

People walked around the edge of the eating area, each concentrated on their own destination, ignorant of the restful paradise below. Palm trees grew from grates in the floor, shading tables that seemed hewn from the floor itself, a modern rock garden. Water trickled from the fountain at the center, a sphere hovering upon a cushion of water, perched precariously in its state of constant motion. Beams of sunlight weaved between passing clouds, racing towards the ground from the cobalt sky. Pinpricks of light danced across the black marble floors, meandering in and out of the shadows; Will-o-wisps lost in the mall's modern design.

Warm air drifted in between the tree fronds reaching into even the farthest corners. A small plastic leaved bush protected the corner, hiding it from the watchful eyes of passer-byes. Only the diffuse light from the "natural" ceiling lights filtered down on the inconspicuous package on the floor. Two sets of nervously excited eyes stared. Fixated upon it, as if the brown paper were about to burst into flame revealing the devil himself. Carefully the wrapping was removed, revealing a worn red leather book cover, the pages yellowed from untold years of use. A stream of light sailed into their sanctuary and fell upon the cover, revealing something embossed in the leather, obscure with age. Looking at the blurry symbol they felt a chill through the balmy summer air. The light moved on, the symbol sinking back into the leather, fleetingly reminding them of drying blood.

"That was really weird." He said, wiping a bead of sweat off his cheek.

"Uh, yea. Let's head back to my house."

"Sure, that sounds pretty good," he managed a smirk before standing up, grabbing and rewrapping book. Sliding it carefully into his book bag he grabbed it started off.

“Wait for me, Ass.”

“Oh no, I better wait, you might turn me into one. I’d sure hate to be Chris’ ass.” Try as he might he couldn’t keep a straight face after he finished.

“I would never. How could I live with an Ass named David, he’d have to named Thor!”

To accent saying “Thor”, he made a hammering motion in the air, and received the patented single eyebrow raise.

“Whaaaaat?” Chris drawled. David just sighed and kept walking.

“Never a dull moment with you,” he shook his head and hopped out of the recess, his ripping Reeboks squeaking across the floor. Quickly they arrived at the glass doors leading outside, the sun shone down, peaking between the clouds, the ground shimmering as if covered with dancing spirits..

Stepping outside was like stepping into a sauna, the heat and humidity was like a cranky rhino rushing head on, a wet, cranky rhino.

“Damn it dude, remind me again; why are we leaving the air conditioned mall?”

“Because you were too scared,” Chris said quickly as he hopped onto his dark blue Huffy, swinging the backpack over his shoulders. The store fronts whipped passed as they sped through the center of town, and down the small side street towards a two story white house.

The best way to describe it was quaint New England style; not only did it not stand out it was almost so perfect that you would miss it on purpose, suspecting it was a trick. The bikes dropped into the soft grass beneath the giant oak tree with a soft clank and thud. Creeping through the door they made it to the wrought iron banister, and up the first stair, almost home free when the voice rang out.

“Chris is that you?”

“Yea mom, I just got in.”

“Whose that with you?” They looked at each other.

“I swear she has hidden cameras or something.” He said and then louder, “Its David, Mom!”

“Hi sweetie, you two didn’t wear your shoes inside the house did you?”

They looked down in unison at their shoes and then back at the white carpet, it was still spotless.

“Of course not!” Chris called back, as they fled up the stairs. and into his room before she could say anything else.

“They have special powers, I swear!” David just nodded.

“So are you ready for an awesome night?”

“Oh shit, about that. I found out earlier that I have to go home.” He tried the guilty look, but to no avail.

“Oh come on, your kidding me right?”

“Nope, sorry man.”

“Shit man, don’t tell me you’re too scared or something.”

“No way, we have some sort of family dinner or something.”

“All right, I guess.” Chris fell onto his bed with a thump.

“Sorry man, I gotta go now.” David stood up, shoes still on.

“Okay, you gotta make this up to me sometime though.”

“Yea, yea, I got it.” David said as he walked down the stairs and out the front door.

Chris came down the stairs, plodding slowly until he slumped into the TV chair. Grabbing the remote he turned on the television; it flickered to life, immediately. Tuning into a news channel he groaned and flicked to the cartoon channel and was rewarded by an immediate scene of ridiculous violence.

“You’re not going to watch that the whole time I’m gone right? His mother said tapping her foot impatiently.

“No I won’t, I’ve got stuff to do.” Chris replied dreamily, as he paid more attention to the television than her.

“Good, there is some leftovers in the fridge for dinner, I’m about to go. You sure you’re good for a day or two while I’m off?”

“Don’t worry mom, I’ll be fine, I’ve got the numbers, and I’ll be good.” He smiled as she leaned forward and gave her a kiss on the cheek.

“I’ll call home on Sunday to check up on you, alright? I’ll miss you.” She called out as she stepped out the door and walked over to the dark green Subaru waiting on the curb. He waved weakly, watching as his mother and her new boyfriend drove off for another romantic getaway. He slammed his fist into the window frame.

“Why the hell did you have to leave, why the fucking hell did you have to leave you Goddamn asshole!” He yelled at the empty house, yelling at his father, who had left them about six months earlier. A salty tear crept down his cheek, he slapped it away. “I won’t cry for him, that fucking bastard.” He slammed the door shut and fell back into the couch, staring down the TV, he closed his eyes, sobbing quietly and drifted off to sleep, upon waking he looked out the window to see the last flickers of the sun setting behind the horizon, the sky a fanciful indigo.

Stretching, he walked up the stairs and into his room, without flicking a light on. The small wooden box didn't make a sound as he pulled it across the carpet and out from under his bed, the little bronze hook holding it shut tinkling as he carried it back to the living room. He slid the book onto the floor from the bag and unwrapped the paper quickly this time. Now he was alone with it, it was dark and he was alone. A shiver of fear and excitement rippling through his body. He carries the box and book into the dining room, lighting the candles he placed in a large circle around him, the lights dancing across the polished wood floor, shadows twisting and crawling across the walls in a macabre waltz. Flipping through the book, carefully touching each of the wrinkled pages, he stopped tentatively reading through the text, this was it, he would summon a demon. This would be it, he would start big, either it would work or it wouldn't, he couldn't do something that was small, it had to be big and it had to be impressive.

The directions weren't horribly complicated drawing a circle of protection, and then mixing up a salve, and he already had the ingredients in the box, perfect for a witches brew. Pulling out the small bottles and a mortar and pestle, he stepped into the kitchen and poured a little water into the bowl and set it down, pulling out a piece of chalk from the box he started drawing out the intricate star within a circle and runes in each point, to trap the raised demon and not let it harm the summoner. He finished it and gave it another look over making sure each corner was closed, because any opening could be an escape for the spirit. Once again turning to the book he looked over the ingredients to the salve, and the more and more he read, the more suspicious he became. Most of the ingredients were at least partially hallucinogenic.

“You’ve gotta be kidding me. This is just some drug to make me think I saw a demon.” He read down the list again, and hit his foot on the floor. “Oh well, might as well try it, maybe I’ll see something interesting.” He shrugged it off and started laying the ingredients into the pestle, smashing them together with the mortar they quickly thickened into a white paste. Looking at it he stuck out his tongue as he stuck his finger into it. It was very cool to the touch, oddly so in the lukewarm room, he took a glob and started spreading it onto his arm. It felt good if nothing else. He started to spread it on liberally like the directions said to, covering all his exposed skin with the paste, sitting naked on a towel in case it might harm the wood floor. He could feel himself growing warmer as the paste heated, then strangely detached, as if the rest of the world was just going to wait for him to do whatever he wanted. He moved over and looks at the book, the once strange words seemed all clear now, not like real words, but that they didn’t seem to make any sense didn’t bother him any longer.

Squinting he look down to the words and said them aloud. “*Nasci ab sub insertus.*” He repeated four or five times and then sat quietly waiting to see if anything would happen. He started into the candle lit darkness for what seemed like forever, and forever was taking its time as well.

A breeze began to blow through the room, he had just about given up, when the candles started to flicker, their light growing dimmer as if behind some sort of shade. The room began to twist in the darkness, like the very air was becoming a living creature. The darkness swirled through the room like a malevolent fog trying to swim into every inch and crevice. The air seems to grow thicker and every little particle of light was being drawn towards the center of the room, shadows seemed to arise from within other

shadows into a black maelstrom. Through the interwoven threads of black he could see a figure, the outline of a figure beginning to grow clearer. Platinum filaments streamed within the storm, weaving together a beautiful form, a face he could only image in his dreams. Lacing down forming her body line by line, everything just perfect, he could feel himself squirming as he watched, growing hard despite desperate wishes to not be. The threads wrapping around then unveiling breasts of creamy white, soft mounds arising from her chest, a tight stomach soon attached to a thin waist. His eyes fell helplessly as the fibers outlined her crotch drawing in each line one by one on this perfect women. Running down and finished her legs and feet everything just how it would be a in a dream, then from her back the threads crisscrossed into a spider web patter of wings which in a sliver flash became bat like. Every inch outlines in an eldritch light. Her body too perfect that even his clouded mind had to doubt it. *“This can’t be real, this is some amazing hallucination.”* His mind spoke trying to fill in the blanks, raven hair, like strands of silk poured off her had as it turned her grey eyes falling upon him. His face growing instantly red under her gaze. *“No...this cannot be real, why does it matter what I do?”* His mind screamed at him, but even if was growing doubtful of this amazing fantasy. His eyes locked onto her face as her lips began to move.

“Chris?” His mouth shot open a question in his throat but lacking the ability to say it. It knew his name...there is not way this isn’t a fantasy, he reasoned.

“Are you Chris?” her voice intoned, like wind whistling through chimes, her voice floated through the room and charmed his ears.

“Ho-how do you know my name” he managed without a stutter, quite an accomplishment.

“You brought me here, I know you.” She replied simply unwrapping her wings from her back and stepping towards him. He readied to scoot back but she stopped at the edge of the storm, and placed her hand against it, like a glass wall.

“Clever boy, sealing me inside of her. But you don’t want me trapped...you want to be with me, don’t you boy?” As she spoke he could hear her voice inside of his head, the worlds swirling as her magic worked its charm on him. Shaking his head he tried to speak back.

“It doesn’t matter, your just a hallucination anyway!” He said to her, and she giggled.

“More like a dream, why don’t you come over here and see just how real I can be.” She kissed the wall and blew a kiss at him, the redness returning quickly, he felt drawn towards her. “*It doesn’t matter, she’s a dream enjoy it.*” His mind told, he shook again, that didn’t sound like him, but it was so true. He stared at her, every curve and line perfect to him, even if she was a dream, he would enjoy they dream. Taking a tentative step forward he could feel like the darkness was drawing him towards her. He wanted to go and just flowed with it, until he just outside the wall, she reaches but was stopped. Stopping and looking at her,

“But you’re a demon, why should I go in there with you?”

She looked and turned slightly, giving him an even better view of the curves of her breasts, his eyes followed them down around her belly and to her crotch. Eyeing it and wanting to have what was hidden behind the little dark puff.

“But I’m only an illusion, right?” She said running a hand over the puff.

Shaking his head Chris stepped forward putting a hand upon the wall, it was like nothing was there at all his hand passed right through and she gripped it, pulling the rest of him

inside. With a devilish grin she pulled him tight against her, his skin feeling electrified with the contact with hers, he gulped as he could feel his hard-on brush against her leg. She grinned and her lips met his, kissing him, and embracing him, he could feel her warmth envelope him completely.

“Pretty nice dream.” He managed before being taken into another kiss, his arms wrapped around her, running down the smooth skin of her back. As she pulled him closer he could feel her press his cock between her legs, just holding it in her thighs, he tried to pull back, but it was tight grip and it only caused him to gasp at the sudden pleasure. Her hands quickly reached around cupping his cheeks and squeezing them firmly, his own hands falling to her rear and caressing over the smooth flesh. Her tongue pressed between his lips as he was forced to suckle it, slowly but surely losing control to her. She released her grip and massaged up along his back, nibbling sucking softly on his lips once he released her tongue, she releases her thighs and he takes a step back, a second for escape, but in his mind he couldn't, leaving this was the most absurd thing in his mind. He embraced her again, and she purred to him, reaching out he caressed her firm breasts, not large but perky under his touch, the nipples hardened, everything seemed to work directly for him. She kissed him again, guiding his hands, under her breasts and along the curves of her belly, touching caressing the entire way, she released soft guttural moans into his mouth while she kept kissing him. His hands seen fell across her waist, he paused for a second, before her guiding hands placed his upon her muff, and he could feel warm moist air flowing from underneath. Pressing tightly he could feel the lips beneath the fuzz, and the droplets of liquid heat onto his skin. She lifted his fingers sucking on the tip on one them, then placing one into his mouth. Panting as he tasted her, a sweetness he had never tasted

before, and a fire inside desperately wanted more. She grins as he looked into her eyes, she slowly allowed him to fall lower until his face was over her muff, and then pressed it softly to her, his lips falling across hers. Dew drops of her liquids flowing to his mouth, his tongue pressed through the slight fur and between them, feeling their warmth surround him, he moved inwards, drinking down the juices, licking along the walls. He had never done these things before, but everything just seemed right, letting her control what he did, and allowing her to guide him, he tasted her sweet nectar, and he couldn't have been happier. Then he felt her step away, her warm hand lifting him up once again, licking his lips and kissing them once again, tasting her own juice, she smiled and reached down, firmly gripping him in her hands, she stroked along his several times, He was gasping at the sensation, when she smiled wickedly.

“Now I will help you, you brought me to this realm, but I have no powers. I only have power in the dream worlds, you are human, you are one of this realm, and when we have joined, I will be part of this realm and you will be part of mine, powers you had never dreamed of, worlds beyond your imagination, will you join me?”

He nodded not even thinking the taste of her on his lips still warm and fresh, the lines between fantasy and reality were shattered, all he knew is that he wanted more of her, at any cost. Her sexual power working their evil magic over him, conquering him through his sexual thoughts and needs. A succubus dreaming of the earth had found a willing partner, and she was going to take full advantage of it.

She grinned and then moving him just right pressed herself onto him, a willing slave to her bidding as he impaled himself upon her, he grunted loudly followed by a soft moan, as she started to slide herself along him. He never imagined anything like this in all

his fantasies as he felt her gripping him from the inside, amazing pleasure roaring along his body, but as she continued the feelings began to grow more intense, with the pleasure started an equal if not greater, he groaned at the pain unable to stop it as he was gripped tighter and tighter. The line between the pain and pleasure quickly began to blur and then fade completely as he was taken higher, his own pleasure flowing into her which she fed back to him tenfold, their pleasure growing exponentially, until was almost pain, the pain of her gripping and now as if thousands of tiny needles were pricking his sex. But she wasn't quite done as he reached an edge, humans were unable to reach higher than this one their own, suddenly the pin pricks all came at the same time and his body was engulfed in pleasure, his entire body feeling the same way at once. Pleasure being felt through every inch of his body at the same time, pain in every inch of his body, without even releasing he went over his physical gate releasing a spray inside her, her body responding in kind coming around him and with this release, her succubus magic, ripped their souls into two parts exchanging them, making each one half of the other. The pleasure began to subside and as it reached human levels again he slipped out and collapsed on the floor, a little of his cum leaking out and ripping onto his body. She grinned one last time, and stepped through the shield, out the door and took flight into the dark night sky, leaving him alone, moaning in the fitful sleep a demonic dream which was to become his reality.

Chris tossed and turned through the night and finally turning once more his eyes slowly opened, blinking in the harsh sunlight shining on his face.

“Man, that was one messed up dream.” He yawned and stretched out still laying on the floor. He then first noticed how cold it felt. Looking down he laughed noticing he was naked.

“That would explain it.” He chuckled as he got up off his knees, looking down at his leg and noticed a few dried white spots. Rubbing them off he stretched again and plodded up the stairs ready to take a nice hot shower to rinse the crap off his body. In the back of his mind he wondered why he was so cold when he had been laying in sunlight and it was summer, but this didn’t really seem like much of an issue.

Grabbing a pair of underwear and his towel from his room his walked down the oddly cold hallway and into the bathroom, shutting the door and reaching in to turn on the water, letting it warm up, the room was soon filled with steam, he took a few breaths but then just stopped watching as his skin grew damp but it only felt the tiniest bit warm. Shaking his head and stepping into the shower, he felt the water hit his skin and run down it, and he could feel a little warmth. It was like the warmth was inside a thermos and he could only feel the outside. Shivering slightly he turned the knob further and further until it was at the very extreme.

“What the hell? This should be burning right now!” he declared looking down at his barely warmed skin, expecting a bright red color, but was greeted by his normal pale white.

“Must be some side effect of that crap I spread on my body, and the thermostat must be broke.” He rationalized in his mind, as he lathered himself up, and scrubbed his body, the feel of the soap and the washcloth seemed fine, but everything just felt warm. Stepping

out he expected to be met with a rush of cold air as he opened the door, but it all remained the same.

“Okay this is getting weird...maybe I need to get something to eat.” He said still speaking aloud to himself as he walked down the stairs, wet and naked, in his confusion forgetting to dry off. He stepped into the kitchen and opened the fridge door. Pulling out a slice of pizza and biting into it, he could tell it was cold but it felt like room temperature. “*Something is seriously messed up here.*” Finishing off the pizza and drinking a glass of water he walked to the front door, and pulled it open, and felt a blast of sunshine and warm air rush him, but he felt the same, everything else seemed normal except for him.

Mostly joking he looked where he remembered waking up, to see if he was still lying there and this was just some really screwed up dream. But he wasn't there he was standing at the door, and now getting a little scared.

“Fresh air, yea, I'll take a walk, that will clear whatever this is right up.” Shooting up the stairs and sliding on underwear, shorts and a shirt he ran down the stairs the out onto the sidewalk. Standing now in the sun he looked around, everything was as it should be, sun shining down people working in their yards, but he was still cold, as if chilled from the inside out. Looking around he stepped off the sidewalk and into the street, completely missing the truck that came hurtling down the street. Blasting the horn the driver tried to swerve but it was far too late, Chris turned and saw the onrushing metal grate slam directly into him. At such a high speed death would be immediate and technically it was. The driver felt the thud as it finally began to slow down and stop completely, he jumped out and looked down the now suddenly quiet street people all staring at the truck, but

there was no body, there were no screams, no blood. Everything looked the same, he looked at the front of his truck, perfectly clean. He stared at it for a few minutes, shaking his head and muttering to himself, hopped back in the truck and drove off.

Chris' eyes fluttered open and he screamed. The scream echoed off into oblivion as it came back to him from all sides at once. He stopped, running over things in his mind again, cold and then a truck and now lying in darkness. He had to be dead, the truck must have killed him, it was the only possibility. Staring at his hand he touched it to his face, it felt real, he ran it over his body checking everything, everything was fine; he had to be dead. Sitting up, nothing was sore, yet he had been just hit by a truck. Twisting and swirling in his mind, nothing made sense. The world seemed to have decided that nothing rational was going to happen today, and started with him. Sitting up and then standing up his eyes started growing used to the darkness and what they revealed changed things very little, he was apparently, in a dark cave. Looking closer he noticed it was a round cave and he was near one of the edges and in the center was a pedestal, with a book. Not seeing much else to do but whine about how nothing was going his way he started towards the book. The cave wasn't very large so he quickly reached the book, and looking over the cover he gasped, noticing that on its cover was embossed the symbol as they had seen in the mall. He opened the cover to find the first few pages blank and the next few and so on and so fourth until he came upon a single page with the word name above a long black line. Above the book rested a long feather pen and an inkwell, he dipped the pen in the ink and wrote "Chris" across the line in the blood red ink. His name sparked a few times before fading into nothing, then letters began to draw themselves across the page, when they finished he read the name. "Lazerous Lazuli."

“huh that’s an odd name.” He managed before the book then flipped several pages at once opening a page, that he had passed before but this time it had most of the page consumed by a portrait, the portrait was of him. He stared at it, his face was exactly the same, though his black hair was shoulder length and he wore a long yellow trench coat and yellow knee high boots. Through a slight opening in the middle he could see a pair of black pants and a white shirt on the top. He looked down and yelled out when he noticed his clothing growing to match the portrait, reaching back and running a hand through his now longer black hair. Pulling a strand around he looking at it an tugged upon it, it was truly his. He could feel his shirt growing heavier as the large coat draped over him. His jeans growing tighter as the now tight black pants gripped to his legs. He turned back to the portrait, finally noting the last two differences a hat held in his left hand and that one of his bright blue eyes was a dark grey. Not completely surprisingly he could feel the fabric of the yellow fedora in his hand and he didn’t have to look to know his right eye was now a dark grey. Though this seemed to be just the subtelest change he looked around and the cave was entirely visible, as if someone had turned on an invisible spotlight. The walls seemed to dance and shiver in front of him, but he could see every nook and crevice. Taking everything in a blur he looked back down to the book, which seemed to be the center for everything. Now flipping the page on the back he noticed a symbol in the same blood red ink, but it was not the same as the first symbol. He could clearly see this one, a large cursive L with a pentagram inside of the lower circle, he ran a finger along its outline and it began to glow a faint red. He stepped back and the symbol returned to just bright red ink. Stepping close once again, his finger traced along the edge, the paper rough and feeling old, he then traced the inner pentagram, the entire symbol

now glowing bright red he stepped back as the symbol began to burn on the paper, as he watched he felt the ground growing soft beneath him and then into a soft liquid as his bare feet squished into it and he began to sink quickly, a eerie green glow arising around him as the ground quickly sucked him through. As his head was pulled into the ground he took a deep breath hoping to hold out as long as possible, but he didn't have long to wait. As soon as he was pulled fully into the ground he found himself standing outside, he didn't recognize the exact area, but it was the town he called home and he was standing in front of a yellow two story house with black shutters, dressed as he was in the cave. The sun has just recently set behind the horizon and the sky was filled with a baleful red. While he stood, the sky darkened to the hazy black of the rural streets. As the darkness fell his eyes looked into the trimmed hedges in front of the house, and fell upon strange creatures, little reptilian creatures with long curved claws and little red eyes. He had never seen them before, and as he stepped towards them they took off running upon two legs then all fours as they escaped in every direction. These small demons knew what he was, and they wisely feared his powers. Though his mind was still abuzz, he had just decided to let things flow, he didn't seem to be really in control, like being pulled along by a river's strong current. Looking up he could see an entire window outlined in red, an almost ladder like path of branches beneath it glowed red in synchrony. Obviously something wanted him to go this way, and whatever it was seemed to be in control so he decided to follow. Climbing upwards, the ladder was easily the best path, stepping onto only the strongest branches. Rising to the window he looked inside. Light blues and yellow wrapped around the inside of the room, soft pink carpeting and toys all led to a center bed, where a smiling child lay sleeping. His eyes picked up the subtle movement of

her chest moving the comforter covering her. Long blond hair lay sprawled beneath her, onto the soft purple pillows where her head rested. He watched the idyllic scene for around an hour before things changed, her breathing began to quicker and as he watched a neon blue haze grew over her, like some sort of shield. Tossing and turning beneath the haze she seemed torn in some sort of inner conflict.

Knowing and feeling inside of himself that something was wrong, stepping forward he passed through the window. Stopping for a second of wonderment at this feat then continuing on towards her. He stopped in front of the shield, and pressed a hand to it, it felt cold, empty except for a deeply inset malice. Pressing onto it hard, he wanted to see within to help her. Letting out a soft growl he pressed onto it hard, the haze suddenly burning the same malevolent red as the earlier sky. Falling, suddenly he was falling quickly, everything had grown that deeply spiteful red and suddenly he was stand in wet grass. Rain pelted down from the sky, dark black clouds filled the sky, and thunder crackled high through the sky and blots of purple lighting careened from the sky to slam into the ground, fires starting even in the wet grass sending plumes of dark smoke into the already stormy sky. In the middle clenched into a tight ball was the little girl, strikes of lightning growing ever closer. After each flash she screamed, tears falling from her closed eyes. He loosed another growl, she stirred, crying out again. A tear welled up in his eye as he looked, knowing he had to do something, she was an innocent child trapped in this horrible nightmare. He felt the blood inside of his body growing warmer, his body filled with the heat he had missed all during the day and now night, something other than the oppressive cold. This fire began to press outward filling his entire body, flowing through the skin and as he looked expecting to see flames bursting outward he watched as

is a spreading wave, black fur began to spread outward across his skin, the flame burning hotter with each spreading circle of fur. Starting off as small splotches and then joining together and consuming one another the lakes of fur began to coat his visible skin and the skin underneath his clothes. Lifting the tight shirt and jeans, suddenly he felt as if the fire had begun to spiral down along his spine, shuddering in the heat, his body actually beginning to sweat he threw off his jacket, ripping off the pants and shirt, standing naked in the storming field, droplets of water now sticking to the thick fur coat. He groaned aloud as he felt the bones in his back begin to snap upward, bending his back forcing him to fall forward, as he landed the shock on his hands, consumed in the fire. Fingers growing shorter and stubbier as they molded together, bones cracking in the conflagration filling his entire body, arms and legs stretching upward, the bones lifting his hands and feet until they stood only upon the balls. His body locked onto all fours as he could feel the hot plasma flowing forward liquidizing his bones as his jaws pulled forward stretching his face outward, his nose becoming a black spot of the front of this new muzzle. His ears risen to the upper side of his head and into points in the flood of fur. His former hands and feet now thick padded paws, meant for walking upon all fours. The finally change was a jerking pull as a skin and bones tails rockets from above his buttocks, quickly followed by the black fur.

Starting forward, he ran towards the girl, knowing that in this form she would accept him and he could help her. Reaching the center the earth was jarred by several other lightning strikes, the entire field seeming like it was going to explode into flame. He reached her, touching the side of her face with his wet black nose, she squeaked then looked up, surprise and then happiness filled her eyes when she beheld him. Quickly

encircling with her arms she placed her face into his fur, sobbing softly. He looked to the sky and let loose a piercing howl. The rain and thunder stalled, as if in fear. Then the rain came stronger a torrent piercing into his fur, and pelting her soft skin. Her sleeping shirt already soaked to the bone, she hugged him tightly, keeping herself in his soft fur.

Looking up he growled at the sky and let loose another howl, this one filled with intended malice, upon the perpetrator. The rain stopped again, and the clouds began to lighten.

Parting down the center they began to grow whiter and whiter, rolling into thick puffed clouds. The fires died almost immediately they power feeding their crimson tongues dying out, and the wind slowed to a soft breeze, sun burst down, the rain drying immediately. As she cried out happily snuggling him even tighter he looked at the sky, an outline of one of those lizards faintly painted in the clouds then fading entirely. He lowers his head and licked her cheek, she giggling and hugged him again.

“Thank you doggy.” With those words the meadow faded into a soft white light, everything coming back into clarity, he stood above her once again in her room, hands held outward, human and dressed in the cloaks. She bolted upright in bed, as the door began to open. The world seemed to move in slow motion as he leapt backward, sliding through the window and into the tree again, and slipping down the branches. He could here faint whispers of the conversation. “It’s okay sweetie, it was just a... ‘there was all this bad stuff’....don’t worry honey...’then this doggy came’...” He was running down the street trench coat flapping in the air as he ran down the main street, and down his own, running through his front door, not minding that it was still locked and closed, finally stopping in the darkness of his living room. Breathing hard he looked at his hands, no sign of the black fur, rubbing his face, no sign of the muzzle. His mind a blur, of what’s

and who's? Nothing seemed clear, except the warmth from the small child, the gladness she had for his help, this was clear, and he knew that is what would keep him warm, but what was he?

Spinning around he punched a tightly clenched fist into the wall, the impact echoed through the empty house. Staring he pulled it back, there was no pain, but his knuckles all left a streak of drying blood. He looked down the flesh ripped, the blood cool on her hands. As he watched the blood dried then as it did the skin knit itself together until not even a scar was left.

As if all the strength was suddenly sucked from his legs he fell onto the wall, limply sliding down until he sat on the floor, pressing his head into his arms as he felt cold tears flow down his cheek, everything was so cold. The only warmth was that little girl, but that wasn't even real, it was a dream. It all had to be a dream, he screamed at himself inside his head. Choking on sobs, "But its so real!" Screaming out the world real like the sharp blade of a guillotine swooshing as it slid towards his head, it was all real. He closed his eyes, everything fading to black, very just as cold as he was, perhaps he could just lie here until he wasted away. No one would miss a wretched thing like him, just sit down until he was nothing but skin and bones, a mystery what happened to the strapping young boy.

Several hours passed with his eyes closed tears squeezing from beneath closed eyelids until he opened them again, everything was black. Seconds later his eyes adjusted, everything was in faint outline, just dark shadows of what it had once been. Wondering how many years had passed while he had lain, he stood up and walked to the front door, and looking outside, the street looked like it had the night before, everything bathed in

the slick shadows. The clicks of the lizards talons as they climbed the trees and houses, everything was the same, it was only the next night. Closing the door to his house softly he stepped out into the night, the shadows swirling around him, the lizards chattering to each other in the trees, and he just knew they were asking one another who he was, and if he was prey. One climbed down a tree, looking at him with its dull red eyes, it leapt to the ground and then stood on its two back legs. Its razor sharp talons on its small hands were the only bright thing on it, its brown mottled skin like rotting leaf litter. It took a step forward and hissed at him to leave, he knew what it wanted. He just didn't care, this thing was nothing, a mere pest in his path. A voice spoke inside, dark and ugly, "Kill it, feed, show them who owns this city." He shook his head the voice was filled with longing filled with lust. It wanted blood tonight, but all it asked for was this minor demons energy. He looked at it, his grey eye beginning to glow, tonight he would feast.

It stopped dead in its tracks. He knew it knew fear now, it didn't have a chance to run as he shot forward with inhuman speed, hand clenched around its neck. It gasped once, twice, then nothing as his hand crushed its soft neck, squeezing its last breath from the frail body, the voice laughed and he jumped into the tree, destroying five more of the bastard creatures before stopping for a breath, the voice had grown quiet, retreating back into the dark recesses of his mind, for now it was satiated.

Stepping to the tallest branch he looked out over the town, the night was filled with flashes of neon lights as dreams flickered to life and expired. Blues, Green, Pastel yellows, all sort of reasons and types, many of them feeding lusting demons, so they might hunt the next night. His eyes flowed from light to light, until it fell upon one. This one was different, it was an evil red, brighter than all the others. The house was so

familiar, he wracked his mind and it occurred, this was his friend's house, something was wrong, and he was going to find it.

Running down the streets, in fear for his friend, not even thinking about himself, nothing really seemed to matter anyway. He reached in minutes, not even out of breath, though he crossed the entire town. Leaping up he slid through the glass window as if it were strange air. His eyes fell upon the red shield, but it flowed so slowly, like liquid. As if his friend were held inside a pool of his own blood, awaiting to finally die. He swore silently to himself and without another thought he rushed forward pressing his hands through it, and falling. Falling downwards through a stormy night sky and slamming into the metallic deck of some strange battleship. Many warped towers sprouting guns and radars, sharp and pointed like a twisted madman's design. Looking around it was simple enough to tell that this was all very, very wrong. Standing he could feel blood trickle down his face, though still alive the fall still hurt. Grunting as he stood up and shaking his head he cast around for a sign of his friend in this slowly burning miasma of a ship. The sky flickering red as the great ship called out its own death. Metal groaning as it twisted and writhed in the turbulent water. Lighting flickered across the sky before reaching down and grabbing one tower, sparks flew as it began to waver, soon to fall. Gazing past it, there he was. David inching away from a burning doorway, he was caught on a ledge. Directly in the path of the stricken tower, it groaned, a warning to all to get out of its way. Almost in slow motion it began to bend towards the ledge. Chris screamed out "No!" Knowing he could never reach David in time unless he could fly.

The air fell quiet, all sounds gone, nothing could be heard over the rush of air around him. Shaking his head as tears flew down his cheek and off into the air. He

screamed again, and as he did, the same warmth he had felt when saving the little girl, began to course through his veins, he loosed a growl, this time more bestial than any wolf; his grey eye shining brighter than the full moon. The conflagration within his body, now concentrated upon his shoulder blades. As if bones he never had were forcing themselves through his skin, he groaned the inner voice screaming. Bones sprung from his flesh, dripping with dark blood; the spray splattering the walls and floor around him, swirling in malevolent mixtures of water and oil. The main bone grew longer extending into smaller finger like some immense boney hand, as they grew longer and longer, the thickened blood now a black, began to drip between the bones, lines spreading through it into outline of feathers. Becoming real as the blood evaporated, leaving charcoal grey bones surrounded by light consuming black feathers, one flap and the rest of the blood flew off, the next flap and he was airborne, careening towards David. The tower falling now, time speeding faster and faster until it hits normal time as his arms wrap around David grabbing him as they fly past the explosion of metal as the tower takes down the ledge, the ship finally rending itself in half. Stealing a glance down in the water, he caught a fleeting glimpse of a glistening silver snake leaping over the ship, disappearing into the smoke and never landing, the storm clouds abating as the ship sinks beneath the calming water. David looks up and second before falling unconscious, "Chris?" Chris smiles as David faints and the dream fades, leaving him standing over David's sleeping body as his eyes flicked open, and looks at Chris, but no longer is he Chris, so much more standing now was Lazerous the Dreamer.

The End Part I of "The Lazerous Cycle"