the rooms, mopped the floors and performed other janitorial duties

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

rather than planting and harvesting corns and fruit bearing trees. It gave him joy and satisfaction when he saw the kids playing and having fun. He never felt old. The children were giving back his youth. He derived energy from them.

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Pauline got inside the storage room, locked the door and got busy with the salamander. It was juicy and fresh emitting a certain musky scent. Pauline felt she was ready to die. She never expected the salamander to taste so good. She only wanted to satisfy her hunger, yet it was beyond her salivary expectation.

“Oh God, oh God.” Pauline kept chewing and chewing and chewing.

Pauline was unaware that Karen and the rest of her gossip gang followed. They were now standing outside the storage room.

“Pauline is so mysterious. I’m real curious.” Karen said.

The girls were talking in whispers to avoid attracting attention. Some students were looking at them who in turn became curious.

“That’s right. She was even carryin’ a newspaper.”

“And somethin’ was wrapped in it.”

“What could it be?” Karen asked.

The more Karen and the rest of her gossip gang talked in whispers, the more curious the onlookers became. Students were crowding around them. Karen and her gossip gang lowered down their voices. They covered their mouths with their hands as they talked to each other.

The students came closer to hear the conversation.

“Go away!” Karen said.

“What is it Karen?”

“We can’t tell you.”

“Common what is it?”

“I told you we can’t. Leave us alone. Go away! This is just between us.” Karen was very stubborn. The student’s begged for her to share the secret, Karen was obstinate. She put her two arms around her chest acting really cool.

“Karen what do we do now?” One member of the gossip gang asked.

“Let’s stay here.”

“But we’re surrounded.”

“I don’t care.”

“The teachers will get mad.”

“Let’s wait and see.”

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

The students kept begging. “Common Karen, tell us what it is.”

“I told you we can’t. It’s just between us.”

It was getting hot. The students circled around Karen and her gossip gang.

Karen saw one girl with a fan.

“May I borrow your fan?” Karen asked.

“Yeah sure. Here.” The girl gave the fan.

Karen fanned herself. “It’s so hot in here.” Karen felt she was in full control. Everyone’s attention was on her. This was what she liked the most.

A teacher saw the commotion and approached. “What’s happenin’? What’s in here?”

The students pointed at Karen.

“Karen has a secret and she didn’t want to share it.”

“Karen what is this?” The teacher asked.

This was the right opportunity. Karen didn’t want to divulge anything to the students. She wanted the school authorities to know.

“What is it Karen?” The teacher asked again.

“There!” Karen pointed to the storage room.

“What’s there?”

“Someone is inside.”

“Who?”

“You might as well go check.”

The teacher turned the knob of the storage room. “It’s locked.”

“Mr. de Mesa has the key.” Karen was aware the old janitor was the one and only person allowed to get inside the storage room. He was the keeper and the custodian.

The old janitor was just at the opposite end of the hallway in the middle of something.

The teacher waved her hand and called the janitor. “Mr. de Mesa, could you help us please.”

The seventy year old man ran. He was still strong despite the age. He often joked he could outrun the school athletes at the track and field events.

“Could you open this please? It’s locked.” The teacher asked with respect.

At the belt of Mr. de Mesa was a long chain with keys. One was for the storage room. He opened the door. It was dark inside. Attached to his belt was a flashlight.



## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

As a janitor, the old man was always prepared. Flashlight, keys, hand knife was part of the tools attached to his belt for emergency purposes.

Students and teachers went inside. The storage room was a bit large. The entire measurement was almost half of an ordinary classroom.

Mr. de Mesa used the flashlight.

Pauline was caught by surprise. There she was, slumped on one corner of the stockroom. The salamander was dangling from her mouth, half consumed.

“Oh my God. Pauline is eating a large lizard.” Karen screamed.

“She’s a cannibal!”

There was a stampede, the students and teachers ran towards the door that slammed closed as bodies were held against it, they were trapped.

“Open the door! Let us out of here!” The teacher shrieked on top of her lungs.

“Open the door please.”

Pauline was in shock unable to move.

“Open up please!”

The female students were already crying.

“Let us out of here!”

“Okay let’s be calm about this matter. Please let’s all stay calm.” Mr. de Mesa said slowly.

Student and teachers listened as the old janitor talked. Everyone was perspiring. It was so hot inside the storage room.

The old janitor asked those who were slammed against the door to move their bodies away from it.

“Okay, slowly, slowly.” Mr. de Mesa turned the knob and opened the door.

Everyone ran out fast.

“Pauline is eating a salamander!” Karen screamed.

“She’s a cannibal!” A girl said.

“Pauline is eating a salamander!” Karen screamed again.

“She’s a cannibal!” The girl repeated.

“Pauline is eating a salamander! She’s a cannibal!” Karen went from one room to another repeating her statement over and over again.

The school was in chaos. Those inside the classroom went out to investigate. Some students went home. They were frightened. The others stayed out of curiosity. The school principal decided to suspend all classes.

17

Ms. Veronica Smith, the school principal was an old spinster. She was working with the school for almost thirty years. She came from a poor family but managed to get herself a good education by working while studying. Through hard work, she became a teacher until years and years of teaching, she became the school principal. She decided to stay single, remained unattached. Just like the old janitor, she enjoyed the company of the school children. She was approachable, although at times, boredom was getting into her system.

Her earnings as the school principal were enough to sustain her daily and monthly expenses. Being old, she thought she deserved a little luxury. However, she managed to console herself. This was her destiny.

The school principal talked with Pauline's driver.

“Please tell Mr. and Mrs. Ranger to come and see me.”

“Yes ma’am.” The driver did not ask what it was. He was aware of the incident, related by one of the parents. He did not say anything to the Rangers. He merely stated the principal wanted to see them.

The Rangers went immediately. If it was regarding Pauline’s schooling, they never hesitated. They very well knew the importance of education.

“Oh my God, we’re so ashamed.” Louise said.

Louise and Martin were at the principal’s office. Louise could not look at the principal directly into the eyes. She tried to cover her face by her two hands. Louise was deeply embarrassed.

“We never expected that Pauline will bring her most peculiar habit here in school.” Martin’s eyes were cast down to the floor. He felt like choking when he was talking.

“Peculiar habit? What peculiar habit?” Veronica Smith asked.

“Pauline loves exotic dishes.” Louise felt like disappearing in front of the principal. She was not used of getting interrogated. Being the most powerful woman in the land, she should be doing the interrogation.

“Exotic dishes?”

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

“Exotic dishes like cockroach, lizard and other small animals. It started when she was only a toddler.” Louise was already trembling. Tears rolled down her rosy cheeks.

Louise despite her old age was still stunning. She possessed a classic beauty, her eyes blue and deep seated. Her nose was pointed and her hair blond. Her facial structure was like a statue created by an artist. Pauline inherited her grandmother’s physical attributes.

Martin was far from handsome. He was tall and thin with a moustache. He got thick lips but with a deep baritone voice. This was his asset, his voice. He was good in closing business transactions. He was good in maneuvering people to his advantage, to entice them in buying the Ranger’s products. He used his good business acumen in accumulating more and more wealth every year.

The Rangers were the most powerful couple in this side of the country. Their stiff competitors had closed down as they failed to level themselves with the production and quality of the Ranger’s product.

The Rangers may be filthy in managing their house, but they were extra smart in managing and manipulating people to gain money.

Now, they were deeply embarrassed. They seemed at the mercy of the school administrator.

“Oh my God.” The principal placed her right hand against her chest and gasped for fresh air. “Why don’t you bring her to a doctor? A specialist who could help her.”

“We already brought her to different doctors. But they all said Pauline’s case was incurable.”

Martin and Louise were fast thinkers. They knew exactly what alibis to state during this kind of situations.

“Oh Christ, poor little girl.” The principal felt pity. She had a soft heart for children, especially the helpless. Born of poverty, Veronica Smith treated all children as equals. Pauline was rich while her school mates were poor, but she saw them as all the same.

“But Pauline is such a wonderful child. Isn’t she? She never cause any trouble nor hurt anyone here in school.” Louise said.

“Oh yes she is. She’s wonderful. She’s not greedy, she shares whatever she has to others.” The principal was playing cool. Pauline was notorious for being self centered, insensitive and greedy. She got not one friend.

“We sure hope you won’t judge her.” Louise’s tears fell on the floor.

“Nobody’s judging her. That’s for sure.” Veronica stood up from her seat and gave Louise her hankie. “Here, wipe the tears from your face.”

“Oh God, have mercy on us.”

A pool of tears was on the floor coming from Louise Ranger’s eyes.

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

“Common you take this hanky and wipe the tears from your face.” The principal said.

Louise took the hankie wiping her tears but continued sobbing. She was heartbroken. The recent event put the Rangers name in embarrassment. “We’re worried. The kids might call her names. Make fun of her.”

“Aaahhh, no, no, no. It won’t happen, that I promise. Whoever I caught making fun of Pauline will be reprimanded.”

“Oh thank you so much. Thank you so much for being so kind.” Louise gave back the handkerchief to Veronica. It was soaking wet.

“Oh that’s fine. The main reason why I asked you to come was to inform you regarding the incident.”

“We’re so embarrassed. We truly are.”

“You don’t have to. Now that you told me about Pauline, about her illness. I understand. Poor girl, I pity her so much”

“Thank you so much once again for understanding.”

“We’ll that’s fine.”

Louise shook the hand of the principal in deep gratitude.

Martin and Louise excused themselves from the principal and talked with each other in murmurs. The principal observed for minutes.

Afterwards, Louise turned to the principal. "We have something for the school."

"What is it?"

"Just a small amount, a donation." Louise took huge sums of money from her large bag.

"Oh please no. Don't bother." Veronica's face flushed red.

"It's for the school, for the children. Please accept our small help." Martin said.

"Oh I can't take that, please no!" Veronica could not even look at the face of Louise and Martin.

"Common it's for the school, for any repairs and renovations."

"But I can't take it."

"Why not?"

"I really can't."

"Common." Louise Rangers kept pushing the large sums of money to Veronica Smith.



## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

“Okay if you insist.” The principal took the money, opened her drawer and put it inside.

“But we also have something for you.” Louise took another huge sum of money.

“Oh no please. This is really embarrassing.” Veronica’s face flushed red once more. It’s darker this time. She felt she was giving up her integrity. She was an honorable woman. She took no bribery from anyone.

“We are the ones embarrassed because of what happened. Common you take it.” Louise stood from her chair. She gave comfort to the principal by patting her back.

“Oh my goodness.”

“Common you take this please.” Louise begged as she extends the huge sum of money against the face of the principal.

“Oh...” The principal grabbed the money by her two hands and hid it fast inside her drawer.

Louise and Martin were glad. Veronica Smith was a kind hearted woman. She did not let them down.

“We’d better get going.” Martin said.

“Thanks so much for your understanding and compassion.” Louise embraced Veronica and Veronica embraced back. They held each other’s hand tightly.

Martin and Louise left.

The principal opened her drawer. She counted the money and her eyes sparkled.

Veronica's imagination ran freely.

She was seated on a luxurious couch. Her shoulder covered with mink coat, her two feet being massaged by a servant. Another servant was busy feeding her with various fruits. Her right hand was holding a glass of expensive wine.

She could connect with the Rangers, especially with Louise. Louise could be a good friend. Veronica knew Louise was hated by the people under her domain. She heard grievances from parents working with the Rangers. Veronica felt she was lucky. The Rangers approached her.

Veronica closed the drawer. There was a change of plan. There was no need to give anything for school repairs. She might as well keep all the money for herself.

\*\*\*

The children were having fun. They were singing a nice song with the melody of *Home on the Range*.

“Oh my dear Pauline, you're a

carnival girl. You're an

eater of salamander.

The lizard you chew,

the cockroach you roast

ANGEL OF CHRIST?

when the sky is not cloudy

all day.

Home home on the range,

where Pauline and the

antelopes play.

Where Pauline is heard

a discouraging word and,

Pauline is not hungry

all day.”

The school boys and girls were singing in unison. They're in a chorus. Someone was even standing in the middle conducting the orchestra.

“Home home on the range,

where Pauline and the

antelopes play.

Where Pauline is heard

a discouraging word and,

Pauline is not hungry

all day.”

Pauline broke down in one corner and cried.

“Stop it, all of you! Would you like to be suspended?” Veronica Smith ran to the rescue. She was holding a stick and looking at the children sternly. She was giving the message that she was serious with her threat.

The children stopped. The children were obedient and abided by the rules dictated by the school authorities.

“Common Pauline, stop crying.” The principal gave Pauline comfort and a hug. She was like a grandmother to a grieving young granddaughter.

As soon as the principal turned her back and left, the fun resumed.

“Home home on the range,

where Pauline and the

antelopes play.

Where Pauline is heard

a discouraging word and

Pauline is not hungry

all day.”

It was dinner time at the Ranger’s home, Pauline and her grandparents were eating their regular food, chicken with mashed potatoes and sour cream. Martin was thrilled over

the possible income the Ranger's agricultural land would generate after the harvest.

Louise was so excited. They were talking about money, and this was the one topic Martin and Louise were very fond of.

Pauline was not eating. She did not have the appetite. She was merely staring at the plate with chicken and mashed potatoes in front of her.

Louise noticed her granddaughter. "My lovely Pauline. Why ain't you eating? Don't you like the food?"

With that, Pauline took the fork and made a quick stab on the chicken. She pretended she loved the food so much and ate with gusto.

Louise felt something strange about her grand daughter but shrugged it off for the meantime. She was too excited for the upcoming harvest. She listened to what Martin was saying.

Pauline was depressed but did not relate the school mockery. She kept it to herself. She did not have any plan of telling her grandparents.

The next morning, Pauline was walking on the school hallway. The choir members headed by Karen were having a practice. The song Home on the Range was played on the piano. First it was only the melody. Then the choir members started singing.

"Oh my dear Pauline, you're a

Jojo Regalado

carnival girl. You're an

eater of salamander.

The lizard you chew,

the cockroach you roast

when the sky is not cloudy

all day.

Home home on the range,

where Pauline and the

antelopes play.

Where Pauline is heard

a discouraging word and,

Pauline is not hungry

all day.”

The player on the piano made the melody faster. The choir members headed by Karen in turn sang faster until it became comical. They all burst laughing.

Pauline ran fast but where was she going.

Finally, it became unbearable. From all corners of the school Pauline was the poke of fun. Boys, girls, even the old janitor Mr. De Mesa was laughing with them.

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

Veronica Smith failed to do anything. She was threatening the children to be suspended, but it was a mere threat. The children stopped when the principal was around, as soon as she turned her back, the mockery resumed. Veronica just feigned deafness when the children made fun of Pauline.

One night after dinner, Martin, Louise and Pauline were all resting on the couch at the living room, Pauline told her grandparents.

Martin and Louise were mad as hell.

“Just ignore them, they’re filthy scum. The kids at your school, they’re parents are mere workers. Most kids even go to school with holes on their shoes.” Martin said.

“The parents of the filthy scum working in our plantation, we might as well fire them, so they’ll end up with nothing to eat.” Louise Suggested.

Martin Rangers thought fast. “No... no... we can’t do that. It might get worst. The kids might hurt Pauline.”

Martin approached Pauline and held her face with his two hands. “Pauline, you listen to me. What you have to do is hold your head up high. Ignore the taunting, don’t let yourself be affected. Those kids are poor, low class, dirty. You are way above them. Put that inside your head. Do you understand?”

Pauline was listening.

“I said do you understand. I want your answer.”

“Yes grandpa.”

The old man indoctrinated Pauline for an hour. Louise did not say anything. She agreed to every word Martin said.

That night before going to sleep, Pauline was lying on the bed internalizing every word her grandfather said. She was way above her school mates. The Rangers were the most powerful family at this side of the county. She needed to be treated with respect.

Going to school the following morning, Pauline held her head high filled with pride and confidence.

There was the taunting.

“Home home on the range,

where Pauline and the

antelopes play...”

A group of boys were singing as Pauline walked on the hallway. Pauline stopped and approached the biggest boy of the group. Pauline gave the boy a big hard slap on the face. Everyone was stunned.

The boy raised his fist and was about to punch Pauline on the face.

“Go on! You’re gonna punch me? You hurt me and you’re gonna regret that for sure. That I promise.” Pauline threatened. She looked at the boy straight on the eye.



## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

The raised fist withdrew slowly down. The boy bowed his head in surrender.

Pauline looked at each of the boys straight in the eyes with an expression of deep hatred. One by one, the boys walked away from Pauline.

Pauline was triumphant and gained more confidence. She slapped and punched. She kicked and scratched every boy and girl who mocked her.

Pauline and Karen were engaged in a cat fight. Pauline heard Karen mentioned *carnival girl*. Without a word, Pauline walked towards Karen, slapped her, pulled her hair and scratched her on the face.

“Get away from me.” Karen pleaded.

Karen was lying on the ground, and Pauline was on top of her pulling her hair.

“Help me. Somebody help me.”

Not one student helped. Karen did not have the chance. Pauline was strong being athletic. Karen was overpowered.

The old janitor, Mr. de Mesa finally came and pulled Pauline away from Karen.

Karen’s right arm was almost dislocated from the joint. Her hair was disheveled, her dress torn. There were scratches on her face.

“You want some more. You want some more?!” Pauline jumped towards Karen and slapped her hard on the face.

“Common Pauline you stop it.” Mr. de Mesa, the old janitor pulled Pauline once again away from Karen.

Pauline kicked Karen on the abdomen. Karen cringed on the ground. She was crying unable to fight back. The school children were just watching. Not one, even the members of Karen’s gossip gang dared to help.

“Pauline would you stop, please.” The old janitor pleaded.

Pauline left.

With that, nobody bothered Pauline, not one uttered a single word of mockery. If she was not around, the children engaged in murmured talks. If she was present, everyone was silent. There were only glances. The message was clear and simple. Leave Pauline alone.

Pauline told her recent triumph to her grandparents.

“I told you, I told you. I was right. We’re so proud of you.”

“Show them who you are. Prove yourself.”

“It was shown and proven grandma.”

“Those worthless creatures, they’re nothing.”

It was a sweet victory for the Rangers.

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

Pauline was now brave enough to eat live animals in front of the kids in school.

“What are you eatin’ Pauline?” A young girl asked.

Pauline was sitting beside the young girl on the school bench. Pauline opened her lunch box to show her food.

“What is that?”

“White rats.” Pauline took one rat and swallowed the small animal alive. She took another one from her lunch box. “You want some.”

“No. I don’t eat rat.” The girl refused.

“You have to taste it. It’s very good. Common look.” Pauline swallowed another.

The girl got scared and ran.

The parents were now complaining.

“My little girl wouldn’t go to school no more.”

“The children are afraid of Pauline.”

“They were thinkin’ Pauline might eat them.”

“Pauline should be stopped coming to school. She might as well be taken to the carnival, where she rightfully belongs.”

The principal’s office got filled with complaints. Veronica Smith refused to listen. The Rangers were

extremely powerful. Huge sums kept pouring into the school treasury box in the form of donations. The money was kept by Veronica Smith to herself for safekeeping. She was becoming rich.

“You got yourself a nice ring Ms. Smith.” Mr. de Mesa complimented.

“Well, it’s gold.” Veronica was proud.

“Could be expensive.”

“It is. But it was an old ring, given to me by my mother when I was still a young lady.” Veronica stated.

Aside from the golden ring, there were expensive necklace and other jewelry.

The parents were helpless.

18

It's Louise Ranger's Birthday. During this occasion, the celebration was only between Martin, Louise and Pauline. They didn't invite anyone. This was a special event. Martin, Louise and Pauline were the only people deserving enjoyment of such occasion.

Martin was getting bored.

"We've already tasted all kinds of animals. I'm sick of it."

"Of course we didn't. We haven't tasted lions, tigers or even elephants."

"I got no intention of eating them. What I meant was I'm sick of rats, dogs, cats." Martin was contemplating. "I want something different." Martin wanted something new, something more exotic.

“What is it?” Louise’s heart was pumping wildly, she was having a hint. “What is it?”

“I want to eat human flesh.”

“What?”

“I said I want to eat human flesh.”

“Are you mad?”

“No I’m not. I really want human flesh.”

Louise was uneasy. “Please stop it. You’re makin’ me starve.” Saliva drooled from Louise’s mouth.

“Just what I thought, you want it yourself. And since it’s your birthday, I gotta’ surprise for you.”

Louise whole body was trembling. Perspiration appeared on her forehead. Her hands were cold.

Martin took Louise and Pauline, inside an empty room. On one corner was a male worker, tied up unconscious.

“What happened to Oscar?” Louise asked.

“He’s dead drunk. I gave him two bottles of Tequila.

Oscar was a forty five year old worker who loved all kinds of alcohol. He was a drifter and found work at the Ranger’s plantation. He was working with the Rangers for more than five years. He was a well known drunkard and

slept anywhere when he lost consciousness. At times he even came to the plantation drunk.

He loved to socialize with the Rangers despite being rebuffed so many times. Louise said he was low class, just like the others. However, Oscar never gave up. He tried to elicit the attention of the Rangers by pretending to be a real hard worker if they were around. He tried to approach them, bad mouthing other workers and telling the Rangers which among the workers were against their policies. However, the Rangers would not hear any of his tattletales. The Rangers preferred to be with themselves, especially Louise. An association with any of the workers meant degrading themselves into the levels of the destitute.

Martin talked with Oscar.

“You’re very hard-working.”

“Yes I do Mr. Ranger. I’m glad you noticed.”

“I like your attitude, your work ethics.”

“I do have a good attitude. Just tell me what to do. I’ll follow.”

“Glad to hear that.”

“Is there anything I can do for you Mr. Ranger?”

“I have a bottle of tequila. Would you like to drink with me?”

Oscar was wide eyed. This was the opportunity he had been waiting. This could be a promotion. He's a drunk and a desperate man. If he associates himself with the plantation owners, his rank will ascend and advance a little.

A date was set for Oscar to come to the Ranger's house. It was the same date of Louise's birthday.

Oscar was sent to an empty room. He was handed the bottle of tequila.

"Its time for us to drink Mr. Ranger."

"You're goin' to drink all by yourself."

"But I can't take this bottle all by myself." Oscar wanted to drink with Martin Ranger. He had lots of stories to tell. He also wanted to learn something from the owner, some tactics regarding business. Oscar was ambitious. He wanted to move upward. "Mr. Ranger..."

"Call me Martin."

"Okay Martin, buddy. Let's drink this together. I can't do this all by myself."

"Sure you can. Don't you." Martin was firm.

"Alright." Oscar was frustrated. He got no choice. The big boss told him to drink the bottle of tequila all by himself. Whatever he was told, he will follow.

Martin turned his back to leave.



ANGEL OF CHRIST?

“Hey buddy. Don’t leave me.”

“I’ll be back. But enjoy. I want you to drink the whole bottle.”

Martin left.

Oscar sat on the floor, consumed the whole bottle of tequila in less than an hour.

Martin came back to check. “I am impressed?”

“What now buddy?” Oscar was feeling drowsy.

“I said I am impressed. No single drop was left.” Martin inverted the bottle.

Oscar was proud of the compliment.

“With that, you got yourself a gift.”

“What is it?”

“Another bottle of tequila.”

“Oh thank you, thank you Martin, you’re a real nice friend.”

“You’re absolutely right. I am your friend.

“I was suspicious of that.”

“Suspicious of what?”

“Suspicious that you wanted me to be your friend.”

“You are absolutely right again my friend.”

Oscar took the bottle.

This time Martin did not leave. He just observed Oscar taking gulps and gulps of Tequila. Oscar was very loquacious. He got so many stories to share with Mr. Ranger.

“I’m so glad... over this wonderful... gift Martin Ranger. I... dreamt of coming... eer to your huge... awws... but it only... now that... it hap...pening.” Oscar’s sentence was cut into phrases. Some words were slurred and incorrect. He was having a hard time talking. He saw Martin Ranger standing in front of him. However, there were two Martin Ranger. His big boss became two persons. “Ei... which... of one of... you is Mar...tin? There’s... two... Mar... tin...”

Martin was not talking just observing, listening to Oscar.

Minutes after, Oscar was in deep slumber and was snoring loud.

The gift for Oscar was over, now the birthday gift for Louise.

“What are you goin’ to do?” Louise asked.

Martin took a double bladed carving knife.

“Martin, whatever it is. I forbid it.” Louise was scared, she knew Martin’s plan. She needed to stop him.

“Please grandpa. Don’t.” Pauline too was scared.

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

“Animals are just fine. They’re just animals.” Louise pleaded with tears in her eyes.

Martin stabbed Oscar on the chest.

“Martin!” “Grandpa!” Louise and Pauline screamed in unison.

Louise could barely look. She covered her eyes with her two hands. However, she peeped at the spaces between her fingers. She was curious to what Martin was doing.

Martin pushed the dagger deeply downward to the navel. Martin took Oscar’s heart dripping with blood.

Martin wolfed down the fresh heart.

Louise and Pauline were wide eyed in horror.

Martin took Oscar’s liver giving it to Louise. “Eat it!”

“No!” Louise refused.

“I said eat!”

“I said no!”

“Common!” Martin was forceful.

“Please don’t push me. I wouldn’t dare.” Louise moved her mouth away.

Martin held Louise’s head tightly with his left hand. His right hand was holding the fresh liver forcing it to Louise’s tightly closed mouth.

The fresh odor coming from the liver was unbearable, unbearable for Louise not to eat it. She suddenly maneuvered her head towards the liver and attacked the fresh organ. Louise emitted the sound of a roaring engine as she ate the liver in hunger. “Oh Martin, Oh Martin, it tastes so good! It’s so goood.” Louise ate the whole liver.

“You left nothin’ for Pauline.” Martin said.

“Oh I forgot.” Louise said. “I’m so sorry my lovely Pauline. Anyway it’s my birthday so you have to forgive me.”

“You’re so greedy!” Martin carved a small flesh from Oscar’s face then gave it Pauline. “Chew it!”

“I don’t want grandpa.”

“You chew it like bubble gum.”

“I don’t want it, I told you grandpa.”

“And why not?”

“I don’t want to eat human flesh.”

“Common Pauline you try it. It tastes so damn good.” Louise gave the assurance. She was wiping her mouth of the liver’s blood.

“No!” Pauline ran from the room.

Pauline ran outside the huge house. She ran and ran until she was far away from the villa.

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

A month passed. Martin, Louise and Pauline did not discuss the incident. They went back to eat regular foods. They're normal people Martin always said.

One night, Louise was looking for Pauline. "Now where's my lovely Pauline?"

Louise searched all the rooms of the huge house until she found Pauline at the basement. Louise smiled to herself and called her husband.

Martin was himself glad.

"Look at our lovely Pauline. She's so busy." Louise said.

Pauline was slouched on the floor eating the liver of an infant unaware of her grandparent's presence. Pauline was almost choking in ecstasy over the sweet taste of the liver. Blood was oozing from her mouth.

"Now Pauline, you damn little girl." Martin teased his grand daughter.

Pauline was embarrassed. She saw her grand parents standing in front of her. She stopped eating.

"Oh no. Don't stop. Just keep eatin' until you're full." Louise said.

"Where did you get the baby?" Martin said.

Pauline was blushing.

“Common Pauline, we keep no secret here. Where did you get the baby?” Martin sounded very fatherly, he wanted to communicate to his grand daughter, the act was normal. “Where did you get it Pauline?”

“I stole it.”

“Where?”

“I saw a woman. She’s the wife of a worker. She just gave birth. When I got the chance, I stole the baby?”

“What a smart move. You’re very good. Bravo! Magnifico!” Martin applauded. He was very proud. This was another victory for the Rangers. This only showed that Pauline was becoming a clever hunter, fast and full of cunning.

Louise was troubled. “Martin, what if they found out?”

“Found what?”

“Our secret. What if the workers discover our secret?”

“No they won’t.”

“What do you mean they won’t.”

“I don’t care. We’re rich. We’re powerful. We can do whatever we want. Nobody could stop us.” Martin felt like a god.

“I’m just scared.”

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

“You don’t have to be scared. We are the rulers and we are the law.”

“I know we are but I’m still scared.”

19

At the slum area, the self proclaimed Bela Lugosi was suffering from asthma. A wheezing sound was coming from his lungs. He was fighting for his life. He was merely waiting for the time for him to bid farewell.

Bela was alone living in the small shanty. A medicine was provided courtesy of Sunshine Charity, but it was not enough to sustain the old man's medication in case of an attack.

He was missing the taste of his friend, the heavy weight lady's black coffee. It had been days when he visited and got his free ration. Bela could not survive without coffee. It served as his fuel. It was the source of his energy. The main problem, he got no money for coffee.

Now he was having an attack of asthma.



## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

Bela prayed. “Oh God, please forgive me for the sins I’ve done. Do not forsake me, bring me to your kingdom, I wanna go to heaven. And be sure you have coffee in heaven. I can’t last long without coffee. Black would do.”

Bela was lying on a mat. He was massaging his chest as he kept breathing in and out of air.

The air at the slum area was obnoxious. Tons of garbage emitted a very bad odor worsening the condition of the old man.

Bela kept praying when he became wide eyed in horror.

“I’m in hell!”

The old man saw a small demon like creature approaching slowly.

“Get away. Oh, please get away from me.”

Charity moved slowly towards the dying old man. She put her small hand on Bela’s chest and massaged it.

“Go away please. God please do not forsake me.” The old man resisted but Charity kept massaging his chest.

Bela Lugosi gathered all his strength and pushed Charity. He got hold of a drinking glass beside him and threw it to Charity.

The ugly girl left carrying Cutie Pie with her.

The old man was scared and lost consciousness.

Hours passed. Bela regained consciousness. He made the sign of the cross.

“Oh my God, what a nightmare.” The old man tried to recall from his memory. “I had a dream. A devil child paid me a visit and touched my chest.”

Bela breathed in and out. He was no longer gasping for air. He was feeling strong. He stood up then jumped up and down. His energy was recharged.

“Hey I feel so strong. I feel so good. The child devil in my dream made me well.” Bela kept jumping up and down.

Bela went out of the house and ran towards the shanty of his heavy weight lady friend. Surely, she missed him. He missed her stories. And of course, he missed her free black coffee.

The heavy weight lady was cooking when Bela arrived.

“Where have you been?” The heavy weight lady asked.

Bela related the incident. It made no sense to the heavy weight lady. She gave Bela his black coffee. Bela Lugosi enjoyed the bitter taste and aroma.

20

It had been five years when Charity was thrown from the church tower by her mother Meg. Her two palms were wounded on the Crown of Thorns of the Black Crucified Christ. People on the procession were frightened and ran away.

The infant Charity was left crying on the ground.

An old blind woman Joan was walking using her cane that served as her guide, so she will not stumble. Joan was seventy five years old, living on the street.

Joan heard a peculiar sound. "What was that?" The sound was hoarse. Joan listened intently. "That's the sound of a crying baby."

Joan using her cane moved to where the sound was coming until she reached where Charity was lying. Joan bent down slowly and felt the coarse body of the infant. “Lord have mercy, it’s a baby. Where’s your mother? Why did she leave you here?”

Joan took the baby. She felt the coarse body but never felt scared. She was blind and failed to see the gruesome appearance.

Charity’s mother Meg was still confused. After she threw her baby, she went down the church tower and walked for hours. She saw a river. She jumped and drowned herself.

Grandma Joan was happy. “God is so wonderful. He gave me a gift, a baby I could take care. What name shall I call you my child? I can’t think of a name.” Grandma Joan thought for days, but she can’t think of anything. She just decided to call the baby “My Child”, since the baby was already hers.

A month passed when something flickered in Joan’s mind. “Wait I know. God was charitable by giving me a gift. I’m gonna call you Charity. You are a charity from God. I love you my Charity.”

Grandma Joan took good care of Charity. Years passed one, two and three. The lives of Grandma Joan and Charity were filled with joy and love. They were extremely poor, penniless. They survived through the left over foods they got from garbage. However, it didn’t matter. They were happy and pleased with what they had.

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

The gruesome features of Charity became more evident. She was taunted by the homeless.

“Monster! Monster!”

Grandma Joan never hesitated to fight to protect her child. She held her cane like a sword and moved the cane around in circles, to battle those who were mocking her beloved Charity. “Who do you think you are? My Charity is the prettiest girl in the world. Don’t you dare tease her and you’ll be dead for good!”

Joan was fearless in defense of her Charity.

“You know my child. I think I’m gonna have a very long life. I feel so strong when I’m with you.”

“Really grandma?” Charity had a very tiny voice, she sounded like a croaking frog. But for Joan, Charity’s voice was like music from heaven.

“Oh yes. I want you to grow into a fine young lady. People were mocking Charity. However, with Grandma Joan it’s all flattery.

“I know you’re very beautiful, even if I don’t see you.”

“You too grandma, you’re also beautiful.” Charity always returned the compliment.

“Oh that’s true. You’re not the only one who said that. People do admire my beauty.”

Grandma Joan and Charity always had a good time together.

Joan as a child dreamt of becoming a nun. There was a convent in their village, and she used to sneak at the convent yard to observe what the nuns were doing. She adored their appearance, the gray frock and long veil they were wearing.

*Someday I'm gonna wear that dress.* Joan told herself.

Years passed and Joan's dream was never nurtured. It remained just a dream, and did not become a reality. Joan never entertained suitors. She did not become a nun, but she felt she belonged to Jesus Christ, and she never married.

Her parents died when she was forty years old. She outlived her siblings and she learned living alone. She was working in a candy factory and became seriously ill. Those were decades ago.

Charity asked about Grandma Joan's eyes. "What happened to your eyes grandma? Why can't you see?"

"I got sick. I went to the hospital then I became blind."

When Grandma Joan was confined at the hospital for the destitute, she was alone, no relatives and family visited. The hospital was run by corrupt officials. Grandma Joan's eyes were operated and removed, sold by the hospital's dirty officials to rich patrons.

The world is full of cold blooded predators prowling for helpless victims.

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

Joan was unaware of what happened. She was uneducated. She thought she merely got blind. Because of her blindness, old age and inability to work, Grandma Joan became homeless. She wandered the street for years until Charity came. Charity was a blessing from God.

Charity learned to be loved and how to love from Grandma Joan. They got no material possession, but they gave each other the strength to endure their daily struggles.

Charity loved to sit on the old woman's lap. Grandma Joan told fairy tales, stories of kings and queens, prince and princess from faraway kingdom. Charity sought the comfort of motherly love from Grandma Joan. Charity felt secured and protected.

One late night, Grandma Joan and Charity were still awake seated on a sidewalk.

"I'm gonna put somethin' on your hair grandma."

"What is it?"

Charity put something on the old woman's hair.

"Hey what is it?"

"Guess what Grandma?"

Grandma Joan touched her hair. "Oh my dear child." There were three flowers on Joan's hair.

Charity and Joan were walking. Charity saw several wilted flowers scattered on the ground. She picked three

flowers and planned to surprise her grandma before they go to sleep.

“You’re real sweet.” Joan patted Charity on the head.

“You like it Grandma?”

“Oh yes I like it so much.” Joan took one flower from her hair and put it on Charity’s hair.

“Now we both have a flower on our hair. We’re both lovely and beautiful.”

“Oh yes Grandma.”

Charity and Grandma Joan embraced each other tightly.

An empty bus was going out of control and was on a rampage. The bus was running so fast.

“What was that?” Joan asked. Her senses were very keen.

“Something is coming towards us Grandma.” Charity said.

Grandma Joan knew what it was. She could hear the sound of the engine. Grandma Joan’s instinct was fast. She pushed Charity away with her two hands. Seconds after, Grandma Joan was hit by the bus and was thrown on the heap of garbage. She died instantly.



## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

“Grandma!” Charity ran back to the old woman to save her. Charity was moved several feet away when her grandma pushed her.

The bus stopped. The driver peeped but decided to escape.

Charity touched the body of the old woman. “Grandma...” She tried to wake her up. Charity cried for hours unable to do anything. She’s only three years old.

Dawn, a garbage truck stopped beside the huge heap of garbage. Two garbage collectors alighted and saw Charity crying beside the dead body of Grandma Joan.

“Look at the girl. She’s so ugly.” The garbage collector with a gorilla face told his companion upon seeing the crying girl.

The garbage collectors also saw the dead woman.

“I think the old woman is dead.”

“Maybe she was ran over.”

“What do we do?”

“Let’s take the dead body.”

The garbage collectors using a shovel gathered all the garbage and brought it into the truck. They took the dead body and hurled it on top of the truck.

“Grandma...”

The garbage collectors ignored the obnoxious girl. The garbage truck was driven fast.

“Grandma!”

Charity ran fast after the truck. She ran faster until she could no longer see the truck yet she kept running.

\*\*\*

On the street Charity learned to survive. She got used over the taunt and mockery. She only heard insults. Grandma Joan was gone. The old woman was Charity’s one and only protector.

\*\*\*

Charity was very young and unaware that she possessed healing powers. She could cure the sick through the touch of her miraculous hands. This was due to the wounds inflicted from the Crown of Thorns of the Black Crucified Christ.

However, Charity could only cure other people. She could not perform her miraculous healing to herself. Charity failed to recover the sight of Grandma Joan because the old woman’s eyes were removed. Charity was unable to bring back the life of her grandmother because she died instantly when the bus hit her. Charity could only heal sick people who were still alive.

21

Charity and Cutie Pie was taking a stroll on the slum area enjoying the scenery of the various garbage scattered everywhere. Charity and Cutie Pie was now a common sight. The slum dwellers never took their time to bother Charity and Cutie Pie since they too were busy mending their own daily miseries.

Most of the slum dwellers rummaged through garbage searching something of value. It's either a piece of metal, a wood, cartons, box or anything that can be sold. Money earned will be used for food, clothing, cigarette, alcohol.

Charity and Cutie Pie passed by several shanties when they heard something.

“Hey Cutie Pie, did you hear that?”

Cutie Pie's ears moved sideways trying to listen from the sound. A baby was crying inside one of the shanties.

Charity felt uneasy. She tried to locate the shanty where the baby was crying. "It's there." She pointed the shanty to Cutie Pie.

The kitten smiled in agreement.

Charity opened the door slowly and peeped. She saw a baby alone lying on a mat, crying.

"Look at the baby. Nobody's with her." Charity whispered to Cutie Pie.

Cutie Pie stretched her neck to get a better view.

Charity approached the crying baby. The baby was chubby. Charity touched the baby, who was running high with fever.

"She's very hot." Charity assumed the baby was a girl, the baby was dressed in pink cloth and the baby was wearing earrings. Charity picked the baby and cradled her.

Charity was only five years old but managed to act like a nanny.

"I'll take care of you, common you stop crying."

Charity started humming a lullaby as she cradled and swayed the baby around the small shanty. Charity danced and danced.

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

Cutie Pie was seated on the floor with her neck stretched observing Charity.

The baby was crying but looking at Charity and listening to the lullaby. Charity's voice was hoarse but it was soothing to the ears of the infant. Slowly, the baby stopped crying but her eyes were fixed on Charity. The baby was only months old and could not recognize the gruesome face in front of her. The baby closed her eyes.

"She's sleeping." Charity told Cutie Pie.

The kitten saw a small ball and started playing with it. She rolled the ball on the floor using her head then ran after. The kitten jumped at the ball which bounced and Cutie Pie tried to run after it again. The scene was repeated over and over. Cutie Pie was enjoying and was oblivious of what was happening around her.

The baby was fast asleep but Charity kept cradling. She gazed at the innocent infant, amused over the angelic face. The skin was soft. Charity moved her face closer to the baby, smelled the baby and was to kiss her.

Suddenly, a woman came inside. She was horrified.

"What are you doing to my child?" The mother grabbed her baby. "I just went out to play cards. Who are you?!"

"She's sleeping." Charity answered.

"Who are you?! Yes I know who you are. You're the one stealing the babies right?"

“No.”

“Yes you are, you little monster. You’re the one stealing the babies. You’re so ugly.”

“No ma’am.” Charity said.

“You go away before I call the cops. You go away!”

Charity snatched Cutie Pie from the floor then ran outside the shanty.

The mother Francine peeped at the door and made sure Charity was no longer in sight. She put the baby, who was in deep sleep, down the mat.

“Thank God you’re now sleeping.” Francine touched the baby on the nape feeling the temperature. “You got no more fever. When I left to play cards, you were running high with fever. I was lucky today, not only did I win, you sure looked well. That little monster, I hate her.” Francine stared at her baby sleeping like an angel.

Francine got two kids. Her older child was in school. When she’s bored, she often played cards with neighbors. She sometimes won but more often lost.

Thirty minutes passed. Francine was lying on the mat beside her baby. She kept turning left and right. She was getting restless. She looked at her baby still sleeping like an angel. Oh how beautiful her baby was. She was innocent and pure, she also smelled divine. Francine gave her baby a daily bath.

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

Francine was really restless because she's bored. She stood up fast. She looked at her baby lying still in deep slumber.

Francine went out of the shanty and walked a hundred meters before reaching her neighbor pal.

"So you saw that little monster inside your house?"

"Yes I did. But I was able to send her away."

"That's scary. You're lucky. She didn't steal your baby."

"Yeah I was thankful."

"What if she comes back?"

"I was thinking of that."

"You're worried?"

"Of course I am." Francine said.

"So what do you plan to do now?"

"Let me think." Francine paused for seconds.

"Common I'm waiting and I'm bored."

"Yeah I could sense that."

The two women talked for minutes.

"It's all routine everyday."

“Then we have to do something.”

Francine heaved out a deep sigh. “You know what I plan to do?”

“Sure I do. I want it too.”

Francine was a compulsive gambler. She could not resist the temptation. Francine and her pal went to a neighbor’s house, and they gambled.

During the early games, Francine was winning.

“I’m so lucky. Yes I am.”

“You have to treat me afterwards.”

“Don’t worry I won’t forget you.”

However, during the latter part, Francine started losing until she lost all her money.

“It’s disgusting.”

“I told you to stop, but you didn’t listen.”

“Now don’t blame me.” Francine went home exhausted and frustrated. The money was for her children’s food but what can she do. In the game of cards, you either win or lose.

“There’s always the next time. Maybe tomorrow you’re gonna win.”

“I hope so.”



## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

Francine went to check her baby.

“Where’s my baby? Oh my God, where’s my baby?”

“Where did you leave her?”

“Here. I left her here. Oh my God, help me find her.”

The two women sought the help of neighbors to search the missing infant

22

Late at night, the slum dwellers were having a serious gathering. There was no electricity at the slum area. It was dark at night. The bright full moon was providing illumination while some brought oil lamps, so they will not have a hard time looking at each other's dirty faces.

“What’s happening? There’s something evil goin’ on. First were rats, then dogs and cats. Now babies were being stolen.”

“I’m scared. I’m real scared.” A woman said.

“It could be vampires or monsters.”

“It could be anything.”

“We have to do something.”

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

“What are we going to do to stop this evil?”

“I’m sure it was the little monster who was taking the babies.” Francine’s pal said.

“How can you be so sure?”

“She took Francine’s baby. Francine told me herself. I was there when Francine lost her baby girl.”

“Did you see it?”

“No. But Francine said she saw this demon girl holding her baby when she came home. Francine left. She and I had a little talk. When Francine returned, I was with her. Her baby girl was nowhere to be found. We knew at that instant that it was the demon girl who took the baby.”

“But you never saw.”

“I did not but I’m sure that it was she who took Francine’s baby and nobody else.” Francine’s pal insisted.

“But the girl Charity cured me. I was having an attack. I can’t breathe. Charity massaged my chest and I was healed.” Bela Lugosi jumped to Charity’s defense.

“You believe that?”

“Yeah I believed it coz’ I got healed. Now I felt strong. I never had an attack.”

“Me too, my two kids were having fever for days. The girl touched them, and they got well.”

“That aint’ true. The demon girl was the one taking the babies. She and nobody else, we gotta get rid of her before we lost all our babies. Let’s burn her alive. She’s a witch.” A man said.

“You touch her and I’ll kill you.” Bela Lugosi took a knife from his back. He always brought this with him as a defense. Now he will use it in defense of Charity.

“Me too, I’ll kill anybody who touches Charity.”

“Oh really. If I see that girl Charity, I’ll either burn her, or I’ll chop her head off.”

“Over my dead ass.” Bela Lugosi raised his knife stabbing it upward towards the bright full moon.

There was an argument. The slum dwellers were divided. Some believed that Charity was the culprit. The others did not and would stand for Charity to defend her.

“Stop! Stop it! We can’t solve this mess through arguments. Babies were stolen and we’re not sure who’s stealing them. The best thing to do is to be vigilant. We have to guard our homes. We have to guard our children, our families. The next thing we know, another baby will become a victim.”

“That’s right.”

“So what are we gonna do?”

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

“We’ll assign men who will guard the areas. We’ll have alternates. We have to be extra careful, or we’ll lose all our babies.”

Everyone agreed.

The slum dwellers set a plan. The men will serve as guards and watch the slum area in strategic location to ensure that no babies will ever be stolen again.

23

Charity and Cutie Pie was rolling on the ground, having fun. The ground was grassy and it was a nice sunny day. The sun was giving out healthy warmth, rejuvenating the two unwanted creatures.

Charity lied still on the ground. Cutie Pie jumped on her face. The kitten moved her right paw against Charity feeling the coarseness of her friend's dark red skin. Cutie Pie licked Charity's face. Charity giggled. Charity closed her eyes and embraced Cutie Pie. They felt the comfort and security of being together.

Charity stood up and ran. Cutie Pie ran after. They raced against each other. Who will run faster and who will run the farthest?

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

Charity moved in circles. Cutie Pie followed. Charity stumbled on the ground. Charity stood up then bent her knees. “Look Cutie Pie. Look what I can do.” Charity was proud to show her talent. She embraced herself with her two arms then rolled like a ball.

The kitten watched her friend thinking if she will run, leap or roll herself too. Cutie Pie ran beside her friend.

Charity rested still like a cadaver, her eyes closed trying to sense what Cutie Pie would do next. Charity opened her right eye, Cutie Pie leaped on Charity’s tummy and playfully bit on Charity’s tattered dress.

“Hey Cutie Pie, let go off my dress.”

Charity ran. The kitten was hanging from the tattered dress. Cutie Pie’s body bobbed left and right. Charity whirled around, her two arms spread eagle. Cutie Pie became cross eyed as she felt the swirling motion. The kitten was thrown several feet from Charity.

Charity saw the kitten lying on the ground, her two eyes were moving around in circles.

“Cutie Pie what happened to you?” Charity ran towards Cutie Pie and patted her on the head.

Cutie Pie gave Charity a big warm smile. Charity and Cutie Pie played for hours. They never felt hungry. They haven’t eaten but yet they were strong.

Suddenly, it became totally dark. The sun hid inside a thick black cloud. The warmth and the heat was gone. The wind blew a cold breeze.

Charity was scared. She held Cutie Pie tightly against her chest.

“Where’s the sun?”

The kitten was looking at her friend with wide eyed innocence. She crouched tighter against Charity trying to hide from the impending danger lurking.

Thunder roared and lightning generated a bolt of electricity against the dark clouds. Huge trees emerged from the ground. The branches moved like tentacles searching for something to tangle.

Charity ducked on the ground, her two arms wrapped around Cutie Pie protecting the kitten from the branches moving like tentacles.

Charity and Cutie Pie was now surrounded by the huge trees. The trees were gigantic. There were no leaves, only trunks and branches. The trees were colored dark brown with shades of black.

Charity heard heavy breathing coming from the trees, inhaling and exhaling the cold air. Charity ran fast in between the thick trunks as she held Cutie Pie tightly. The kitten’s eyes were shut tight. She can’t look at the trees. Cutie Pie covered her ears with her two paws. The heavy breathing of the trees was spine chilling.



## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

A long thin branch emerged and snatched Cutie Pie from Charity.

“Cutie Pie!” Charity was horrified but she was quick. She jumped towards the thin branch. “Let her go. Let Cutie Pie go!”

Cutie Pie was feeling the suffocation. The tentacle branch tangled around her small body crushing her.

Charity bit the thin branch. She released all her strength as her nail like teeth punctured deeply on the thin branch.

Charity’s gums were bleeding. The thin branch released Cutie Pie, and the kitten fell on the ground. Charity grabbed her kitten and ran fast like a gazelle.

Charity looked around. The trees were nowhere in sight.

Charity saw a flicker of light from a distance. She narrowed her eyes. Something was inside the light. Something was moving.

“Cutie Pie look.”

Charity ran to the light carrying her small kitten. Her two feet were fast and snappy. Her heart was throbbing in excitement. Someone was waving inside the light. It was an old woman.

“Grandma?” Charity ran faster. “Grandma! Cutie Pie, it’s grandma!”

Charity almost stumbled on the ground but regained her balance. However, with every step she took, instead of coming closer, she was moving farther from the light.

Charity lost the old woman. She could no longer see her.

Charity woke up from a deep sleep. She was only dreaming.

\*\*\*

Charity looked for food but there was none. She and Cutie Pie were very hungry but there were only papers and craps.

“Cutie Pie what are we going to do?”

Charity saw a piece of paper.

“Would you like to eat this?”

Charity tore the paper into small pieces and gave some to Cutie Pie. The kitten just looked.

“Do you want me to taste it first?” Charity put several pieces of paper inside her mouth chewing it, she forced to swallow. “Cutie Pie, don’t even try it.”

Charity and Cutie Pie was tired and tried to sleep against the hunger they felt.

“Cutie Pie, would you like me to tell you a story so you can sleep?”

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

Cutie Pie stretched her body. She extended her two forelegs and two hind legs.

“Once upon a time in a faraway place, there was a kingdom. There was a princess her name was Charity, and she had a friend named Cutie Pie.”

The kitten smiled to Charity.”

“They loved to play around the palace. They had great fun together.”

Charity remembered the story of her Grandma Joan, and she was now telling a fairy tale to Cutie Pie. She kept talking and talking until Cutie Pie was yawning.

“Can you sleep now my little friend? Can you close your eyes?” Charity moved her right palm against Cutie Pie’s two eyes, gently closing them. The kitten shut her two eyelids.

The weather was cold. Charity was embracing Cutie Pie closely to stimulate heat. The furs provided warmth. Hours passed. Charity was in an embraced position. She woke up. She was alone.

“Cutie Pie?”

The kitten was gone.

“Cutie Pie?”

Maybe Cutie Pie searched for food. Yeah, she did search for food. Charity consoled herself.

“Cutie Pie?”

Charity searched in frantic.

“Cutie Pie?”

Charity heard Cutie Pie crying out loud. Cutie Pie was in pain. And it sounded like the kitten was being tortured.

“Cutie Pie?!” Charity ran towards where the sound was coming. She can’t find it.

There was silence. Time was passing. It was like an eternity. Charity was going crazy running here and there, searching everywhere. Something was hurled in front of Charity, Cutie Pie, dead, disemboweled.

"Cutie Pie!!!!"

24

Jeff, Miriam and Jacob were taking breakfast. Jacob was busy with his ham sandwich as he read the paper, a cup of coffee on his right.

Jacob's ham sandwich was half consumed. He put the sandwich down, took a sip of his black coffee and leafed through the newspaper. He was getting an update of the latest news.

Miriam was eating her toast with a fried egg on her plate.

Jeff was holding his glass of milk but not drinking it. He also had a ham sandwich on a plate but he was not touching it.

Tom Tom was on the floor, walking around, wagging his tail.

The toy doggie was full of energy.

Jacob stopped reading. “What’s happening to him?” He was referring to Tom Tom

Jeff barely heard his father.

Jeff and Tom Tom were together everyday. They were the best of friends. Tom Tom never failed to amaze Jeff. There were surprises. Tom Tom was mechanical, no thoughts, no feelings. However, Tom Tom at most times acted like a real dog, showing compassion, concern towards his friend Jeff.

“What’s happening to him?” Jacob repeated.

“You know dad. I was not replacing his battery yet he kept moving, walking, barking, leaping.”

“How did that happen?”

“Charity touched her.”

“Who?”

“Charity.”

“And who’s Charity.” Jacob asked.

“It was a street girl. There are talks among the neighbors that this girl Charity has healing powers.” Miriam explained.

Miriam did not engage in chitchats and got no time for trivial talks. However, when she passed by the grocery, she

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

got the news from other customers who were nearby neighbors.

Miriam shared the little girl's story to Jeff and was surprised that her son knew Charity.

Jeff did not initially tell his mom regarding his encounter with Charity. He was told time and again to go straight home coming from school. He kept the story to himself, afraid to get castigated.

It was only when Miriam told Jeff about what she heard of Charity when Jeff related the incident to his mother.

Jeff was an obedient son. He occasionally bent the rules but he never dared crossed the boundary set by his parents.

As a growing boy, he also engaged in mischief, but he was fully aware of his responsibilities as a son, as a student and as a friend to Tom Tom.

“She could heal and anoint the sick.” Miriam explained.

“You mean Tom Tom was sick before and this girl touched him?”

“He was not sick dad but his battery was old, so he could not perform his tricks. When Charity touched him, he became full of energy”

“Really?” Jacob was skeptical. He felt like laughing. Surely, it was just part of Jeff's fantasy.

However, Jacob was fully aware of Jeff's ability and talent. His young son created a puppy robot that moved with Jeff's command. There must be truth with what Jeff was saying.

"But there was another rumor?" Miriam said.

"What is it?"

"Babies were being stolen. The neighbors were saying that it was the girl Charity, who was stealing the babies."

"Well that's scary. This girl Charity is dangerous."

"That ain't true dad."

"How can you be so sure?"

"I'm very sure."

"Why do you say so?"

"She's a nice girl." Jeff related the story to his father when he collapsed on the street because he was running high with fever and Charity touched him.

"You were touched by this girl Charity, and you were convinced that it was not this girl Charity, who was taking the babies."

"She won't do that dad, and she can never do that?"

"But how sure are you?"

"I told you she's a nice girl."



“One touch from Charity and she got your sympathy.”

However, it was no ordinary touch. Jeff could hardly explain. There was something on Charity’s hand. It was some kind of healing. He felt invigorated after Charity touched him. Tom Tom himself was never the same. The toy doggie became extra active, fully alive. There was no need for Jeff to tell the doggie do his tricks. Tom Tom was moving all by himself.

“You’re not to meet this Charity.” Jacob warned.

“But it’s not her.”

“How can you be so sure? It could be her. It could be a child syndicate. It could be anyone. Whoever it is or whatever it is. Stay inside the house after school.” Jacob warned.

“Yeah we have to be very careful.” Miriam also warned her son to go straight home coming from school.

Jeff drank his milk. There was a blockage in his throat and could not drink his milk properly.

Jacob noticed. “What’s happening?”

“It’s nothing dad.”

Jacob gave his warning. “Jeff you go straight home, coming from school.”

“Yes dad.”

“Promise?” Jacob asked.

“Promise.” Jeff answered.

“Swear?” Miriam asked.

“I swear.”

“Cross your heart?” Miriam asked smiling.

Jacob smiled as well.

“Cross my heart.”

“Okay we believe you.”

“And we trust you.”

“It’s a promise never to be broken.”

“It’s a promise never to be broken.” Jeff repeated and he put his right palm against his chest.

“So the three of us have a pact.” Jacob said.

“Yes we have.” Miriam said. “Right Jeff?”

“Right Mom and Dad.” Jeff said.

Jacob patted Jeff on the head. He and Miriam felt lucky to have a brilliant and creative son.

At school Jeff was not attentive to the lesson. He made his homework which he did everyday. However, during class

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

he hardly heard what the teacher was saying. The discussion was active. The students were participating.

Jeff was called. He remained seated.

Jeff was called again.

Jeff's seat mate patted his arm.

"Excuse me ma'am I'm sorry." Jeff said.

The teacher repeated the question, Jeff gave the correct answer.

It was the same with the other subjects. No matter how hard Jeff tried. He was losing his concentration. There was one person on Jeff's mind, Charity.

After school Jeff passed by an old bookstore. He was known by the bookstore clerks. Jeff used to buy some school supplies here. He also loved to browse on some of the books about magic, mysteries and horrors.

His attention got caught on one book titled Vampires. It was interesting. It was a used book. He opened it and leafed through the pages. He was sure that it just recently arrived. The book was not in the shelves during his previous visit.

He went to the cashier section to pay for the book. The lady cashier was looking at him.

"This book is not for children." The lady cashier said.

Jeff thought fast. “Well I’m just doing some research.”

“Research on what?”

“About... vampires.”

“About vampires? Well, that’s interesting. And for what subject in school, if I may ask?”

“It’s not for any subject. Just for my personal knowledge.”

The lady cashier was convinced. “Ok, ok.”

Jeff paid for the book. The lady cashier wrapped it.

“Be careful of the books you read. It could get inside your mind.”

“Yeah I will. Thanks.”

“Me, I don’t read that sort of materials. I do get nightmares.”

“I’m brave enough.”

“Sure you are.”

“Bye.”

Jeff will do his personal research on what was happening. The book could provide answers.

Reaching home, Jeff went to his room and locked the door.

“Tom Tom what are we gonna do?”

The dog was moving in all corners, stopping, sitting on the floor, as if with a mind of his own. His friend Jeff was confused. The toy doggie himself was getting confused. Tom Tom wanted to help in solving the mystery. He was mechanical, non-living but there were instances that he acted like a real doggie. This time he wanted to prove his worth. Only if he could talk, he could share some opinions, he could tell his thoughts and feelings.

It's so hard to be a toy, unable to express oneself freely. Maybe someday he will have a chance to enjoy the benefits and privileges of a living dog. It was a dream for the toy doggie Tom Tom. There was a real doggie named Tom Tom, but he was gone. The toy doggie had taken over the place of the real Tom Tom. He was serving the same purpose, the best friend of Jeff, his constant companion, his ally, his buddy.

“Do you think it was Charity?”

The dog barked, wagged its tail and moved towards Jeff.

“You think it was Charity, who was stealing the babies?”

Tom Tom leaped towards the bed and started biting Jeff's shirt. It was a playful bite, not to the point of tearing the shirt apart.

Jeff took the book. The drawings were really scary. He was having goose bumps. He felt his hairs were raised up

pointing to the ceiling. It was late in the afternoon, and it was getting dark.

Vampires, creatures of the night, they feasted on human blood for sustenance. Some events that remained a mystery or unsolved like multiples murders were ascribed to vampirism.

Jeff looked outside the window. The sun was red with the color of blood. The clouds were dark on the horizon. Few birds were flying on the sky.

The book Jeff bought was not appropriate for his age, his mother and father would get annoyed if they discover their son's access over this kind material.

Jeff was so curious about the recent happenings, when he saw the book, he bought it immediately. Luckily, the lady cashier understood his purpose, asked few questions. However, allowed him to buy the book.

“Want to see this Tom Tom.”

Tom Tom barked repeatedly.

“This book is horrifying.”

Tom Tom jumped from the bed towards the floor and on the bed again. The dog sat on the bed.

“Are you scared?” Jeff asked.

Tom Tom went at the back of Jeff and put himself inside Jeff's shirt.

“I think you’re scared.”

Tom Tom barked loudly while his head was inside Jeff’s shirt.

There was a knock on Jeff’s room.

“Jeff...” It was Miriam. She arrived from the office and heard the endless barking. “Jeff are you alright? Open the door.”

Miriam like the other parents was worried over the recent events. She heard the girl was so ugly, obnoxious, foul smelling. The girl was branded as the daughter of Satan, ready to take helpless infants and bring them to hell.

Jeff opened the door fast. Miriam got inside the room.

“What’s happening here?”

“Nothing mom.”

“Tom Tom was barking loud.”

The toy doggie was seated on the floor.

“I was playing with Tom Tom. We’re just playing Mom.”

“Are you sure you and Tom Tom are alright?”

“Yes we are mom.”

Miriam looked around the room.

“You want something to eat?”

Jeff shook his head.

“Just tell when you’re hungry. Okay?”

“Ok mom.”

Miriam went out of the room and closed the door.

The book was lying on the bed. Miriam did not see the book.

Miriam and Jacob encouraged their son to read various materials but should be within the boy’s age limit.



25

Late afternoon, on a grassy lot, Charity using her two tiny hands was digging. Next beside her was a small box and Cutie Pie was inside the box together with grass flowers. Charity gathered the flowers from the grasses that grew on the lot. She took several of the flowers, and made a very small bouquet. The grass flowers were thin, spiky and coarse. However, they served as an offering for her beloved Cutie Pie.

Charity dug and dug until she got the right depth. Charity placed the small box inside the dug ground and put back the soil. This will be Cutie Pie's burial ground.

There were still plenty of small grass flowers that were left and Charity scattered them on top of Cutie Pie's burial ground.

Charity sat beside the burial ground. Her little friend was now resting.

Charity remembered the days when she and Cutie Pie would look for something to eat. It was lots of fun having a friend, spending time together, eating and playing. The two of them had nice adventures. First it was Grandma Joan, and then it was Cutie Pie.

Charity remembered the soft white furs of the kitten. It gave her comfort during the cold nights. All she needed to do when she and Cutie Pie were sleeping was to embrace the kitten tightly.

They had great fun, the food they shared and the games they played. The games were mostly running, the kitten running after her, or she was running after her kitten. They never got tired when they were together.

There was time when Cutie Pie's furs got smeared with mud while they were playing. The kitten was like a ghost. Charity tried to get rid of the mud wiping it with her hands but the mud stuck on the furs. The mud dried and Cutie Pie's color became black and white. Charity loved her still. No matter what the color, the kitten remained as cute as ever.

Charity never failed to kiss and hugged her pet every morning when they woke up and every night before they go

to sleep. Cutie Pie always licked Charity's face as well as her hands in exchange of the hugs and kisses. It was a mutual admiration.

Charity looked up the sky. It was almost dark. She put her two hands together and recited a prayer. She prayed for Cutie Pie to be happy and for the beloved kitten to be with her Grandma Joan, so her two loved ones will be with each other. Charity knew that Cutie Pie and her Grandma Joan were in heaven. She was taught before by her Grandma, that good ones go to heaven. Her grandma was a really nice lady and Cutie Pie was a good kitten so surely the two of them were in heaven right now.

Charity smiled and felt so much happiness inside her. She's happy for her friend Cutie Pie and her Grandma Joan to be both in heaven.

Charity lied on the burial ground with her face resting on her hands. She smelled the soil, it was sweet. She kept smiling remembering her cute kitten and her good grandma.

Charity started laughing. She laughed and laughed. She laughed out loud but tears fell from her eyes. She wanted to smile and laugh for her friend Cutie Pie and her grandma Joan but tears kept falling from her eyes.

26

Denver was driving the van. His mother Jane was at the hospital. Denver took the chance of going out. He got no license being underage but Denver loved taking risks. He drove the van faster when he passed by a vacant lot and saw the girl Charity lying with head slumped on the ground.

Denver's instinct was to get down from the van and make fun of the girl. He wanted to torment Charity. He felt deep hatred. He can't imagine a girl so ugly, horrible and really foul smelling to be human. Charity was subhuman.

His dogs Ringo and Paul were better. They ate better foods than Charity. They lived in a big house. Ringo and Paul were like royalty in the animal world. Charity was lesser than an animal.

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Denver thought of driving the van towards the vacant lot and run it over Charity. He wanted to crush Charity's body and mangled her into pieces.

Denver smiled over the wild fantasies he was having. If he told his mother Dr. Sunshine about it, he knew what the reaction would be.

There was an instance when Jane Sunshine lost her cool and slapped Denver right hard on the face. They had a visitor at the house. It was a lady doctor working with Dr. Sunshine at the government hospital. The lady doctor was with her young son only eight years old. The lady doctor and the young son were to take dinner with the Sunshine.

“Denver why don't you ask your little friend here to play.” Dr. Sunshine asked.

It was a nice introduction.

The little boy looked harmless. He was so charming with dimples on his cheeks. Dr. Sunshine often complimented the boy's physical attributes when she saw him together with her colleague lady doctor.

Jane and her lady friend engaged in woman's talk. They talked about the latest updates in their fields. Dr. Jane Sunshine often read medical journals, so she was knowledgeable. The lady doctor friend was also equipped with the latest trends, there was a good interaction.

Minutes after, the young son came crying with mouth bleeding. Denver punched the boy on the face. Denver was only fourteen years old then, but the boy was only eight.

“Oh my God!” The lady doctor was horrified.

Jane was fuming mad. The little boy looked so pitiful. Jane felt humiliated. Without asking for an explanation, she slapped Denver with both hands several times hard on the face right in front of her lady doctor friend and her son.

At that instant, the lady doctor friend and her son left the Sunshine home without taking dinner.

Jane Sunshine ran after them. “Please let me treat him first.” She offered.

“You don’t have to. I can treat him myself.”

“Please.” Jane was begging.

“No.”

“I’m so sorry. I’m really really sorry.” Jane apologized.

The lady doctor treated his young son inside the car. There was a first aid kit.

The lady doctor friend promised never to return to the Sunshine home. She liked Jane Sunshine. She never expected a kind hearted woman would bear a son so spiteful.

“What has gotten into your head again?” Jane was trembling in anger.

Denver merely laughed in silence. He was slapped hard on the face. His face was red. Who cares, it was only a slap. Denver gave no explanation. Denver always found ways to

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put his mother in an awkward situation. Not once did Denver ask for an apology from his wrong doings.

Now Denver was fantasizing on running the van on Charity. Denver smiled, and went down from the van. He approached the vacant lot and looked at Charity. The girl was so dirty and smelly.

Denver raised his right foot and was to kick Charity on the head. Denver knew the girl was sleeping. He wanted to smash Charity's head, curious as to what was underneath the skull. Did Charity have a brain? Maybe it was mere garbage and wastes.

Denver raised his right foot higher but had a second thought. He put down his right foot, went back to the van and decided to go home.

\*\*\*

It was now wide spread at the slum area regarding the stolen babies. Children were warned not to go out. Parents were scared and having a tight guard towards their children.

Denver was aware. Jane Sunshine told her son about it. She heard the news during her recent medical mission. Jane Sunshine was worried. She pitied the lost babies and sympathized with the mothers. She and slum dwellers could not establish who the culprit was. Some slum dwellers were pointing to Charity. Some did not believe that Charity was the culprit.

“But she's very young and she's very small. I don't think she's capable of doing that.” Jane said.

“Evil gives no boundary to age and body size. She’s a monster.” One slum dweller said.

“Yeah, she’s a child of Satan. She brought the babies to hell.”

Jane was not convinced. A young girl with a small and fragile body to take babies would get caught. However, one can never tell.

Jane heard and read stories of cults. This was a possibility. Members of cults were brainwashed by their leaders in doing something irrational. The cult members became overly attached and could not think properly. They were dictated of the dos and don’ts because their will power became too weak. The members left their family and loved ones just to be with their leaders and co-members.

Very young girls and boys were the prime target as they were easily convinced. However, there were also older ones, some mothers and fathers brought with them their children to be part of the organization. Some were even forced into committing suicide and murder.

Charles Manson was a famous cult leader who convinced his cult members into committing murder. Charles Manson at a young age was already committing the act of stealing and burglary. He was getting in and out of jail for various crimes.

Charles Manson became obsessed with music and aspired to become a famous musician. When his musical aspiration failed, he was frustrated.



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He founded a cult and named it “the family”. He manipulated his members in committing murder. Charles Manson did not commit the murder himself. He merely told his members to commit the act, and the members slaughtered innocent people without mercy. Charles Manson and his cult members stuck to each other until the very end. Charles Manson became so notorious he was acclaimed by younger generations in prints and ads.

There was another cult leader by the name of Jim Jones who convinced his members of nine hundred people into committing suicide by taking cyanide. It was known as the revolutionary suicide. It happened in Guyana during the late 1970’s.

Everything was possible in a cult. Could the babies be victims of the cult? Jane Sunshine discussed it with the people conducting their night vigil. It could be or it could be not.

Jane gave her warning to Denver.

“You will not join our future medical missions.”

“Why not?” Denver asked.

“Because I said so. That’s the reason why.”

“But I want to join your medical missions.” Denver insisted.

“Not now. Maybe later!”

“When?”

“I don’t know!”

“But I want to know when.”

Jane turned her back. She was turning red and Denver once again was getting into her nerves.

Denver smiled to himself. He was trying to test the limit of his mother. The previous days, Jane exploded with a slight provocation. Denver was enjoying the mild torture he was doing.

Aside from the bizarre incidents, Jane asked Denver to stop coming to the slum area because her son was not welcome. It was due to Denver’s previous altercation with the teen age boys. It would be safe and better for Denver to stay home and be out of trouble.

27

“I know who the culprit is? It’s that filthy little creature. She’s a god damn monster.” Denver told Jeff.

Jeff defended Charity. “It’s not her. I’m sure of that.”

“What’s with you? Why do you like her so much?”

“She’s a nice girl.”

Denver and Jeff were playing Nomadic Heroes.

Jeff was already warned by his father Jacob to go straight home after school. However, Denver was very demanding, and convinced Jeff to play for another computer game. Denver promised to accompany Jeff when going home.

Denver learned from his mother that the men at the slum area were closely vigilant. Carrying torches, the men guarded the slum area at night to ensure that no baby will be stolen.

“That girl is evil inside and out. She came from hell. She was sent by Satan. You know what I’m gonna do, I’m gonna bring Ringo and Paul with me. I’ll help out with the men.”

“What did you say?” Jane Sunshine said.

Denver was surprised. Denver and Jeff were unaware Jane was behind them while they were playing. Jane was listening to the whole conversation. She was about to leave and was passing by the living room area when she heard her son.

“What did you say? You’ll help out with what?” Jane was irritated.

Denver was defensive. “I didn’t say anything. Did I Jeff?”

“Stop your foolishness. Don’t you dare go out and be part of the trouble. You stay home! I told you that before.”

“But I didn’t say anything. Me and Jeff were just playing.”

Jane turned to Jeff. “Could you please report to me what your friend Denver will be up to. I want you to take charge of him. If left unguarded, he will be out of control. Please help me with your friend. I know you’re a lot younger but please guide him.” Jane pleaded.

Jeff nodded.

Jane turned to Denver. “Now you stop being foolish. I’m warning you and I’m real fed up.” Jane was almost pulling her hair. She was carrying her hand bag and was tempted to hit Denver with it on the head but controlled herself.

Tears rolled down Jane’s eyes. The previous day she was being mean to Denver. She was guilt ridden of her behavior. She always wanted to be an ideal mother to her one and only son.

From the past, Jane could not remember spanking Denver once.

Her husband Steve told her before.

“Now that we have a son, I want to raise him properly. Spanking would never be a part of our discipline. It would be best to talk to him if he will be naughty.”

Jane heard of parents committing violence against their own children, mother or father being imprisoned for being too severe. Some of these parents were using drugs that they failed to think properly during those violent acts.

When Steve died, Jane took over in providing the necessary authority. During the early years, Jane not once hit her son. It would always be talk, explaining to Denver the consequence of his actions. If Denver was naughty, Jane spoke with her son regarding his misdemeanor.

“So you know what’s gonna happen if you repeat that.”

“Yes mom.”

“So what are you gonna do now?”

“I’ll be a good boy.”

Denver being young was always listening and saying yes. He was very obedient. But Denver changed. He was still listening but was doing his own ways. He became too mischievous.

Jane started to doubt her capabilities as a mother. What did she do and what did she fail to do? She already sought the guidance of peers and professionals. She followed the advices, read books and tried to apply what she learned. Now she was having lots of doubts.

Jane Sunshine, a champion of the poor, defender of the oppressed, some even branded her as a saint due to her tireless charitable works. There’s one big question torturing her mind. Did she fail in the most important aspect of her life? Was she a failure as a mother?

“I’m warning you Denver, don’t push me.”

Denver can’t look into his mother’s eyes. Jane was really mad.

Denver knew the reason why.

Jane lately was having trouble taking the regular medical donations from the government. It was cut into half. The

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government reasoned that there were additional organizations aside from Jane and the previous ones also asking for donations, officials in charge needed to allocate them properly.

Denver saw his mother several times in a sour mood. They had a good relationship despite Denver being too mischievous.

“What happened mom?” Denver asked patting his mother on the back.

Jane shared her dilemma about the government donations.

“What do you plan to do?” Denver asked.

“What can I do? Accept it.” Jane understood quite well. If other organizations doing charitable works were intended for the poor, she had no misgivings.

However, Jane heard rumors of irregularities. Some organizations in charge of providing charities were in actuality corrupt who stole the goods intended for the destitute. The dirty officials of the organizations either kept the goods for themselves or sell them at a very cheap price.

There were officials of third world countries receiving millions in goods, items and various clothing from rich countries were selling the goods instead of allocating them to the needy.

The rich were getting richer. The poor were getting poorer. There was no equality. The law of equilibrium was tilting its balance to the rich and the powerful.

Jane's mind was tortured not only by Denver. She needed to raise funds to continue the free medical works. She might take additional portions from the earnings of the Sunshine stocks. Anyway the stocks were more than enough to sustain her and Denver for the rest of their lives.

Was life really just?

Jane and Denver were receiving so much. However, the poor were receiving very little. Jane was tempted to give all her money and wealth to the slum people.

Denver and Jeff were immersed with the game, Nomadic Heroes. Denver tried to ignore his mother. His mind was focused on the computer. He was losing from Jeff with more than a hundred points.

“And where's Emilia again?” Jane asked.

It was not only Denver getting into Jane's nerve. It was the same with Emilia. Before, Jane need not gave instructions. Lately, Emilia needed to be told every detail, or she will not move. Emilia was treated as a family member, but there were times Emilia was abusing Jane's kindness.

“Emilia!” Jane walked towards Emilia's room next to the stairs

Emilia's room was not a servant's quarter. It was a large room, complete with luxury. It had an entertainment



showcase, a television, DVD player with a collection of various movies. It had its own refrigerator. Emilia often filled it with cheese and assorted fruits. It had a mini component. Emilia could listen to her favorite music. If not doing anything, which was rare, Emilia entertained herself with movies or music. Emilia didn't eat much. She was thin. When hungry, she either ate the cheese together with crackers she loved so much or the fruits she hoarded in her refrigerator.

The Sunshine had its own music room. It was equipped with a grand piano, an acoustic guitar, flute and other instruments.

Jane, Steve and Denver had no inclination to music. Steve played little on the piano. Jane had no knowledge at all in music. Jane sent her son Denver to a music school so Denver could develop his talent. However, Denver was not interested.

To the Sunshine's surprise, it was Emilia, who had musical abilities. She played the piano with excellence. She performed classical. She could pluck the guitar and played the flute.

“Emilia I never expected it. You're so good.”

“Thank you Dr. Sunshine.”

Several times in the past, Emilia performed a mini concert at the Sunshine house. Jane's friends were amazed and entertained on how Emilia played the piano.

What was astounding, Emilia developed her musical talent all by herself? Nobody taught her.

Jane bought music sheets so Emilia had the chance to play music of the masters.

Emilia was widely talented. She was not only a good cook. She was also a secretary, a driver, a swimmer and a musician.

These were the reasons why Jane considered Emilia as a surrogate sister. Jane was very proud of Emilia. She was not ashamed to introduce Emilia to her friends.

However, Emilia was now getting into Jane's nerve.

"Emilia!" Jane shouted.

"I think she went out." Denver answered.

"And where did she go?"

"I don't know. And don't ask me. I'm not a keeper of monkeys."

Jane's face flushed with anger. She was tempted to slap his juvenile son but can't do it in front of the young visitor Jeff.

Denver, Emilia, her current dilemma with the charitable goods. Jane wanted to confine herself in the hospital, so she could rest and relax. She wanted to climb a mountain, bring a tent with her, and spend the weekend communing with nature.

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Jane also thought of joining a monastery and hide forever. This could be her calling. This could be God's plan for her. She was getting tired.

Jane's dilemma with the charitable goods was building so much pressure.

Denver and Emilia became Jane's easy target.

"I'm going to the hospital. It's something important."

Jane received a call from the hospital. The medical donations from the government arrived, and she needed to check them. Donations were delivered directly to the hospital where Jane worked. Being the champion of the poor, it was Jane's responsibility to look over the items.

The donations were cut into half. Jane was still thankful. There were other options. The worst thing was for the sick and the destitute not to receive their foods and medicines.

Jane went towards the door.

"Bye Dr. Sunshine." Jeff waved and smiled to Jane.

"Bye Jeff." Jane smiled and waved back.

"Bye mom." Denver said without looking at his mother.

"Bye Denver." Jane whispered.

Minutes after, Denver heard his mom's car engine leaving. He stopped playing, stood up then looked at the

window. He saw the car was away from the house. He smiled and then went back to Jeff.

Denver and Jeff changed roles. Jeff played Lurky. This character was the mighty warrior adept with all kinds of weapons sword, axe, and sling-shot. Denver played Vonn, the dwarf with psychokinetic powers.

Tom Tom was on the couch sitting still beside Jeff's backpack. At most times, Jeff brought Tom Tom with him. Jeff felt Tom Tom will be lonely if left alone in the house.

Denver spent hours in practice to ensure he will win by the hundreds during their next encounter. Denver was still losing. He was getting frustrated. However, Jeff was a really smart kid, and Denver admired him so much.

“Have you tried taking alcohol?” Denver asked.

“What?”

“I said have you tried taking alcohol?”

“Nope, I wouldn't dare. I'm too young for that.”

“You gotta try it. Mom was given a brandy, a gift. But, she doesn't drink. So I'm the one taking it little by little. Want some?”

Denver was slowly taking vices. His father Steve was never into vice. Steve did not drink and did not smoke. He did not gamble. He was a family man, dedicated to his profession and to his family. Steve and Jane were the perfect pair. Denver was their exact opposite.

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The Sunshine house had a wine cellar when Steve was still living. When entertaining friends, they only needed to take from the wine cellar the needed alcohol. However, Steve decided to get rid of the wine cellar. Steve was keenly aware that one reason for alcoholism was due to alcohol's easy access. People with wine cellars had greater chance of developing alcoholism and family members were prone.

There were several factors why a person became alcoholic. One could be due to psychological factors, especially those with low self esteem or suffering from depression. Social and cultural factors, when the advertisement glamorized alcoholic beverages in print and media, sending the message that alcohol provided higher social status. It could be emotional. Those with a high level of stress took alcohol to alleviate the emotional torture. It could also be genetic or biological. Children with alcoholic parents had a higher tendency to develop the bad habit.

At a very young age, Denver was developing a penchant for alcohol. Denver wanted to try smoking. However, he played baseball at school. It might affect his game, and he loved baseball so much.

“You gotta try it.” Denver insisted to Jeff.

“I told you I can't”

“Why don't you grow up.”

“Denver I'm only nine years old.”

“Who cares? Nine, fifteen, thirty, sixty years old. We all have the freedom to take alcohol if we want to.”

“But I don’t want to.”

“Why not?”

“I just don’t want to.”

Jeff was getting irritated. It’s hard to argue with Denver. He always found ways to get what he wanted. He’s overly persuasive and at times obnoxious. He’s hot tempered and became mean if he lost an argument.

Denver left the living room area then came back several minutes after. He returned with the bottle of brandy and a small glass.

“You take one shot.” Denver poured the brandy into the small glass.

“I told you I cant. My mom and dad would get mad.”

“They wouldn’t know, unless you tell them.”

“I won’t tell them because I won’t take it.”

“Yes you will. You will take a shot because I want you to do it.”

“I think I’ll go home now.” Jeff threatened. He was getting trapped.

“Okay, okay fine, I won’t force you.” Denver gave up. Afraid Jeff might leave. He instead took a quick gulp from the glass. “That tastes real good.” Denver closed his eyes, inhaled and exhaled deeply, feeling ecstatic.

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Denver poured the brandy again into the small glass then took another shot, then another shot.

Jeff was observing.

“Hey hey, this is unfair. I’m taking something and you got nothing with you. What do you want?”

“Don’t worry, I’m just fine.”

“Nope I won’t take your answer. What do you want? Coke, orange juice, milk? What?” Denver felt his eyes were getting heavier. He was feeling sleepy. The effect of alcohol was getting into his system.

“I think I like.” Jeff thought. “Coke. Do you have one?”

“Yep, we do. Your coke is coming.” Denver stood up but his walk was wobbly. He looked back towards Jeff. “I’m not drunk.” He almost lost his balance. His right hand touched against the wall, so he did not stumble.

Denver went into the dining area. Minutes later, he was carrying a big bottle of coke and another glass.

“You have to drink this all by yourself.”

Denver poured the bottle of coke into the glass and gave it to Jeff.

“That’s ice cold.” Denver stated.

Jeff took a drink from the glass.

Denver took another shot of the brandy. Denver felt a whirling sensation, the wall, the ceiling, everything around him, including Jeff was moving in circles. Minutes later, Denver was fast asleep on the couch.

Four hours passed. Denver woke up. He was still dizzy. He moved his fingers around his right eye to clear his vision then stretched his body. It was a nice nap. Denver looked beside him and saw Jeff sleeping. Jeff was snoring loud.

“You know what. You’re crazy. I was asking you to take a shot of the brandy. You refused. Now you’re sleeping and you’re even snoring. You’re a damn crazy kid.”

\*\*\*

Charity was still on Cutie Pie’s burial ground. She was lying with her face on the ground set against her two arms. Charity got no intention of leaving. She wanted to be with her one and only friend.



28

Denver went into the mansion's backyard. Ringo and Paul were inside their cages. They became agitated upon seeing their master. The two dogs were models of ferocity. They were highly trained to attack and devour anything or anyone if Denver asked them to do so.

Jane Sunshine was worried at first with Ringo and Paul. When Denver requested for two big dogs, Jane was hesitant to grant her son's request. She knew that Denver was unstable. She knew that Denver was capable of doing irrational acts. However, when the mansion was visited by two unwanted characters to rob the house Jane yielded.

Ringo and Paul were mere puppies when Denver and Jane bought them. The two dogs were sent to a training school, so they could properly watch over the house and served as securities.

Unknown to Jane, Denver asked the trainer to teach Ringo and Paul on how to attack and kill anything or anyone, to slaughter without mercy. The trainer received a huge amount from Denver. The training of Ringo and Paul was to the max. Money was never a problem to Denver. He was the sole heir of the Sunshine's huge financial investment.

Despite the wealth, Jane was scared of the future. She was scared over her son's unstable character. She was scared that Denver will be squandering all the money someday. Jane thought if given a choice to donate the huge investment to the poor or Denver squandering the money, she would rather give it to the poor. She knew that Steve worked really hard for the investment to grow and serve as the pillar for the Sunshine's future. Jane Sunshine would never bear to see Steve's investment wasted. Jane was still young. However, she was already planning on what to do with the Sunshine stocks. For sure, she will not give everything to Denver. Fifty percent of these stocks will go to the poor.

Denver opened the cages. Ringo and Paul leapt out.

“How are you buddies? Miss me?”

Denver patted and hugged the two dogs. Ringo and Paul alternated in licking their master's hand and face. They were elated. Denver had the time to pet them. The two dogs had two masters, Jane and Denver but their ultimate master was Denver.

Ringo and Paul sometimes were civil to Emilia. She elicited the sympathy of Ringo and Paul because she occasionally gave them dog foods. Emilia was so scared of

the two Dobermans she decided one time to drop by the supermarket and bought dog cookies.

“Hi there cuties. Would you like some food?”

Ringo and Paul ate all the cookies with pleasure. They became civil with Emilia.

“So you’re awfully nice to me now.” Emilia said. The dogs looked tamed and docile when she approached the cages. “With that I’ll give you some more cookies.”

However, days after Ringo and Paul became ferocious once again.

“You ingrates. Do you know that the cookies were so expensive?”

The two dogs were only nice to Emilia if she managed to bribe them. Without the cookies, Ringo and Paul could not tolerate the presence of Emilia.

“I’m cutting all ties with you. No cookies whatsoever. You’re on your own. Expect nothing from me. You silly creatures.”

Emilia decided not to bother Ringo and Paul. Emilia thought that Ringo and Paul were corrupt animals just like Denver.

“Wanna have some fun tonight?” Denver asked.

Ringo and Paul were going crazy. It’s been days since Denver talked to them. Most times, Denver just opened the

cages and let the dogs get out watching the front and backyard. Now he patted and hugged them. It meant a lot to them. They felt special.

Denver took the dogs' chains putting them into Ringo and Paul's collars.

"Soldiers are you ready for action?"

The two dogs barked furiously.

"Are you ready for action?"

The two dogs were snarling.

"So you do want to have fun."

Ringo and Paul were jumping and running around Denver.

"Common, let's go!"

\*\*\*

Night was cold. Charity was in deep slumber due to exhaustion and despair. Her body was aching. Her skin hurts due to prolonged exposure to the hot sun. She was crouching on the burial ground trying to cover herself with her two arms. She was having a hard time moving her limbs. It was unbearable. She was confused. She was disoriented.

Something hard fell on Charity's head. Her body moved a bit, but she hardly woke up. There's another one, then

another one. Charity's hand by instinct touched her head. It was wet, blood was oozing.

Charity heard the sound of dogs. They were snarling, and they sounded angry. Charity tried to wake up. She moved her fingers against her eyes. It was dark and she could barely see.

Charity sensed danger.

Denver was breathing heavily. He was in ecstasy. "Hey buddies, could you see the filthy creature?"

Ringo and Paul were barking furiously.

"Could you smell her?"

Ringo and Paul were going crazy.

Unable to control his excitement, Denver released the chains he was holding and let go of the two huge dogs. "Go grab her."

The two dogs smelled the stink coming from the horrible girl. Almost mad, they raced against each other towards Charity.

Charity was lying with her face on the ground extended her neck to see what was coming.

The two dogs were leaping as they ran until they reached Charity. Ringo bit Charity on the leg while Paul bit Charity on the arm. Charity closed her eyes tightly as she felt the excruciating pain when the dogs tore her flesh.

The two dogs drag Charity's small fragile body on the opposite direction. Charity felt she was being dissected into pieces as the two dogs ravaged her.

Denver was several feet away, breathing heavily. He was filled with thrill as he witnessed the brutality.

Charity tried to crawl back towards Cutie Pie's burial ground. The two dogs got more furious, Ringo was biting her on the neck as if trying to open the veins and arteries beneath the skin to suck the blood. Paul was biting and pulling Charity's hair and would not let go until Charity's head got bald on a certain portion.

Charity unable to bear the agony screamed for the names of her two loved ones. "Grandma! Cutie Pie!" She was trying to defend herself from the attack by using her two hands but the two dogs were getting crazier. "Grandma!!! Cutie Pie!!!" Charity was seeking help.

Fifteen, twenty, thirty minutes passed. Denver was jolted as if waking up from a nightmare. "Ringo! Paul! That's enough!"

The two dogs kept devouring Charity.

"Enough! Stop it!" Denver shouted.

Ringo and Paul stopped. They looked at Denver in contemplation.

"Come here quick. You might get contaminated from that filthy creature."

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Ringo and Paul obeyed and ran towards their master. Denver ran to the parked van, and the two dogs followed. Denver opened the van's sliding side door and the two dogs hopped inside. Denver went into the passenger seat and drove the van really fast.

“So how was it buddies? It was fun wasn't it?” Denver asked. He was breathing heavily.

Ringo and Paul's tongue were hanging from their mouths. Saliva was drooling mixed with Charity's blood.

Charity's mangled body was left on the burial ground. She was gasping for air and fighting for life. Her whole body was trembling. She was covered with blood. Chunks of flesh were torn from her neck, her thighs and her legs.

Charity regurgitated blood. She gasped for air in and out. Her lungs were trying to get fresh air into her system. Charity's right hand moved. She got a flower grass then squeezed it tightly as her whole body went into violent spasms.

\*\*\*

Denver reached home. He went into the backyard and placed Ringo and Paul inside their cages. The two dogs remained agitated. They rocked their cages wanting to get out. It was not enough. They wanted more.

Denver was watching the two dogs as his eyes burned like fire. It was a great fun, watching a filthy creature being ravaged by his two soldiers. Denver hoped that Charity was

not dead. He would return with Ringo and Paul to attack her again and again and again.

Jane Sunshine came.

“Where have you been?”

“Just outside.”

“Outside where?!” Jane screamed.

“Just outside mom.” Denver was scared.

Jane Sunshine lost all control. She slapped Denver with her both hands.

“Why?” Denver was surprised.

“Why? You’re asking why? I told you to stay home!” Jane Sunshine kept slapping. All the anger and frustrations that stuck with her exploded.

Denver tried to cover his face with his two arms. He never expected his mother to be this angry.

Ringo and Paul were barking furiously inside their cages as they witnessed their ultimate master undergoing punishment from their other master.

“Mom stop it!” Denver pleaded. However, Jane was uncontrollable.

Denver moved away from his mother. Denver tripped and stumbled on the ground.



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Jane started kicking Denver.

“Mom please.”

Jane kicked Denver on the back, on the thighs, even on the head.

Denver tried to cover himself with his two hands.  
“Mom you’re going crazy.”

“Yes I am crazy. I’m real crazy. I’m so fed up with you. I hate you! I hate you!!!” Jane was going berserk.

29

Midnight, Pauline was starving. She was craving for human flesh, for the taste of a newly born baby. She felt the hunger pangs inside her stomach. Pain was radiating from the mid-portion of her tummy upward towards the esophagus.

Pauline was outside a shack, moving swiftly but gracefully similar to a predatory animal. She sniffed the air. There was the fresh sweet scent of a newly born baby.

Pauline crawled on all fours. She needed to be careful.

A worker together with his family was living in the shack. The wife had just given birth. Pauline was fully aware. She saw the baby when she passed by coming from school as she rode the car driven by her driver.

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

Pauline crawled towards the shack. She opened the wooden door, careful not to make noise.

Inside, the worker was sleeping together with his wife and three children. The baby was lying between the worker and his wife.

Pauline's instinct was to leap and devour the baby at that instant. However, she got to stay rational, one wrong move and there will be real trouble. The last time, she was almost caught. She heard the workers were getting agitated over the repeated lost of the babies. She needed to stay cautious.

With a swift careful grasp, Pauline got the baby. The baby did not even wake up and was still fast asleep.

Pauline was now running fast. Her blond hair was moving with the wind. Her dark blue eyes radiated against the illumination coming from the bright full moon.

While running, Pauline covered the baby's nose and mouth tightly until it was dead. A baby's cry could catch attention, and the nice meal would be spoiled.

Pauline ran for long kilometers, but she never got tired. All she wanted was to satisfy her hunger. The Rangers underwent a strictly normal diet for quite sometime since the workers were becoming suspicious.

The Rangers sent a fall guy whom they paid a huge sum of money. The fall guy took charge in admitting the fault of stealing the babies and selling them just to cover for the Rangers. The fall guy was currently in prison. The fall guy's

family was reaping the benefit over the huge sum received from the Rangers, yet the talks and suspicion went on.

Pauline reached the Ranger's villa and went directly into the basement. She devoured the dead baby starting with the eyelids. It tasted so good. Pauline's eyes rolled upward in ecstasy. Pauline started tearing the flesh from the soft arm.

"Pauline?!" Louise came. "You're becoming too greedy." Louise grabbed the infant from Pauline.

"That's mine!" Pauline tried to get the baby back, but she was pushed violently and her buttocks fell hard on the floor.

"Can't you share this with me? I'm your grandmother!"

Pauline and Louise ate the baby together. Pauline dislocated the arm and ate the little fingers. It was crunchy as well as juicy.

Louise opened the belly area, dug her right hand inside. She took the liver and the heart chewing them little by little. "Oh god... Oh god..." Louise collapsed on the floor. She ate while lying down.

Martin came. "I knew it. I knew it. I could smell it upstairs. You greedy monsters, you did not even bother calling me." Martin pushed Louise and Pauline, grabbing the baby's remains. "This is all mine."

"That's mine."

"No it's mine."

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

“Give me back the heart and the liver.”

“I want the eyeball and the bone marrow.”

“No! No!! No!!!” You’ve already eaten. It’s my turn.“

The three wrestled against each other. They were all dying for the baby. They underwent a strictly normal diet for months. They were becoming insane as the deep craving for human flesh intensified. However, they were left with no options. The workers were giving them dagger looks as the suspicion grew.

The Rangers used their money. They tried to increase the workers’ salary by one percent. However, it was not enough. The gossip and rumor persisted.

At school, nobody bothered Pauline. There was no mockery. However, everyone was passively hostile. When Pauline walked at the corridor, the students gave her dagger looks. Even the teachers were cold at Pauline. It was only the principal who remained warm. She was still motherly, gave Pauline hugs whenever she sees her.

“How are you my dear child?” Veronica often gave Pauline not just hugs but kisses.

“I’m doing fine Ms. Smith.”

“Are you happy here in school?”

“Yes I am Ms. Smith.”

“I’m so glad to hear that. If you’re having trouble or if you’re having problems don’t hesitate to tell me. I will do my very best to help. Okay?”

“Yeah. Thanks Ms. Smith.” Pauline was glad, she had a strong supporter.

The Rangers were kind to the principal Veronica Smith. Aside from the financial donations, the principal received regular supply of fruits from the Rangers. The Rangers and the principal were very cordial to each other.

The principal spent dinners with the Rangers. Although the principal noticed that the Ranger’s house was filthy. As part of good manners, the principal never once mentioned it. She was happy with the invitation.

When the principal needed a car and a driver, the Rangers were more than happy to accommodate. The principal could use the car together with the driver. When the principal needed something, all she had to do was to tell Pauline.

“Oh Pauline could you help me with something.”

“Oh what is it Ms. Smith?”

Pauline will tell her grandparents. The principal’s wish will be granted.

The Rangers being greedy and wicked also needed a friend and sympathy from others. They found a friend from the principal, and they liked each other’s company. They got

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

no qualms in granting her wishes. They felt that the principal served as Pauline's protector in school.

However, Pauline needed no protector, she could very well protect herself.

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Martin, Louise and Pauline were feasting with the baby's remains.

Unknown to them, the workers were outside the villa.

"Pauline she got the baby. Pauline got the baby!" Karen, Pauline's arch enemy in school, said.

Karen was dead sure that it was Pauline. Pauline was a monster. She ate live animals and Karen knew that Pauline could also eat humans. Karen talked to the workers and told them her suspicion.

Unknown to the Rangers the plantation workers had been watching Pauline's moves.

Karen was very vigilant. This was the night they had waited. Karen saw from her opened window, Pauline running with a baby. She woke up the others, and they ran in pursuit of Pauline.

"The Rangers are monsters."

"I told you. I said before but you're all dead scared of the Rangers." Karen had been telling the workers, she had a

strong hint, Pauline was stealing the babies but nobody wanted to listen.

The people were afraid of the legalities. They knew they could be imprisoned without a strong evidence. The Rangers had powerful legal counsels. Some workers went to prison before due to certain legal issues. One wrong move and they would surely end up in jail.

There was no solid evidence until this night.

“Lets not waste time!”

The workers carrying torches went inside the Ranger’s huge villa. They searched every room until they found the Rangers at the basement wrestling against each other for the baby’s remains.

“Oh my God!” One worker said.

The workers hardly believed what they saw. Martin was feasting on the intestine. Pauline was chewing the eyeball. Louise was holding the bone like a lollipop while sucking the marrow.

Karen vomited upon seeing the bloody scene. She knew Pauline was evil, but she never expected Pauline was worst than evil. Pauline and her grandparents were not humans. They were messengers from hell.

Some workers were holding machetes.

“Hack them, let’s hack them into pieces.”



## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

“No, don’t! They have to be burned. Let’s burn the monsters alive.”

The workers grabbed Louise, Martin and Pauline.

Karen was jolted and scampered away when Pauline being dragged passed by her and their skins touched. Karen had goose bumps all over her body. She remembered her altercation and cat fight with Pauline.

Pauline was pulling Karen’s hair. Pauline was strong being athletic and Karen was unable to fight back. Karen tried to kick Pauline at the stomach but Pauline used her arms to block Karen’s feet. Karen was losing her energy.

Pauline with her long and black fingernails scratched Karen’s tummy. Pauline inserted her full right arm inside Karen, pulled her intestines and feasted on it.

Karen buried her face on her two hands. She closed her eyes tightly. It was all imagination. It’s only in her mind. Karen started screaming. She became hysterical.

A woman worker approached Karen. “What’s happening to you?”

Karen kept screaming.

“Hey what’s the matter?” The worker asked.

Karen dropped on the floor and cried.

“Leave her alone, she’s gone mad.” Another worker stated.

The woman worker and the others left Karen. They went outside the villa to witness a great event.

Karen found herself alone in the basement. She looked around and saw the baby's blood and remains scattered all over the floor.

Karen stood up and ran. She started screaming again.

The Rangers were dragged outside the villa.

"Tie them to the tree. Tie them up."

"What do we use to tie them?"

"Look for something."

There were wires, meters and meters long, set up outside the Ranger's villa used for hanging clothes. Several men took the wires.

"We got something. We got something."

The men used the wires in tying around Martin and Louise's wrists and arms that were pulled up against the old tree branch and trunk at the villa's entrance. Martin and Louise's bodies were fully extended. They were also tied around their feet and around their waists, around their chests, their thighs and neck. The men were to tie Pauline when she managed to escape.

"Run after Pauline. Run after her. Don't let the little monster escape."

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

Karen by now was outside the villa as she saw the Rangers tied to the old tree. She slumped on the ground and covered her face as she could no longer bear to see what's going to happen next. She just sobbed and sobbed.

Pauline ran fast like an animal.

Martin and Louise could hardly move.

“Set us free! We fed you! Gave you food, shelter, gave education to your children!” Louise said.

“Oh shut up! You talk a lot you dirty swine.” A woman worker said.

“Dirty swine? How dare you talk to me like that!” Louise said.

“Dirty swine? How dare you talk to me like that!” The woman worker mimicked.

“You're nothing. You're nobodies.”

“Yeah we're nobodies. Who's nobody now?”

“I'm the most powerful woman here.” Louise said with dignity.

“That was before.”

“You will pay for this! I promise you will surely pay for this disrespect!” Martin threatened.

“Douse them with kerosene. Douse them with kerosene!”

“Where do we get kerosene?”

“Find one, find anything.”

Some men went inside the house and returned several minutes after.

“We found no kerosene.”

“What do you got?”

“Cooking oil.”

The men were carrying liters of cooking oil. It was found at the Ranger’s kitchen. The men searched in frantic running for time. They were looking for kerosene but found none.

“That’ll do.”

The tied body of Martin and Louise were doused with cooking oil.

“Stop it. Stop it!” Martin said.

“What are you planning to do? Set us free! In the name of the Lord God in Heaven, set us free. Have mercy on us.” Louise was now pleading.

“Did we hear it right? She mentioned God.”

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

“Yeah. She’s asking for mercy. God will give you mercy but not us. You’ll receive no mercy from us. You gave no mercy to our babies. You will receive no mercy from us.”

“Right! Give them no mercy.”

“No mercy!”

“No mercy!”

“No mercy!” The workers chanted.

The whole body of Martin and Louise were now soaking wet with cooking oil.

“Please I beg of you. Have mercy on us.” Louise’s eyes were filled with tears.

“No mercy!”

“No mercy!”

“No mercy!”

Pauline at this point hid inside the cornfield. Several men who were running after passed by and failed to find her. Pauline was fast and full of cunning.

The workers lit the doused body of Martin and Louise with a torch.

“Oh God! Oh God help us!” Louise said as she looked high up into the sky filled with twinkling stars.

Pauline heard her grandfather and grandmother were screaming in agony as they were burned alive and fried like chickens. Pauline covered her ears with her two palms. She wanted to run back to save her grandparents, but she was dead scared. If she returned, for sure she'll suffer the same agony. Pauline crouched herself fully inside the cornfield and covered her ears tightly with her two hands yet she could hear the screams.

Karen could no longer bear the spectacle. "Do you have to burn them?!"

"Yes they have to be burned. They have to rot in hell. These monsters gave no mercy. These monsters deserve no mercy." The man leading the burning said.

Pauline spent hours hiding before deciding to run again. She needed to escape. Her life was at stake. She ran and ran. She was the school's prized athlete. Pauline never expected that her running ability would one day save her.

It was dawn and was still dark. Pauline reached the highway. Few vehicles were passing by. She saw a delivery truck carrying sacks and sacks of potatoes. The delivery truck was parked and currently being repaired by the driver and his two male companions.

Pauline crawled up fast to the truck and hid among the sacks. The driver and his two male companions failed to notice Pauline. They were busy fixing the front right tire of the truck.

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

The repair was done and the truck was driven for hours. When the truck stopped, Pauline jumped from it. She was so dirty her dress smeared with blood.

She saw clothes hanging outside a house. She stole a girl's clothing. She changed and hitchhiked. Pauline transferred from one vehicle to another until she reached the city.

She walked and walked. She was barefooted. She hitchhiked once more and an expensive car stopped beside her. Driving was a forty year old man, a bit chubby. He was handsome, with brown hair, wearing spectacles.

The man allowed Pauline to hitchhike. While driving, the man listened from Pauline's pitiful tale of physical abuse and torment from her stepmother.

"Where are you going?" The man asked.

"I don't know."

Pauline said she ran away from home and was homeless. The man believed all bits and pieces of information from Pauline's fanciful tale and decided to bring Pauline home.

"Would you like to stay here?"

"Yes. Oh please yes."

The man noticed that Pauline was lovely. She had blond hair with blue eyes. Pauline was dirty yet she was strikingly beautiful.

Pauline served the man. She cooked, washed the dishes and clothes, cleaned the house, did everything. She was very hardworking, and dedicated.

Sometimes she remembered her grandparents. Martin and Louise gave her everything. She can't help but cry.

"What's happening?" The man asked Pauline.

"It's nothing. I'm just happy to be here." Pauline wanted to prove her worth. She got nothing to cling to. She lost everything after the horrible night. She got no intention to visit her place of origin, or she too will be burned alive.

"You work real hard."

"Just allow me to stay. I'll do anything."

"You're a real nice girl."

"Thank you so much."

"I thank you too."

"It's I who should be thanking. You gave me home. You gave me shelter."

Pauline and the man were thankful for being with each other.

The man grew very fond of Pauline. He decided to send Pauline to school. Pauline finished high school and took up a college course. Before graduation the man asked Pauline to marry him. Pauline was in tears and accepted without



hesitation. The man loved Pauline so much and Pauline loved him as well.

Driven, hardworking, brilliant and strongly motivated, after years and years of study, Pauline finished her course with flying colors. She was very proud of herself. Her husband was very proud of Pauline.

Pauline, just like the man she married became a full pledge doctor. Beautiful, highly educated, respectable and very dignified.

Dr. Jane Pauline Ranger – Sunshine, what a beautiful and haunting name.

Later Pauline became uneasy. She wanted to forget and bury the horrible past.

“I hate you! I hate you!” Pauline often said when she looked at herself in the mirror.

Pauline needed to do something. She hated her blond hair. She hated her blue eyes. She hated herself. She hated everything about her.

Pauline colored her blond hair and transformed it into black. She wore brown contact lenses to cover her deep blue eyes. She never wanted a reminder of the past. Physically there was a transformation but Pauline remained stunningly beautiful.

Pauline always elicited the attention and admiration of her husband’s friends.

“You’re a real lucky guy.” Friends told Steve.

“I’m the lucky one not Steve.” Pauline often said.

Friends felt that Steve Sunshine was fortunate to have a beautiful and intelligent wife.

“I am the lucky one.” Pauline repeated over and over to Steve.

Pauline remained extremely loyal to her husband. Steve was her savior. Without him, Pauline felt she could have gotten abused or assaulted on the street.

Pauline promised herself she would serve her husband until the very end. Steve Sunshine was not only handsome but kind as well. He was very generous and giving especially to the poor. He established a foundation. The Sunshine Charity was dedicated for the destitute, and Pauline was very active in helping her husband with his magnanimous works.

However, Pauline had another dilemma. Her name Pauline Ranger carried a curse. This should never be spoken, just the mere mention of the name made her whole body shivered. It was only her Grandma Louise, who insisted in giving her the two names Jane Pauline when she was born.

Pauline decided to drop the second name Pauline and just used Jane instead. She also decided to erase her maiden name Ranger. In all documents, she just used Jane Sunshine. She never wrote nor spoke Pauline Ranger again, the name and the person she hated so much

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Jane or Pauline tried to eradicate from her system the obnoxious habit of eating human flesh. After that horrible night, she promised never to touch human flesh again. It was a well kept secret. Her husband Steve Sunshine never knew her true background. She invented a story and stuck with her story. She was a victim of physical abuse from a stepmother.

Her husband was inquisitive.

“What was the name of your stepmother?”

Jane thought fast. “I don’t even want to mention her name.”

“What about your father?”

Jane shook her head.

“Don’t you have brothers and sisters? Relatives perhaps?”

“Please Steve, I don’t want to talk about it. I wanted to forgive but I have to forget first.”

“Don’t you want to visit them one day? Show them you made something out of yourself.”

“No I don’t.”

“But you have to be proud, since I myself is very proud of you.”

Jane shook her head. Her sob story was only a fabrication, so there’s no one to visit. Pauline even wanted to erase the memory of her grandparents. Her grandparents loved her so much now she hated them. She felt they were the reason why she learned to eat human flesh. Maybe they’re rotting in hell right now.

She went to church regularly and lighted black candles for her grandparents, for the eternal damnation of their souls in hell. They were more than welcome by Satan. Sometimes she heard the workers telling. Martin and Louise Rangers were alive yet their souls were already burning. It was like a prophecy coming true. They were burned alive.

When Jane looked at herself in the mirror, she saw a stunningly beautiful woman. She saw the face of her grandma Louise. They had similar features, blond hair, deep blue eyes. Black hair and brown contacts lenses were the answers.

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

Steve and Jane never talked about Jane's background once more.

Since that horrible night, not once did Jane tried to touch human flesh, the mere thought gave her nightmares, she felt spiders and scorpions crawling on her skin, just to imagine herself engaging in her previous habit.

She gave birth to her son Denver. Jane was so happy, now she was a mother. Steve loved his wife more. It was a beginning, a father, a mother, a son, a family. Jane never felt so contented. Steve gave her love. Denver gave her joy.

Months passed after giving birth Jane grew weary. She became irritable.

“What’s the matter?” Steve noticed.

With reason unexplained, Jane's craving for human flesh was back and was heightened. At first, she only tasted her own blood when she accidentally pricked herself with a needle, while repairing her husband's trouser. Later she wanted more. She wanted the flesh of a newly born baby, her all time favorite.

She decided to buy a newly born baby from a drug dependent mother. She promised herself it was the last. Then, there was another then another, and then another.

One night Steve woke up. He found himself alone on the bed. He looked for his wife.

“Jane... Jane where are you?”

He went into Denver's room. The baby was sleeping. Steve went into the bathroom.

“Jane?”

He searched every room but Jane was nowhere to be found.

Steve decided to go to the stock room. Steve knew it was empty. They often put inside the stock room canned goods and other items to be distributed for the poor. It was empty because all the items were already given to the needy days ago.

However, Steve was surprised when he opened the light and saw his wife Jane slumped on the floor. “Oh my God. What the hell are you doing?”

Jane's hand and face were full of blood.

“What the hell are you doing?”

“Steve?” Jane was tongue tied.

Steve could hardly believe. Right there in front of him was his beautiful wife committing a horrible act. Jane was feasting on the thigh of a dead infant.

“Steve, Steve forgive me. Forgive me please.” Jane crawled and knelt in front of her husband embracing him around the legs. “Forgive me, I was just hungry. This won't happen again. This would be the last time.”

“Hungry? What do you mean hungry? There are plenty of foods in the kitchen.” Steve felt really sick.

Jane could hardly explain. “Please, Steve I don’t know what to say. I promise this won’t happen again.”

“You promise this won’t happen again. How many times have you done this? How many?”

Jane failed to answer.

“How many?!”

Jane was crying. “Steve please.”

“Who are you? Where did you come from? Why were you running the first time I saw you? You’re running from where? You’re running from what? Tell me the truth.” Steve felt the revulsion towards his wife. Jane was very beautiful. She was young, filled with innocence when he found her and took her under his care. Steve never imagined a woman so lovely could perform an abominable act. Steve felt like vomiting.

Jane embraced Steve tightly around the legs. She was kneeling on the floor seeking forgiveness from his savior. Steve was a like a god to Jane.

“Steve I’ll do anything. Just forgive me. I’ll do anything for you to make you proud and happy.”

“Make me proud?”

Jane felt terrible. She hated herself. “Let me explain. Let me explain about myself, about my past.”

“What past?”

How can she explain her horrible past to the man she truly loved? Jane felt she could never survive without her husband. Steve was her mentor, her guide, her provider. Steve was everything to her.

“About my past. It’s, I don’t know where to start.”

“No... No please... I don’t wanna hear it. Get away from me. You get away!” Steve pushed Jane away using his legs and walked fast towards the door.

Steve felt something dug deep into his back.

Jane was holding the knife as she stabbed her husband once, twice, thrice.

Steve collapsed on the floor, his right arm reaching on his back trying to remove the knife that was deeply embedded and puncturing his lungs.

Jane was using the knife to cut the baby into pieces. The knife served another purpose.

Jane was horrified. “Steve, Steve I’m sorry.” Again, she knelt on the floor and hugged her husband tightly. “I’m so sorry. I didn’t mean to do it.” Jane removed the knife from Steve’s back. It was smeared with her husband’s blood.



## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

Jane felt an urge and licked the blood from the knife. It tasted really good, maybe because she loved her husband so much.

Steve was dying, lying on Jane's lap.

Jane unable to control herself devoured her husband on the neck like a vampire. It was really good. Not satisfied, she ate her husband for days until her stomach was almost bloating.

Jane got very depressed. Steve was her mentor, her guide. Steve was like a god to Jane. Steve was everything to her. She knew she could not survive without Steve. However, after several months, Jane recovered. She went on a diet and regained her slim figure.

“Well well well. I'm slender once again.”

Jane accepted her fate. She no longer hated herself when she looked at the mirror. She was now seeing a stunningly beautiful woman, intelligent, dignified, and highly educated.

Steve was now part of the past. Who cares? Steve was a good meal, and Jane was satisfied. His heart and liver tasted so yummy. Jane often licked her lips and salivated whenever she remembered the heart and liver of her late husband.

Denver acquired the unusual habit of her mother. Before, Denver was merely eating, rats, dog, cats, and rabbits. However, as he grew older he started eating human flesh and became fond of babies.

“I want some more mom.”

“Okay you can have it.” Jane was very giving. Denver was her one and only son. Steve was gone. She only had Denver. She will do everything to make his son happy.

Denver never thought of eating Ringo and Paul. The two dogs were his brothers. He loved them so much.

Even the servant Emilia learned to eat human flesh.

“Oh Dr. Sunshine, it tasted really nice.”

“I told you.”

Jane Sunshine with her usual benevolent self never hesitated to share the exotic meal to Emilia. Being part of the Sunshine household, Emilia enjoyed the benefits and privileges.

At first they only bought babies, but it became too expensive.

“What do we do Dr. Sunshine?” Emilia asked.

“You’re talented. You can do something if you want. Don’t you?”

“Okay I will.”

They just stole the babies at various slum areas where Jane Sunshine performed charity works. It was the servant Emilia, who became an expert in stealing. She acted like a garbage collector, thin and dressed in tatters. She was highly

convincing. Emilia was so adept and not once was she caught.

Jane was totally convinced of Emilia's capabilities. She was very good in cooking, in cleaning the house. Emilia had excellent musical abilities. Emilia developed another expertise, stealing babies.

"You're sooo good. I'm so proud of you." Jane often told Emilia.

"Because I admire you so much Dr. Jane Sunshine, you're like a big sister to me."

"And you're my little sister." Jane hugged Emilia, who also hugged back.

"Oh. We're really like sisters." Emilia said.

"We are sisters."

Jane not only provided Emilia a handsome salary, but Emilia was given additional benefits and luxuries. She was Jane Sunshine's female comrade. Steve was gone. However, Jane felt Emilia had taken over Steve's position of a good provider. Emilia provided Jane and Denver stolen babies for their nourishment and sustenance.

Jane felt she and Denver could not survive without Emilia. It would be hard to find a replacement, somebody who was so adept in stealing babies but could also be trusted, a keeper of secrets. Jane knew that without Emilia, she and Denver will die of starvation, starvation for human flesh.

Jane, Denver and Emilia ate human flesh on an occasional basis only. They still ate normal foods. If human flesh was not available, they ate animals as substitutes. But their all time favorite was the flesh of the newly born babies.

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Jeff was sleeping. He felt something on his face until he woke up. It was his doggie. Tom Tom was going crazy, barking and jumping on Jeff's face to wake him up.

Tom Tom jumped from the floor to Jeff's lap then to his face. This was repeated over and over. Tom Tom did not stop until Jeff was awake.

Jeff was inside an empty room. He was tied on a chair. Jeff struggled hard to free himself. However, the rope tied around his body, and his two hands was too tight.

Jeff smelled something rotten.

The room was dimly lit. There was a light bulb at the ceiling. However, it provided a small glare. Jeff tried to look around the room, but he was dizzy and unable to think properly.

When Jeff and Tom Tom were alone, the little puppy moved and acted like a living dog. Jeff need not asked him to perform his tricks. Through the spiritual guidance of the real puppy Tom Tom, the toy puppy acted like a normal living dog. However, with the presence of others, Tom Tom was an ordinary toy. He will not move or perform his tricks, unless Jeff asked him to do so.

However, now that nobody was present. Tom Tom was going nuts.

“Tom Tom, do something. Help me please.” Jeff pleaded. He moved his body against the chair. He felt he was in a trap. The restraint around his body was strong. Jeff could hardly breathe. He was gasping for fresh air. It was hot inside the room and beads of perspiration were all over him.

It was his fault, Jeff told himself. He made a pact with his parents, that he will go straight home after school. It was his fault. He was too hard headed. He broke a promise, now he was suffering the consequence.

Tom Tom was barking. He was furious. He wanted to help his friend. Tom Tom was helpless. He ran around the room, barked, leaped from the floor towards Jeff's lap then leaped down again.

Jeff and Tom Tom were both confused unable to do the right thing, unable to do anything.

Jeff remembered he felt dizzy and fell asleep when he drank the coke Denver gave him.

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

Denver mixed the coke with sleeping pills. Denver fell asleep with the alcohol. Jeff fell asleep with the pills.

Jane Sunshine wanted Denver to eat Jeff's brain so Denver might acquire Jeff's talent. She was hoping that like Jeff maybe Denver someday can create a toy dog and make a breakthrough in Science. Jane was a doctor and wanted her son Denver to get involved in the medical field. However, Jane remained frustrated. Denver instead of becoming immersed in his studies became a school bully.

"Tom Tom, help me please." Jeff felt the lurking danger. He was not sure where Denver was, but he was afraid what Denver would do next. "Tom Tom."

Tom Tom was barking and leaping on Jeff's lap. He somersaulted high up in the air, wagged his tail while doing his circus act. However, this was the best Tom Tom could do.

Jeff kept struggling until the chair with Jeff tied around it collapsed on the floor.

Tom Tom as if with the mind of his own bit the rope tying on Jeff's two wrists. Tom Tom kept biting the knot pulling the rope. The doggie pulled and pulled until the knot loosened.

Jeff's heart was pounding wildly. He was perspiring profusely. He felt the loosening of the knot on his two wrists. It was his chance. He managed to free his two arms and worked his way with the rope around his body.

Jeff was tied using only one long rope. When the knot around his two wrists loosened, it was easy to untie everything.

“Oh my God thanks so much. Thank you Tom Tom.”  
Jeff took his doggie and kissed him several times.

Jeff noticed there was a bulky thing on one corner of the room. It was covered with a sack. Jeff took the sack off and there was the housekeeper Emilia, seated, dead.

Emilia and Denver had a serious altercation several days ago. Denver threw a figurine on her head, and it was cut opened.

Jane was shocked to see Emilia bleeding. Emilia was her little sister. “Oh my God. What have you done again?!” Jane was furious to Denver.

“She’s crazy. She’s so damn crazy!” Denver didn’t care a bit.

Emilia made a silly joke.

“I’m really hungry. I want to eat Ringo and Paul.”  
Emilia said with a smile on her face.

Denver lost his temper and threw the figurine to Emilia.

Jane tried to stitch Emilia’s wound.

“Dr. Sunshine, what have I done to deserve this?”  
Emilia cried.



## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

“Common be quiet, I’m doing something to your wound.” Jane tried to console Emilia. Jane felt like crying. Emilia looked so fragile and pitiful.

Jane saw the blood oozing from Emilia’s head. Jane had the sudden urge to taste it. Jane licked the blood from Emilia’s head.

Denver was watching and got envious. He too licked the blood from Emilia’s head.

“It’s yummy.” Denver kept licking.

“You’re so damn greedy.” Jane pushed Denver away from Emilia.

Denver pushed his mother away.

Jane was infuriated. She got a knife, raised it high then stabbed Emilia.

Denver took another knife.

Both mother and son went crazy and kept stabbing Emilia until she was dead. Emilia became a meal for Jane and Denver Sunshine.

Jane cried and got depressed. Emilia, her beloved surrogate sister was now dead. She felt that it was Denver’s fault. It was Denver’s altercation with her beloved surrogate sister who prompted Jane Sunshine to stab her.

Anyway, past was past. And just like Steve, Emilia was gone. She was good a meal. And just like Steve, Emilia's heart and liver tasted so yummy.

Denver became the target of Jane's frustrations and anger. The donations from the government for the destitute were slashed into half. Emilia was gone. Denver remained hard headed. Denver was getting into Jane Sunshine's nerve. She exploded with the slight provocation from her son. It was time for her to impose discipline to prove once and for all, who was the real master of the Sunshine dynasty.

Jane was scared that Denver one day would grab all the Sunshine wealth for himself and leave her penniless during her old age. She needed to do something while Denver was still young. Jane was thinking of raising another son or maybe a daughter, someone who possessed enough discipline unlike Denver, who was spiteful. She was starting to hate her own son. Jane was planning to eat Denver.

Jeff ran out of the house fast carrying Tom Tom. Luckily, Ringo and Paul were locked inside their cages.

Emilia was already dead for three days.

Jeff ran oblivious of his surroundings. He was able to get out of the Sunshine's affluent village.

Jeff ran, and ran but unaware that he was passing the outside perimeter of the slum area.

The men with torches saw a young boy carrying a toy dog running. The men intercepted Jeff.

“Hey boy, why are you running?”

Jeff was confused and incoherent. He was surrounded by the group of men with torches. He looked at the faces of the men one by one. The men were rugged and dirty. Jeff was unable to distinguish one from the other. Their faces all looked the same to him.

“We’re asking why are you running?”

“Denver.”

“What?!”

“Denver. It was Denver.” Jeff wanted to say something more but unable to do so.

“What are you saying?”

“Denver! Denver!”

“Fix yourself. What do you mean?” The men were becoming impatient.

One man grabbed Jeff on his collar and raised him high up. Jeff was strangulated. He was above the ground and started to kick his two feet.

“Can’t you talk? Can’t you talk?”

“Let go off the boy. You’re killing him.”

The man holding Jeff by the collar refused to let go. Suddenly, the man was punched on the face. He released Jeff

and he collapsed on the ground. He saw small stars twinkling around him.

The other men turned to Jeff.

“We’re you hurt boy? We’re you hurt?”

Jeff shook his head.

The man who held Jeff seeing twinkling stars was kicked repeatedly by the other men for assaulting the young boy.

“What happened boy? Why are you running?” The men asked Jeff once again.

Jeff was scared stiff but was able to relate the incidents little by little.

“I just saw the van of Dr. Sunshine several blocks from here when I came home.”

“Let’s go.”

The men with torches run to the location of the van.

The slum dwellers were used to seeing the van parked outside the slum area since Jane Sunshine was conducting regular charity and performing free medical works. The van was tinted, and the inside could not be seen from the outside.

“Would you like us to take you home?” One man offered to Jeff.

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Jeff shook his head then ran again.

“Hey where are you going?”

Jeff did not look back. He ran and ran carrying Tom Tom with him.

32

Inside the van, Jane and Denver were busy with another baby.

“Mom it tastes great!”

“So yummy.”

“The heart is mine.” Jane said.

“I’ll have the liver.” Denver said.

“No! Both the heart and liver are mine. They’re my favorite!”

“Mom you’re so greedy.”

Jane slapped Denver. “I’ve given you everything. It’s time for me to have something for myself.”

Denver felt guilt ridden. Her mother was castigating him. It pierced his heart.

“You may have the toes.” Jane said to Denver.

Denver was left with no option but to feast with the toes. However, Denver was surprised. It was crunchy. It tasted sweet and fresh.

The window of the van was suddenly broken. The glass shattered and the door was opened. Several men were carrying huge rocks.

Jane and Denver were startled.

“Monsters! Just what I thought.” One of the men said.

The men with torches were in frenzy, another baby was lost. The mother was hysterical. Everyone searched until they saw Jeff running.

Some of the slum dwellers noticed Dr. Jane Sunshine got agitated with pregnant women. There was a time when Jane salivated while looking at a newly born. However, these incidents were ignored. She was a highly respected doctor. She could do no wrong.

Dr. Jane Sunshine’s magnanimous works were only a façade. It was a cover of her true nature, her diabolical and malevolent intention, her desire for the newly born.

"Kill them, kill them both."

The slum dwellers were raving mad.

\*\*\*

Jeff reached home.

"Where have you been!?" Miriam was frantic.

"What happened to you?" Jacob was in panic.

The parents looked for hours. Jeff failed to come home from school. Miriam and Jacob went to the police station, called several people. They searched and searched. They went home hoping their son had already arrived. Now he's here.

The parents were both mad. However, seeing Jeff disoriented, unable to give comprehensible answers and was trembling in fear, they decided to bring him to the hospital.

\*\*\*

The men dragged Jane and Denver outside the van. However, Jane and Denver were like wild animals. They would not allow themselves to get caught. Their mouths were drooling with the baby's blood. They bit anyone who touched them.

"They're ferocious!"

"They're real monsters!"



Some of the men got wounded. Others were afraid to get near. The eyes of Jane and Denver were burning like fires.

Jane and Denver were able to run free.

“Don’t let them escape.”

The men with torches ran after.

“Mom I’m scared.” Denver started to feel afraid.

“Don’t worry, I’ll take charge.” Jane’s eyes were almost bursting into flame. She was used to this kind of situation. She did it before. She would be able to do it again, to escape and save herself and her son Denver.

Jane still loved her son, despite Denver getting into her nerves.

Jane and Denver ran but were intercepted by another group of men with flamed torches. The slum dwellers were dead serious in guarding the slum area. Several groups of men were dispatched every night to provide security. Jane and Denver found themselves surrounded.

“Mom... Mom...” Denver was crying.

Jane embraced her son tightly. She contemplated as she recalled the dark episode of the past, that horrible night thirty years before.

Jane could hear the screams of her grandparents, the screams of agony while they were burned alive. It was so

loud and Dr. Sunshine was almost deaf. She wanted to cover both her ears. Jane moved her two hands but unable to do so. The deaf defying scream she was hearing was coming right from her own mouth and from her son Denver as they were being burned alive.

"Aaaaaaaahhhhhhhh!!!!!"

When caught, Jane and Denver were tied against an old tree.

"Let's douse them with kerosene."

"Where do we get kerosene?"

"You go look."

Several men ran back into the slum area but failed to find kerosene.

The men returned.

"We don't have kerosene."

"What do you got?"

"Cooking oil."

"Yes! That'll be better. Let's fry the monsters."

"Let's fry them like chickens."

"We can't call them fried chickens but fried monsters."

"Yesss!"

“Fry them!”

“Fry!”

“Fry!”

“Fry!”

“Fry!”

“Fry!” The slum dwellers chanted in unison.

They were raising their fists in triumph as they chanted for the frying of the abominable monsters.

Jane and Denver felt the scorching heat of the flame.

The frying was done for hours. The slum dwellers did not stop until Jane, and Denver’s flesh was crispy.

“Stop it, it’s over.”

“It’s not enough. It’s not enough.”

“These monsters are from hell. It’s not enough for what they did.”

\*\*\*

The ravaged body of Charity was lying on the cold ground. There was a little life emanating from her. She crawled little by little until reaching the ground where Cutie Pie was buried. She wanted to be with her friend. Finally, she succumbed.

\*\*\*

Jane and Denver had long wanted to eat Charity. They saw her as a rare exotic meal, but she was so filthy. She might be carrying a disease. They turned to Cutie Pie instead. It was Denver, who ate her.

When Denver saw Charity after she buried Cutie Pie, his craving for the filthy girl worsened, but he also felt the repulsion. It was a mixed feeling of craving and disgust. He decided to let Ringo, and Paul attacked her. He would no longer have the desire to eat her when she's gone.

When Jeff was around, Jane and Denver were merely playing their games just to pull Jeff into their trap. They knew that Jeff was extra smart, so they didn't want him to have a hint. When Jane was looking for Emilia it was just a play, Emilia was already dead for several days.

The real reason why Jane became highly irritable was the scarcity of the babies. The men were so vigilant in guarding the slum area, and it was getting harder to get the babies.

\*\*\*

The day after at the hospital, Miriam and Jacob learned everything from Jeff.

“Oh my God.” Miriam and Jacob embraced Jeff tightly. They were so grateful Jeff managed to escape.

Jeff was traumatized but was already calm. Beside him was Tom Tom. It was his toy doggie that saved his life.

\*\*\*

Dawn, it was deep cold. It was dark. The obnoxious smell of the garbage filled the air as the lifeless body of Charity lied on the ground. Flies were swarming on the dead body.

### 33

Jeff spent three days at the hospital. Upon discharged, they went to the authorities to report everything.

The police went into the house of the Sunshine and found the dead body of Emilia. They also found Ringo and Paul inside their cages.

The police investigated. They went to the slum area where Jane Sunshine conducted her Charity works. Nobody wanted to talk. The charred remains of Jane and Denver were already buried. The slum dwellers eradicated the monsters from hell.

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

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Jeff and his parents were driving home when they passed by a vacant lot filled with garbage.

“Mom Dad look.”

It was the dead body of Charity. It remained unnoticed at a certain distance and was like an ordinary garbage. However, Jeff’s eyes were sharp.

Jeff and his parents alighted fast from the car. Jeff was carrying his toy doggie Tom Tom. They could hardly believe what they saw. The whole body of Charity was covered with large wounds. Her head was almost decapitated from her neck. Chunks of flesh were torn from her thighs, legs, arms.

“Who did this?” Jacob said.

“It’s too much. It’s way too much.” Miriam said.

The family was unable to decide what to do. Would they call an ambulance, the hospital, police authorities? What? They stared at the dead body of Charity as they contemplated.

Miriam and Jacob had never seen Charity before. They were only aware of her physical description as related by their son Jeff.

They knew that Charity was physically appalling but were also aware of her kindness as told by their son. However, they never expected something so horrible to be inflicted on the girl.

Miriam noticed something. “Could you smell that?”

“What is it?”

“Could you smell it?”

“What is it?”

“There’s a sweet fragrance.”

The smell of a fresh blooming flower filled the air. Miriam, Jacob and Jeff searched as to where the scent was coming. There were grass flowers scattered on the vacant lot, plenty of them. Miriam bent down to smell them. It was the typical smell of grass.

“It’s coming from her.” Jeff said.

Tom Tom barked repeatedly.

“What?” Miriam asked.

“The sweet scent is coming from Charity.”

Miriam and Jacob tried to smell the dead body, and it was true. Charity’s dead body was emitting a sweet fragrance.

“This is impossible.”

Miriam and Jacob could hardly believe.

Charity was dead yet Charity was emitting an unexplained sweet fragrance.



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Miriam and Jacob called a funeral parlor and the body of Charity was taken. They also called the police that made an investigation. The family also informed the church of what they found out.

The church authorities visited the funeral parlor and were convinced. A certain fragrance was coming from Charity's body. The church took the body of Charity.

A day after, something unusual happened. The large wounds of Charity healed. The dark red skin emitted a glow, there was a certain aura. The face which was normally repulsive became lovely to look at.

Charity's body was placed at the center of the Church altar. It was positioned standing up. Charity remained dress in tatters and tainted with blood. The church authorities decided not to change her clothes. This was the same clothing she was wearing when she was ravaged by Ringo and Paul.

At the back of the body was the huge miraculous Black Crucified Christ.

There was an expression of torture on Charity's face, an expression of pain and suffering. Her eyes closed. Her mouth mildly opened as if seeking for help. However, her face emitted certain radiance.

The news spread about Charity, and people from everywhere started coming. Those afflicted with sickness touched Charity's body.

“I felt better.”

“I felt stronger.”

“I breathe better.”

“I got rid of my coughing spells.”

The church got filled with people, the rich and the slum dwellers sat side by side with each other along the church pews.

Bela Lugosi was there. The heavy weight lady was there. Bertha was there. Francine was there. Jerry, the man who hit Charity on the head with his knuckle was there. The middle aged woman who grabbed Charity's sandwich was there, and a lot more. They were all seeking for spiritual healing from the girl who was once branded as the daughter of Satan.

People of all ages, young, old, people from all walks of life, the rich, the poor, the powerful, the helpless, the beggars, the mighty, the homeless were present seeking for sanctification. They were inside the church not merely to ask for physical healing but divine intervention as well.

Jeff, Miriam and Jacob joined the others in conducting a vigil. Every night coming from work, Miriam and Jacob together with their son Jeff with the toy doggie Tom Tom took their time in visiting Charity.

Miriam and Jacob were grateful that their son Jeff was given a chance to have an encounter with the girl Charity.

The people inside the church were reciting a prayer when the people stopped. The sweet fragrance filled the

## ANGEL OF CHRIST?

whole church. Before, the fragrance was coming only from the body of Charity now it was all over the church.

"Miracle this is a miracle."

The people knelt and sang hymns and praises. The others tried to outdo each other to touch the girl.

"Charity!"

"Charity!!"

"Charity!!!"

The girl who was despised, defiled, hated, spat was now adored. She was the center of adulation.

The prayers, chanting and praises continued. Grateful from the miracle God had sent.

"Mom Dad, she was dead for weeks now, how come her appearance didn't change a bit?" Jeff asked his parents.

"She's blessed by God."

## 34

Inside Jeff's room the window was open and the wind blew from outside inside the corners of the room. Lying on Jeff's bed was the book *Vampires*. The wind blew stronger and the book was leafed through its pages.

The book touched on historical documents and notorious figures in history, real people who engaged in certain forms of brutality to satisfy their sadistic cravings.

According to the book, there was a historical figure, a highly notorious man who lived in Europe by the name of Vlad Tepes. This diabolical figure was born in Wallachia, now known as the modern day Romania, where he reigned in terror.

Vlad Tepes was a prince and ruler of Wallachia during the mid fourteenth century.

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Vlad Tepes was also known as Vlad Dracula meaning son of the dragon. His father was Vlad II also known as Vlad Dracul, since he was a member of a fraternal order of knights known as the order of the dragon.

Dragon in Romania meant Drac and Ul was the definitive article. In Romania “ulea” meant “son of”. Vlad Tepes or Vlad the III became known as Vlad Dracula meaning son of the Dragon.

In Wallachia, Dracula means devil.

Tepes meant impaler. This was how the way Vlad killed his victims, impaling them on stakes or spears and displaying them publicly. Impalement was Vlad’s method of torture and execution. The death was slow and painful.

Most of Vlad Tepes victims were enemies who were not part of his allies. He eliminated all possible threats to his power. He took sadistic pleasure in torturing his victims, men, women, children, including babies regardless of religion and social class.

His captured enemies were forced to build a castle known as Castle Dracula.

Vlad Tepes enforced a strict moral code to his people. Those who defied would be punished through impalement. He launched an attack against his enemies, and his victims ran into tens of thousands.

His enemy’s army tried invading Wallachia. However, was forced to retreat when they witnessed a horrifying scene. Thousands of people were impaled.

Vlad Dracula was defeated in a battle and was decapitated. He was remembered as one of the most brutal figures in the history of mankind.

However, Vlad Tepes is considered as a national hero in Romania for defending his country against the invading enemies.

Vlad Tepes or Vlad Dracula never drank his victim's blood.

Most people believed that Bram Stoker the creator and writer of Dracula based his blood thirsty hero from Vlad Tepes, the historical Dracula. When it was translated on the screen, Bela Lugosi became famous for portraying the dashing blood thirsty hero.

However, there was another notorious historical figure, which drank and bath from the blood of her victims. She was Elizabeth Bathory, a countess from Hungary. Born during the mid fifteenth century, she was also known as Countess Dracula due to her similarity with Vlad Dracula.

Elizabeth Bathory was a highly educated woman. She read and wrote in four languages. She married another aristocrat and had several children. Her husband was a military man and was a chief commander leading the war. During this time, Elizabeth was left to defend her husband's estate.

Elizabeth aside from being highly educated was stunningly beautiful who was vain and grossly self centered.

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She engaged in a grotesque perversion and developed an interest in black magic.

As she grew older Elizabeth began to fade, and she developed the habit of bathing and drinking human blood to retain her youth and beauty. Years and years she practiced the act of vampirism. Young girls were enticed to work in her castle only to end up as victims of Countess Elizabeth.

The countess was caught and was sent to death. However, the court decided to put her on house arrest. The act of condemning a noble woman to death would be a disgrace to the respected names of the nobility.

Elizabeth Bathory was imprisoned in her own castle wall. Four years later, she died at the age of fifty four.

Another notorious historical figure was Gilles De Rais, accused of torture and murder of children. When his father died, his mother remarried and Gilles felt isolated and alone. He lived with his grandfather together with his brother. However, his grandfather had a violent temper. Gilles like Elizabeth Bathory was an intellectual. He spoke and read Latin and a lover of music.

Gilles even fought with Joan of Arc, a peasant girl who led an army to defend France against the English. Gilles together with Joan were proclaimed as heroes.

Joan of Arc was eventually captured by the English. She was accused of witchcraft and was burned. Joan of Arc hundreds of years after was hailed as the National Heroine of France and was canonized as a Saint.

Gilles despite his brilliance and military accomplishments found his life monotonous. He started to engage in the murder of children who appeased his sadistic cravings. He got engaged in black magic and communing with the devil. He offered the murdered children as sacrifices.

He was caught and sentenced to die through strangulation and burning. During the hour of his death, he prayed on his knees and sought forgiveness from God and from the families of the murdered children.

History had repeated itself, from Vlad Tepes or maybe years before him, to Elizabeth Bathory, Gilles de Rais, Martin and Louise Ranger, Jane Pauline Ranger - Sunshine, Denver Sunshine, to Emilia.

It went on and on and on.



35

Charity was speeding upward fast towards a dark oblivion. Her eyes were closed. Her hands clenched into tight fists. She was dressed in tatters.

Charity speeded faster. Her whole body was trembling and undergoing spasms, she was gasping for fresh air.

Finally, she jolted and stopped, as if she woke from a deep sleep.

Charity looked around. It was all dark, and there was nothing. She looked down. She was stepping on air, floating.

Charity was afraid she might fall. She slowly moved her hands trying to cling into something but there was none.

She was alone.

It was freezing cold.

She remained stationary.

She heard something.

“Charity...”

Someone was calling.

"Charity..."

Charity saw an old woman, moving slowly towards her. The old woman was graceful. She was dressed in white but was like a ghost emitting a certain glow.

Charity narrowed her eyes to have a better vision.

“Charity.” The old woman was now face to face with Charity.

“Grandma?” Charity’s tiny voice whispered.

“It’s me.” Grandma Joan said.

Charity embraced the old woman tightly. “Grandma...”

“My little girl.”

“Grandma...” Charity embraced tighter as tears rolled down her face. It’s been so long. The hug from the old woman provided comfort.

“I have something for you.” The old woman moved her right hand to her back.

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“Cutie Pie!”

Charity kissed the small kitten. Cutie Pie with her front legs embraced Charity, glad to see her friend. The kitten smiled then licked Charity repeatedly on the face.

Charity looked at her Grandma Joan. The old woman can see. She was no longer blind.

Grandma Joan by her two arms carried Charity, who was holding Cutie Pie on the hind leg. The old woman had huge white wings flapping on her back.

Charity heard songs and praises. Charity saw colossal white clouds and from the clouds, hundreds of little angels with white wings emerged, they were singing.

The old woman carried Charity and Cutie Pie towards the colossal white clouds while hundreds of angels sang.

The old woman threw Charity and Cutie Pie into the air. A pair of small white wings emerged from Charity’s back. Cutie Pie as well developed a pair of small white wings.

“Cutie Pie you got wings.” Charity was amazed as she saw her friend floating in the air with two small white wings flapping. “You can fly.”

Grandma Joan took Charity’s hand, and Charity grabbed Cutie Pie on the hind leg.

Grandma Joan, Charity and Cutie Pie rushed towards the colossal white cloud.

Jojo Regalado

Hundreds of little angels sang their songs and praises. There were baby angels playing flutes, lyres, trumpets and violins providing melody to the soft voices filling the air with angelic harmony.

END

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jojo Regalado lives and writes in the Philippines.