

# **FEAR FACTORS**

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**PETER ANDREW SACCO**



## INDEX

<a href="#"><u>DEDICATION</u></a> .....	7
<a href="#"><u>ONE HELL OF A SEXY DEAL</u></a> .....	<b>9</b>
<a href="#"><u>OPEN SEASON</u></a> .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<a href="#"><u>MAN'S BEST FRIEND</u></a> .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<a href="#"><u>BATTLE WITH THE BULGE</u></a> ...	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<a href="#"><u>THE CLOSET</u></a> .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<a href="#"><u>RUNAWAY TRAIN</u></a> .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<a href="#"><u>BRAIN CHILD</u></a> .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<a href="#"><u>TRICK OR DREAM</u></a> .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<a href="#"><u>THE FOURTH REICH</u></a> .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<a href="#"><u>THE BLOODY BUTCHER</u></a> .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<a href="#"><u>ABOUT THE AUTHOR:</u></a> .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>



## DEDICATION

We've all dreamt those dreams that cause us to stir in our sleep, awake and think about what if they really could happen? Fear Factors is a collection of short stories which looks at those frightening dreams which cause many to stay away at night and ponder their worst fears. It takes a look at the dark side of humanity and the evil humans are willing to do to others as well as themselves. Jules Verne was a visionary who authored books based on his fantastical dreams and insights. Decades later, much of what he wrote about in fiction has become a large part of technological fact. What if all types of dreams could come true? Scary thought!

This book is dedicated to: my parents John and Bridget, my sisters, Melanie and Lisa, aunts Angie and Mary, Uncle Jim, Frank, Jim, Janet and Robert Sproat.

It is dedicated to fellow readers and authors like myself who like to think about the sensational fiction which has ability to create goose bumps throughout bodies. Because of the likes of Stephen King, Alfred Hitchcock, Wes Craven, Edgar Allen Poe, Tim Burton, Chris Carter and David Cronenberg, I too have ventured into the magic, fantasies, horrors and illusions of writing what makes people mumble..."uh oh!" Thanks to these masters of horror!

And thank you to every reader who enjoys my work!



**ONE HELL OF A SEXY DEAL**

## **CHAPTER ONE**

A sickly looking man in his late thirties stands atop the edge of a high bridge, overlooking very choppy waters. After much hesitation, he slings one leg over the rail, and then the other, until both feet come to rest on a ledge no more than eight inches wide. The fierce winds blow the ball cap from his head into the water. What is left of the man's hair is strewn about in the wind. The man purses his lips tightly. His badly disfigured face looks like it will crack if he flinches any tighter. A harsh sounding cough resembling a dog's bark, resonates from his mouth. Tears gently start to form in the corner of the man's eyes and slowly begin to stream down his cheeks until they are lost in the deep, dark crevasses of his face. The man lets one of his hands become independent of the railing. His arm blows free like a rag doll. The right side of his overcoat takes off in the wind like a child's kite. A motorist passing by, sees the man and stops their car. A couple step out and rush over to the man. A second motorist follows suit and then a third. Soon there is a handful of people standing at the edge of the bridge trying to talk the man out of jumping.

The man slips out of his over-coat, one arm at a time, grasping onto the iron rail firmly with each hand. The man slings the coat back over the rail and stares at the onlookers for a brief moment. One of the women standing near the man catches his coat in her arms and face, as the others try to pull the man back over the rail. In a loud shriek, the man screams "You win, you son of a bitch!" Before they can grab onto his legs, or torso, the man leaps off the bridge and his body descends violently in the wind toward the water. Several of the onlookers turn their heads in disbelief, while others stare over the rail, watching him plunge down into the dark depths. The woman, who caught the man's jacket, removes a large envelope that has been stapled to the lining of his coat pocket. She opens the brown envelope and reveals what appears to be a small manuscript. In the background, wailing sirens can now be heard growing closer. The woman walks away from the bridge with her husband, and reads the manuscript aloud.

"I am Dr. David Jacob. Welcome to my nightmare."

## **CHAPTER TWO**

It was not long ago I had everything a thirty-nine year old man could possibly ask for. I had a beautiful, blonde wife with a figure which could compete with any runway model. I had a great job as a professor of philosophy at Columbia University. I drove a brand new Mercedes coupe. And my penthouse totally incredible! I believe everything I ever owned, I deserved, including my problem which I will share with you soon.

Before I tell you about 'that' problem, allow me to tell you about the problem I had which put me in a dilemma of sorts. You see, I have a problem with women. I really do love my wife, but there are just so many nice tits and asses out there, at times, I just lose it. I just can't help lusting after women! Being in the position I am in, young, very good looking and of course, intelligent female students swarm my office like bees to honey. A man is only so strong.

My wife and I had a good sex life but I just needed more; not more out of life, just more sex. How can I describe it without sounding like some crazed nympho? Well, sex was what drove me. It was my life-long hunger. Whenever I walked by one of those female students in the hallway, the ones with the mini-skirt strategically pulled up to the crack beckoning beneath the base of her crotch, and of course no underwear, I would salivate. It was like the hot fudge sundae I lusted for as I graded poorly written papers into the break of dawn. And when they had leather on, mercy me! I needed female tail of all sorts.

I had my first encounter with one of my students just over a year ago. One minute we were discussing Spinoza, the next minute, we were rolling around on the couch in my office. Was she a hot number! She was getting by with a C in the course, and after her performance, I made sure she came out of the course with a B+. That escapade was only the tip of the iceberg. It seemed this was the first hole in the dike and the waters came crashing through soon after. Within the next three months, I bedded about nine of my students and a few strays here and there whom I picked up in the halls. And to believe I had been married four years until this point and never committed an infidelity! Now, it was a regular part of my life.

Stroking before class, oral sex between classes and intercourse on the couch in my office after class. Talk about being the ultimate sex machine. I must have been going through some kind of mid-life crisis. Things got even more risky. I got so bold as to invite one of my students over one weekend, when my wife Trish, the CEO, was away at some convention. As it turned out, the stupid bitch left her underwear under the bed, the first time she ever wore underwear, and my wife found them the following week. I don't know how I did it, but I pulled a David Copperfield and wiggled my way out of it

with no hard feelings. That really should have been the end of it, but I had to press my luck one more time.

The wife was out of town again on business two months later, so I thought. I had one of my students over and we had just started mattress tosses when the wife walked in. Fortunately, I was on top and this spared Connie, my student, a little shame and a bruised forehead, after Trish hit me in the head with a plastic mug. Before I had a chance to do or say anything, Trish was packed up and out of the penthouse. I was alone. This is when my real problem began.

I was taking a shower on the Sunday morning following the incident, when my life got more interesting. Given what happened the previous night, I was in a fairly decent mood. I was singing aloud U2's song "Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For". There was something tugging at me inside. I think it was one of Descartes' meditations on being. I thought repeatedly to myself what it would be like 'to be' forever, and to have all the pussy I could get for the rest of my life. Then I made some stupid comment aloud. What was it? Oh yes. "If I could live forever, and never age another day the rest of my life, I would be the ultimate lover. Dracula and Casanova, eat your heart out. I'd even sell my soul to the devil for that chance."

A few minutes later, I finished my shower, dried myself off and was staring at my handsome features in the mirror for a few moments. I really was the complete package. I had looks, brains, and all the charm in the world. I threw my robe on and went into the bedroom. My eyes almost rolled out of their sockets. There she was. She was incredible! I had to rub my eyes because I thought I was hallucinating. I wasn't. The most incredible, voluptuous red-head was lying spread-eagle on my bed dressed in black tights, which covered her whole body like plastic wrap. Her nipples protruded out like two incredible erections. I had mistaken her genitalia momentarily for the Panama canal. After a brief body scan, our eyes met. Her eyes were the deepest brown, with hot coals afire in the middles. I felt myself burning in them. I joked to myself that five minutes gazing into those lasers, one could easily become spontaneous-combustible. I tore myself away from her gaze and studied her perfect nose and her pouting lips, as hot as black cherries. I could suck on them for the rest of my life and never grow chapped. I was so captivated by her lips I did not hear what she said. Still entranced, she slithered off the bed and sauntered toward me. Her walk! She flowed like honey off bee comb across the floor. Her presence sweetened the air. It was the aroma I had always associated with love making to the most beautiful woman in the world. That aroma was here in my bedroom. I could feel a bulge beginning to grow in my robe. At the back of my mind I was still fumbling with the irrelevant questions of who the hell this broad was, and how the hell did she get in here, and who the hell really cares right now, cause I'm about to score major, that is, until I wake up.

At last she was standing before me and her soft lips touched my own ever so gently. I tried to kiss her back but she pulled away. I wanted to taste

her lips. She gently caressed the bulge in my robe and laughed aloud. I looked at her ivory white teeth and the heart-shaped form of her lips. Quite abruptly, she stopped laughing and looked serious for a moment.

This time she spoke and I heard her. "So you want to be the Dracula of the twenty-first century and sample the forbidden fruits from every garden?" she whispered.

How the hell did she know that? I just nodded.

"You think you are God's gift to women, do you not?"

Once more, I nodded. Before she could speak again, I interrupted. "Who are you?"

"Do you like what you see?" she answered with a snicker.

"Damn right!" I yelled.

She looked at me for a moment, studying my eyes and then began to speak softly and slowly. "I am here to give you what you desire. You wanted to live forever, and have your fill of women, and be the world's greatest lover. I can give you that. I can offer you the chance to live forever."

I snickered and nodded. She stared at me like I was some immature teen. "You do not believe I can offer you everlasting life on this earth?"

"Yeah, right lady! I don't know how you got in here, or who the hell you are, but I love your sense of passion. You've definitely turned me on. So tell me, did Trish send you to get even? Is this retribution?"

She looked at me, laughing again. This time she appeared to be laughing at me. I was curious, but at the same time I was really turned on. I just wanted to get this broad on the bed and make endless passion. I kept asking myself if Trish, my wife, sent her. But for some reason, I knew she did not. Who the hell was she? She spoke again in her soft, seductive voice. "You were the one who had me sent."

I just looked at her and smiled. "I wish it was this easy every time I got horny. Talk about thirty seconds or free," I joked aloud.

She smiled at me and took out a black piece of paper from beneath her sleeve. Instantly, she produced a stylus from nothingness. I was definitely impressed, as well as curious.

"A magician as well!" I joked.

She looked at me and smiled once more. It finally dawned on me. She had been sent by one of the boys. For some time now, my colleagues and I had been engaging in the fine art of practical jokes. Who would think stuffy, philosophical minds could engage in such pathetic ruses? A while back I got Roger McRae, an ancient Greek philosophy professor in the department, really good. He had been riding me for some time, so I had a male strip-ogram sent to his largest lecture. Rumor had it he turned beet red throughout the striptease. Yes, it must be him. He sent this chick.

She must be some sort of professional call girl, or entertainer. Knowing the boys, they might have her wired up, or have some kind of hidden camera. She knew of my desire to live forever. The guys must have filled her in on a brief bio of yours truly. Being a professional, she's probably good at picking

locks, or using credit cards, which would explain how she got in. How would they know I would be home today? And alone for that matter? Wait one minute. I left a message on Steve's machine last night telling him what happened and I would not be able to make the luncheon today. Bingo! That's it! What the hell, I'll just humor her and play along and try not to do anything embarrassing in the process.

"What is the pen and paper for?" I asked trying to keep a straight face.

She walked towards me and guided me onto edge of the bed. She handed me the black piece of paper while slowly nibbling the tip of the pen. That was even a bigger turn-on!

"Is this like a consent to sex form I am supposed to sign?" I joked.

She shook her head and smiled. "You don't understand, do you? I'm here to offer you everlasting life in exchange for your soul."

I tried to refrain from laughing, but was unsuccessful. The guys will love this response, I thought. "So what you are telling me is I might engage in an existential beingness by being, in I will assume infinity in time and space, and never be juxtaposed to non-being, or the meaningless, posh lost existence marked by a descended state of nothingness?" I wanted my bullshit to smell sweet.

She stared at me in silence. Obviously, her mind was still caught up in a whirlwind on some other plane. She smiled and proceeded in her sale. "Do you want to live forever?"

"Everyone would love to live forever," I stated.

"I am offering you eternal life. You will never perish from this world unless you want to, and at that point, you come to me," she asserted.

"And where are you going to be?" I asked mockingly.

"In hell," she answered.

When she said that I almost broke out into a frenzy of laughter, but I kept my cool. There was no way those guys were going to win.

"Are you the devil?" I asked her.

"I am anything you want me to be," she replied.

"What if I told you I do not believe in hell," I said.

"Well then, by signing your soul over to me, you have nothing to lose, do you?"

I looked at her and smiled. "Is it really as hot and painful down there as everyone portrays hell to be?" I mockingly asked.

She offered me a sarcastic grin. "Oh, it's nasty."

"Can it get any nastier than here?" I scoffed.

"Oh, you'd be very surprised," she said licking her lips.

"So what would I get from this deal again," I said thinking aloud. "I get everlasting life, as long as I want it, and then when I've had enough, you get my soul, and I am then condemned to everlasting suffering and pain of the S and M variety. Is that the deal?"

"Yes," she answered with a wink.

"So I could get hit by cars, jump off buildings, get shot, and I would not die unless I willingly surrendered my soul to you?"

"Yes, it's your show," she answered again.

"I could therefore, do anything which would kill human beings and not die?"

"Yes, " she answered again.

"And sickness and disease? I would never get ill and die from it?"

"Yes, that's right. You will never die from any disease and will never suffer any of the effects of any disease known to man," she answered.

"So all I have to do is sign your deed here and I can live forever?"

She looked at me for a moment and then handed me the pen. I tried very hard to remain composed and to go along with this charade.

"Where do I sign my soul away?" I quipped.

"Just sign your name anywhere," she answered.

I looked at her one last moment and then signed my name to the deed trying not to laugh. A thick red ink which resembled blood, flowed from the pen. I thought to myself that these guys would sure as hell go to any length to play a joke. After I signed the paper I handed both the pen and the paper back to her. She smiled a seductive smile and licked her lips. This was the part I was waiting for.

Boldly, I asked her if we were going to seal our deed with a kiss or maybe more. She nodded her head, her long, fiery red hair flowing over her shoulders. She smiled and leaned forward and kissed my lips. As our lips touched and I felt the heat of them I remembered nothing more than waking up in my bedroom having gone to sleep wearing nothing more than my bath robe. When I awoke, the clock read four p.m. I must have dozed for most of the day. I tried to remember what had happened, but could not recall any events preceding the kiss. For that matter, I wondered if I had dreamt the entire experience. Hot showers do tire me. It must have been a dream. It was definitely wishful thinking the woman I had lusted after my entire life would just happen to appear in my bedroom out of nowhere and then disappear without a trace. And who did she claim to be?

Oh yes, she was from hell and I traded my soul in exchange for everlasting life. I slapped myself gently and told myself to get a grip. I thought my mind might finally be experiencing some burn out. What really had happened is the night before, Trish caught me with another woman and she packed up and abandoned ship. I thought I should get dressed and do something with the rest of the day. If the red-headed chick was real, I'd hear about it at work tomorrow from Roger and the boys. If not, then it was all a dream. A good one I might add. As I got up to get myself together, I noticed dry blood in the fold of the thumb and index finger of my writing hand. It looked like the ink from the pen I had used to sign the deed. I also noticed a little cut on the palm of my hand. Quickly, I dispelled the myth of the bleeding pen. It was just a dream.

At work the next week, my colleagues, especially Roger, did not in any way dispel their partaking in this devious plot for getting even. By the end of the week, I had so much work on my plate, and inter-departmental meetings, I lost sight of the entire episode which happened on Sunday morning. That was until two weeks later.

I was entertaining in the penthouse once more, with an anthropology major whom I happened to meet in the school's pub during lunch break. One thing led to another, and before I knew it, we were back at my place. Since Trish caught me, I hadn't heard from her, or her lawyer. Until now! Tanya, my latest flame, and I were engaged in a water sports in my hottub. I had the tunes on. Nothing like good sex and a little jazz. We were having one hell of a splash, until Trish walked in unexpectedly. It seemed she had used her key to drop off the divorce papers, however, she was intrigued by the moaning which came from the spa. Engaged in a wicked blow-job, I noticed the door fly open. The draft sailed over my shoulder and was enough to send shivers down my spine until I saw the look of contempt in Trish's eyes. Not even a Grizzly's vengeance could have matched her look of rage.

Tanya and I were speechless. Finally, Tanya opened her mouth and sarcastically asked if the angry-looking bitch was my ex-wife. I could see the red in Trish's eyes now. Before I knew what hit me, she tossed the radio, still plugged in to the wall socket, into the tub. Sparks flew everywhere. I could smell flesh cooking in the boiling water. Tanya's pain was briefly extinguished with the popping out of her eyeballs from their sockets. Her mouth appeared to weld shut like vice-grips. The sweet and sickening smell of death filled the room.

Tanya's body was tossed to one side of the tub arms draped over the sides. Her body stopped jolting from the electricity once a major circuit in the building's main fuse panel blew. Oh yeah, I was in the tub the whole time with Tanya, and did not even feel a jolt of electricity, let alone a shock. The only shock I got from this entire experience was the surprise of what Trish had done. I couldn't believe she had it in her. I also could not believe I was still alive. What the hell happened!

The next time frame was somewhat of a cognitive blur. I do remember the maintenance man and security guard standing over Tanya's body as it floated in the hot tub. I was seated on my bed still in my skivvies when the police arrived. Trish was in total shock babbling on and on about how she killed Tanya and how I was the devil. Needless to say Trish was eventually charged. But the poor girl was a basket case and she would probably never be fit to stand trial. The police, not to mention the coroner, were very interested, as well as puzzled, as to how I walked away from the incident unscathed. I concocted a story which had me just barely getting out of the tub as Trish was tossing the radio into it. They told me how lucky I was to be alive, and in the future how I shouldn't have electrical appliances too close to water. I sarcastically replied in the future I would avoid any similar circumstances by

my never remarrying. The case was an open and shut case and I went on with my life. An infinite life, which I might add.

I could not believe it! I had signed my soul over to an incredible red-head claiming to be the devil. Was it all a dream? Was I going crazy? At least that is what I thought was happening in the beginning, until I started to gradually test the limitations of my mortal body.

The first occasion was much the same as my shocking experience in the hot tub. I had a very long day at work and the guys did not feel like going out after work for our customary ale. Come to think of it, they all seemed quite aloof after the incident with Trish. I think some of them believed I was a real prick and provoked the entire incident. I was surprised at the support offered me by the university and the media.

Anyway, I tested my latest hypothesis, that maybe the redhead was really who she claimed to be and maybe I was indestructible. Actually, the last little while, I required less sleep and felt so ambitious. I climbed into the hot tub, first turning on my new radio. After about an hour of debating whether this was sane or whether I was cracking up I decided to put the radio into the water. What the hell? If I fried myself, I deserved it for what happened to Tanya, not to mention my wife. I tossed the radio, which blared an old Van Halen tune, into the water. Instantly, on contact with the water, there was a zap sound, and the lights flickered again. This time the cord blew apart at the outlet. I was alive, not a burn, or any hair standing on end. End of story.

However, the tenants, not to leave out the maintenance man, must think I have some sort of death wish with the radio and the hot tub. My next trick was overdosing on tranquilizers. Like I said earlier. I had not needed as much sleep lately, if this was going to kill me, well, it would be a relatively painless end. I still could not grasp the notion that I was indestructible. Perhaps the laws of physics had changed and I was an exceptionally poor conductor for electricity. If the guys at work only knew what the hell their pompous colleague was doing in his spare time, while his wife rotted away in some loony-bin they'd certainly shoot me.

I had taken the whole bottle of tranquilizers and had a really deep, and sound sleep. I did, however, wake up the following morning bright and early, refreshed and ready to go. No signs of vertigo, not as much as a slight hangover. I felt so alive and energetic, that today, on this Saturday morning, I was going to jump off the roof of my building. What the heck? It was only thirty-five stories high. After a quick cup of coffee and a bagel, I was off to play Superman. I made it onto the roof around ten forty-five a.m. and I was on the street two minutes later. It took me a few moments to survey the area and make sure no one was in the vicinity. What a jump! I have never experienced anything so wild and exhilarating. I actually passed a damn seagull on the way down. I even caught a glimpse of the hot blonde on the ninth floor stepping out of the shower on my way down. I was quite proud of myself. For it only being my first jump, I landed on my two feet, stumbling

just a bit. I was sure with a little practice I would be much better at leaping tall buildings in a single bound and landing with a perfect score. Now, I thought, how else could I try to get myself killed?

By the end of the day, I had; thrown myself in front of the subway, got hit by at least eight vehicles, jumped through a bay window, jumped off the Brooklyn Bridge, stabbed myself through the heart, hung myself, tried to drown myself, and shoved my head in a five hundred degree oven. I must admit things did get a little messy when I stabbed myself, but the wound instantly cauterized. I kept thinking to myself what the folks at work would think, not to mention the papers. "PROFESSOR TRIES TO KILL HIMSELF TEN DIFFERENT WAYS ON SATURDAY, BUT WALKS AWAY UNSCATHED!" Gee, what does he do on his Friday nights for fun? I was like a kid in a candy store not knowing where to go next. I was definitely having fun.

### ***CHAPTER THREE***

I had it made. I could not be harmed in any way, shape or form. I could have really taken advantage of the situation and knocked off every corner store, not to mention bank and walked away even if they shot me. Wouldn't 't that have been something if I got caught committing some heinous crime and they sentenced me to life in prison. I sure as hell would have been screwed for life! Right now, for the most part, I had the world by the balls and really could get away with murder; my murder.

This new-found power of mine changed me in ways which are difficult to explain. It wasn't like I was becoming more arrogant than I already was. Rather, I was growing more aloof from life, no longer considering longer term consequences. I was no longer savoring the moment. Time was a commodity I would possess forever, so why get wrapped in a happening, when I would always be making things happen?

This new life I was living was also affecting my sex life. I had a totally insatiable appetite for sex. I could never get enough of it. It was like a constant marathon. At one point I did eleven different women in one day. For the first time in my life I even paid for the services of a prostitute. It was one Wednesday, in the wee hours of the morning, when I got this incredible appetite for pussy.

I left my apartment, with one hell of a hard-on and wandered the streets until I found something worthwhile. The streets were relatively barren at four in the morning. On my way back to my pad, I came across some hooker heading home from work. I asked her if she would like to come back to my place, but she did not speak English very fluently. She looked like some babe that just jumped ship from Mexico. My Spanish wasn't the greatest, but I could get by. We made small talk for a while and she kept telling me I should find some other whore because she was sick. She said she felt like she was coming down with the flu. I told her it did not matter. What the hell, just a couple of weeks ago I popped one of my students who had a terrible case of herpes. I imagine I have also slept with a lot worse in recent weeks, but hey, I'm immune to pain.

I had even tried to catch rabies by going into the lab at school and injecting myself with the disease. I did not even salivate the slightest. After about five minutes of forceful persuasion, I pulled out a hundred spot and we were off to my place. Sex with her wasn't the greatest, but it was a piece of ass. The broad wasn't kidding when she said she wasn't feeling well. She vomited violently all over the ceramic tile on the bathroom wall, and once more on the carpet in the hallway. The skin around her eyes also seemed to look very tight and leathery. She also said her teeth had been bleeding a lot lately.

Before she left my place, I noticed a charm that must have fallen from her purse. It was really quite strange looking. I asked her what it was and she said a friend gave it to her to ward off evil spirits. She was about to tell me about the cult she belonged to when I abruptly told her good night and pushed her out the door. The last thing I needed to hear about was evil spirits.

The walls started to cave in almost immediately after I met that damn whore. Almost two weeks later I felt like I was coming down with the flu. I thought maybe all of the students coming in and out of my office, leaving their germs behind, was finally wearing at my immune system. After further thought, that shouldn't have been the case, because let's face it, I'm Dr. Immune To Pain. Perhaps my luck was changing and no longer was I going to live forever. Maybe the red-headed she-bitch had reneged on her offer. So I put my hypothesis to the test and threw myself off the top of the penthouse building that night. I still had to work on my landing, but other than that, I was all in one piece. What the heck was going on here? My body felt like it was undergoing some sort of metamorphous within. I finally concluded maybe it was all part of my eternal package and this was my body's way of replenishing itself after all of the stress I had been putting it through.

The flu-like symptoms persisted, as well as my insatiable sexual appetite. I was still scoring with the chicks an awful lot. This kind of kept my mind off the illness I was experiencing. Then things really began to get worse health-wise one night. It happened after some really good sex I had with one of my coeds. We had just finished having great sex and rolled over onto my stomach to catch a brief nap. You know how women are after sex. They find it imperative to cuddle. Barbara, that was her name, started to rub the nape of my neck and I screamed at her to stop because the pain was excruciating. It felt like a huge throbbing lump was trying to squeeze itself through my skin. After several attempts to prevent Barbara from seeing what it was, she finally pushed my hair back and caught a glimpse of the mutation. I honestly thought she was going to puke, from the look on her face. She moved away from me like I was a leper.

Finally, she showed me a little compassion, and handed me a compact from her purse so I might see it for myself. When I caught a glimpse of it, I thought I was going to puke. Whatever the hell it was looked like something that crawled out of my nose the last time I had the flu. It was a sickening greenish, red lump, the size of a golf ball, that appeared to be throbbing. Ever so compassionate, once more, Barbara suggested I have it looked after by a doctor and then booked it out the door. So much for the great pillow-talk after sex.

The next morning when I awoke the first thing I did was go over to the mirror. I had put ice on the lump last night which really made it throb like a bitch. The ice must have worked because the swelling was down somewhat and the pain was much more tolerable. Something else startled me as I gazed into the mirror. The skin around my eyes appeared to be growing wrinkles.

The skin was no longer elastic but appeared to be cured, almost like leather. Suddenly I remembered the whore I brought home a few weeks ago. Her eyes had been leathery looking, like a lizard's. What else about her? I tried to remember in more detail. I remember she had vomited. And yes! I remember her teeth had bled. So here went nothing. I smiled my pearly whites into the mirror, and almost shit myself. Several of my teeth were bleeding. Whatever the hell she had, she had given it to me!

Within the next week, I was falling apart. My eyes looked like they were ready to be made into a handbag. I tried some of those wrinkle creams but they were as effective as band-aid for a gun shot wound. My teeth were all aching and bleeding. I was having one hell of a time eating and had all but lost my appetite for food. On the other hand, my sexual cravings were still very much in tact. In fact, they appeared to be growing more intense. I had tried to have sex a few times with different women over the last week but they were slightly turned off by the drooling blood from the corner of my mouth. I still was getting my fair share of ass anyway.

The following week I was really getting worse. I was starting to lose my hair in clumps. Every morning when I woke up, balls of hair would be lying all over my pillows. When combing my hair, you would swear I was thatching dead grass. I also lost a couple of teeth in the process. Other changes were also shocking the hell out of me. I was developing some kind of cysts all over my body. They were especially predominant on my ass and my penis. Damn they hurt like a son of a bitch. I still wanted to screw like a dog in heat though.

Desperate times called for desperate measures so I did something that I do not normally do. I went to see a doctor. It had been at least ten years since my last examination. Needless to say he was quite surprised to see me, and even more shocked to see me in my current state. He gave me a complete physical. He told me my blood pressure and heart rate were normal if that was any consolation. My temperature was also surprisingly normal. Further examination, he concluded there could be a couple of things affecting me. Dr. Harris said there was no point in guessing. He sent me down to the lab for tests and scheduled me for a follow-up in a few days. As I left the building, I remember a peculiar question he asked me. He had asked me if I had been to Africa recently and if I had been bitten by any snakes. Who's got time for Africa when you have the jungles of New York?

The cysts on my body were now becoming open blisters. They very much resembled the large growth I once had on the back of my neck, which was now completely gone. At least something had healed. Another tooth went missing in action in the meantime. I was growing more and more disturbed each time I looked in the mirror. I was beginning to resemble a survivor from some sort of nuclear fallout. You've heard those commercials that ask " Are you experiencing hair loss? Then try New Growth!" My scalp was melting away! I doubt very much New Growth was going to do the trick. The doctor finally called me three days later and told me I had better get to the clinic,

now! He sounded quite troubled on the phone. In fact he sounded extremely troubled. I asked him to tell me what he had found. He kept telling me I better come there now.

I went to the clinic and after hearing what he had to say, I wish I hadn't. As it turns out, yours truly has blood that has never been seen under any microscope, ever. As a matter of fact, the boys in the lab thought my blood sample was some sort of joke. Who has ever heard of green blood? My blood was red, like anyone else's, but when coagulated it turned a very striking shade of green. My doctor told me I should take an indefinite leave of absence from the school and have myself checked into the hospital for a battery of tests. I had already taken the last two weeks off from school, so what the hell, what's a couple of more years. My sarcasm was growing to a feverish pitch.

After listening to the doctor's advice, I was more depressed than ever. My self-esteem was definitely taking a shit-kicking. I went out and roamed the streets. I met up with some prostitute at a nearby bar and made small-talk. All she wanted to talk about was how sick I looked and death was probably right around my corner. This did not boost my confidence, nor did the fact she found me so repulsive. For the next couple of months, I wandered the streets of New York looking for the whore. I had taken an indefinite leave from the school. I thought I might get some flack but when the Dean caught a glimpse of me of me, he couldn't sign the papers fast enough. Hell, if I saw myself on the street, I, too, would turn and run the other way. From the time I met that whore until now, I had shed forty-five pounds from my once athletic, well kept one hundred and ninety pound frame. I began to sport a baseball cap to hide my almost bald head, and learned to keep my mouth shut, as not to lose any more teeth. I was definitely the specimen. As for what species, I can't imagine.

The days in my life were becoming a painful eternity. My being was slowly eroding away. I felt that sooner or later, I would be relieved of this misery and no longer be a part of this earth. At least as far as I knew, the deal with the redhead was off because she did not keep her part of the bargain. And that was when she appeared in my penthouse once again. It was late one Wednesday night, I was camouflaged in the darkness of my living room when she came to torment me with her sadistic charm. She was dressed in a black body suit, fiery hair tossed about her shoulders. Her ruby red lips radiated from moonlight which crept in through the venetian blinds. She started to laugh at me when she saw me. "Whatever is the matter with you these days, David?" she asked mockingly.

I just stared at her and did not respond.

"What is the matter? Cat got your tongue? And your teeth?" she smiled.

I could feel my rage burn. I wanted to scream, but I could not stand the pain.

"Well, aren't you glad to see me, David? Wanna screw?" she asked in a mocking seductive voice.

I just looked away out through the slit in the blinds. I thought to myself what it would be like to no longer be in this world. The very thought sent shivers down my back and burned a bottomless hole in the pit of my stomach.

"Are you afraid to die, David?"

Finally, I had to look at her. I glanced up to catch a sarcastic grin split the corners of her mouth. I struggled to find words as tears burned through the corners of my eyes. Hatred overwhelmed me. "I guess your deal is off," I slowly whispered.

"Off?" she replied.

"Look at me," I whispered.

She stared at me for a moment and then shook her head. "We had a deal Dr. Jacob, and you signed the deed," she snickered, holding the contract before me.

"Our deal was I would live forever and never suffer. Look at me! I'm dying for crying out loud!"

"Oh, don't be so melodramatic. You're not dying," she laughed.

"Then what the hell is this?" I asked holding up my hands.

"Well, it looks like you caught some sort of bug," she smiled.

"But I was supposed to have immunity to disease and pain," I begged.

"Oh, if you're worried about the pain, that will go away eventually," she offered.

"It will?"

"Of course it will, give or take a couple of centuries." she chuckled.

"This wasn't suppose to happen to me," I pleaded.

"Yeah, yeah. You've said that already."

"You said I was immune to all of this."

"I told you that you were immune to any disease known to man."

"Known to man?" I asked.

"Yes Dr. Jacob. Seems you went out and contracted some disease that won't be known for another decade and won't have a cure for another century or so."

"So make it go away," I groveled.

"Sorry. That wasn't part of the deal."

"What if I..."

Before I could finish she interrupted. "It doesn't work that way. I already own your soul."

I couldn't believe what the hell I had gotten myself into. The witty, but uninhibited professor of philosophy had made a pact with the devil involving the use of his soul as collateral. This was all suppose to be a joke. Roger and the guys were supposed to have been the ones to send over the red-head to return the favor. This is not fair. It's all too real It is real! This redheaded

bitch from hell really is the devil. She really is screwing me. I tried to compose my thoughts and not get anxious.

"I got it from that hooker, didn't I?" I slowly asked.

"You wanted to play and then you paid," she chuckled.

"What is it?" I asked without hesitation.

"If you must know, it is the plague of the future that will attack sexually irresponsible beings like yourself.

"Where did the whore get it?"

"She belongs to a black magic cult which has sex at the root of its rituals and worship. Let's just say they screwed around with the wrong spiritual sacrifices." She walked over to the window and peered at the skyline. "You know I think Freud was right when he said humans are driven by sex and the pleasure principle," she said. She turned and faced me. "Look what it's done to humans like yourself and others. You people are never content with what you have. You fools all want to be gods and live like gods. Stupid fools."

"Can you please help me?" I pleaded once more. Pleading was never one of my stronger attributes.

"I'm sorry, but it's all too late. Did your beloved wife get a second chance? How about Tanya, your little lover? This is eternity my friend. There are no second chances."

"What will happen to me?" I reluctantly whimpered. She shook her head and laughed. "You'll live forever as you have requested."

"This, whatever I have will not kill me?" I asked.

"You will just go on rotting until your body can deform no more."

I could feel what was left of the hair on the back of my neck stand on end.

"Or you can surrender your existence, and come with me now and burn in hell."

"Why don't you go to hell!" I shouted angrily.

She looked at me and started to laugh again. "I think I might just take you up on your suggestion. In the mean time, I'll keep a nice warm place there for you. I'm sure I'll see you very soon."

"I doubt it," I said trying to sound convincing.

She knew my body was growing weaker but a fire in my soul had just begun to burn. She waved to me and walked to the patio door. "Well my friend, I must be going for now but we'll be seeing you real soon. Why don't you go out cruising for some chicks tonight? I'm sure they must find you really attractive these days."

With her last comment, she disappeared through the door into thin air. I put my head between my bony arms and knees and wept. For the first time in my life I wanted to pray but did not know how. The months continued to go by slowly. My body was decaying more and more each day. The only consolation in this was that I knew this disease could not kill me, therefore the pain and suffering must stop sooner or later. I was now almost

completely bald. I had lost almost all my teeth and I was wrinkled something fierce. My total body weight was no more than one hundred and two pounds. I felt like I should be living in Ethiopia. There was not much left of my penis. It had decayed and eroded away. What I had traded my soul away for I could no longer have. Talk about bittersweet irony. I suppose it was only par for the course.

Let's face it, I was no longer a sex symbol whose front door was getting broken down from sex-craved women. I didn't think I would be engaging in any sexual activity, at least for another century. That was the key. I had to last another century or so, until they found a cure. I knew I could do it. Even though my body was deteriorating, my mind and spirit were still holding up. I had to practice mental gymnastics and make myself stronger.

After a few more months, my misery was becoming unbearable. The nest-egg I had saved for retirement was dwindling. I was becoming the proverbial island. My mind and spirit were losing their will to endure this suffering. Was there really going to be a cure for this disease? Was this in fact a disease I had or was it a curse? Was there really a place called hell or was I already there? It couldn't be any worse than it already was. I kept thinking to myself if I had the chance to go back and change things... Regrets, regrets! They only added to my pain. Where did I go wrong with my life? I had it all and I shit it away.

For the next few weeks I grew even more metaphysical and questioned my existence from the inside looking out. I could be a god and live for eternity!

Ironically, it was my being this little god and my living eternal that was going to rob me of my existence from this planet.

Three months later I was dropping like a rock. The physical rot was pureeing my spirit into mush. I didn't want to spend eternity looking like one of George Romero's 'Living Dead' night creatures. I looked pathetic, a shell of the man I once was. She was beating the shit out of me. The bitch was winning the game because I was beating myself. It was time to put up or shut up. I didn't want the bitch to win. This thing was going more rounds than I could tolerate. It was time to surrender. What the hell, she would eventually win. Why put myself through anymore pain than I had to? I would jump off of the Brooklyn Bridge and surrender my soul on the way down. I would, in fact, get everything I deserved. Life as I had once known it was truly gone for me, and this existence, and that's all it was, was far from any sort of life. I believe I had truly died the minute I sold my soul. I played with fire and now I was getting burned. In jumping, I could at least soar one last time.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

"To whoever reads this letter; I hope you will appreciate the pain I went through in my life, so you will never be tempted to chase after what was not meant to be, " the woman read. The woman paused for a moment to catch her breath before reading on. She glanced over the railing where Jacob plunged. Her husband's eyes met with an attractive red-head standing a short distance away. She stared back at him expressionless. She seemed so mysterious, yet so seductive. He felt lost in her.

As his wife resumed reading the letter, he was snapped back into the moment. "We all have lives to live, and live them to the fullest we can. If you are lucky enough to find true love, or any sort of love in your life time, hold on to it. It is so valuable. You never truly know how great it is until it is gone. Sex is nothing more than a momentary feeling that passes as quickly as it came. True love lasts forever."

The woman paused for a moment then said "Amen to that." She resumed reading the letter. His eyes were locked on the red-head. She stood closer. He was so enthralled with her flowing hair thrashing in the wind. Her eyes were so deep. She ogled him back. Her lips were so sultry and kissable. Finally, she winked at him as his wife resumed reading. "It is time for me to endure my true eternity of suffering. Farewell. Beware of the wolf in sheep's clothing. Especially if she has red hair."

The woman finished reading David Jacob's manuscript to the masses around her. The police had begun questioning people at the scene. The woman handed the manuscript over to a police officer.

"Guy sounded like one hell of a winner," her husband said as he watched the red-head move closer. Several of the onlookers nodded in agreement.

"Typical man, screw their own life up and then blame it on a woman," groaned a female onlooker.

The woman who read the letter accompanied one of the officers to his patrol car to offer a description of David Jacob. "Just need to get your official statement, " said the officer.

Her husband felt the weight of the red-head's stare. He could feel his loins start to tingle. Her eyes would burn through any man's soul. Slowly and methodically she sauntered toward him holding a scrolled piece of paper in her hand. Her black tights revealed the curves of her buttocks below the black bomber jacket she wore. Her legs were so sleek and tight. His eyes were glued to her ass. He wanted right then and there. She seductively licked her lips and gently bit down on her lower lip. His erection pounded in his trousers. He unconsciously whispered amen standing next to him, "I'd love to give her a ride."

The man nodded and sighed. "Yeah, you and me both."

She turned and strutted away from them. They read the glittery lettering on the back her leather jacket '100 % DEVIL".

"I'd sell my soul for her any day of the week," the husband moaned to himself.

She raised her arm to him and waved, releasing the scrolled paper she held in her hand. It blew with tremendous force right into the face of the husband. He caught it and glanced at the red ink, "Paid In Full," he mumbled.

