

TERROR CRUISE

By BG Locke

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Though the cruise ship wasn't scheduled to depart until 6:00 p.m. everyone was on-board and checked in by 5:30. Excitement flowed through the passengers like champagne on New Year's Eve. It was Halloween time and for the one hundred guests at this very special party, that was one of the best times of the year. It was the fifth anniversary of their online gaming site's Halloween party and everyone was in a party mood.

Perhaps the most excited passengers were the ones being issued their private elevator keycard. The Cinatas Pacific's Elite Deck was exactly that, elite. There were ten suites on the elite deck and they were enormous. Included in each room was a personal Jacuzzi, a private sun deck, exotic dessert and snack trays, a personal valet available to cater to the passengers' every whim and a fully stocked bar.

Wabbitt was most excited by the bar. She lounged on the comfortable sofa in Suite E3, her assigned cabin, and drank a Long Island Iced Tea while looking out at the beautiful ocean awaiting her.

"This is going to be a marvelous trip." She said smiling.

"Yes ma'am." Her valet responded.

She looked over at him, startled. She had forgotten that he was still there. "What is your name?"

"My name is Harold."

"Harold huh? Doesn't exactly fit, it should be Rafael or Carlos or something exotic like that. But, Harold is fine. My name is Wabbitt and it's nice to meet you."

"Very nice to meet you to ma'am."

"Please stop calling me ma'am, you are making me feel old. Just call me Wabbitt, I insist."

"Wabbitt it is then. Is there anything else I can do for you?"

"Not at this moment, thank you for making the pitcher of tea for me."

"My pleasure. If you need anything else, just pick up the phone and dial one. I am on duty until midnight, after that your valet will be Stephen."

Before she could respond, Harold turned and left her suite.

"Now this is how life should be." She thought aloud.

Back on the main deck, known as the Poe Deck the passengers were mingling and the activity level was intense. Everyone was walking around meeting and greeting their online friends, exploring the ship and preparing to wave goodbye to everyone on shore. Of the one hundred passengers, eighty-four were buzzing around the main area of the Poe Deck.

Only the ten passengers on the Elite Deck, four of the ten passengers registered in Jr. suites on the ship's Hemingway Deck and two wayward

explorers weren't in the main area of the ship. Both of the two persons venturing elsewhere on the ship were on the Dante Deck, the ship's lowest deck where passengers are forbidden. The Dante Deck was where the engines were, the cargo hold and the crew quarters. It was dimly lit in most areas and extremely dangerous for anyone who didn't know where they were going.

Majic was not on the passenger manifest. He came aboard as a friend of another passenger, but his plans were not to get off. He would stow away and enjoy the cruise. As soon as he was told the Dante Deck was off-limits, he began his trek straight to it. Now, he was lost. He'd entered a bulkhead area and into the engine room area. The engines on this ship were enormous and an awesome site to see, but now he wanted to get out of here. As he was passing by a metal wall he heard to of the ship's crew coming in his direction. Quickly, he opened a metal door and climbed inside a dark chamber. He left the door open just slightly behind him.

"Another cruise, another dollar" He heard one of the crew say.

"I'm just glad I get to work behind the scenes down here instead of catering to a bunch of drunken idiots anxiously being spoiled on their first cruise." The other responded.

"Hey, what's this doing open?"

Majic took a deep breath, his heart was pounding, he just knew he was about to get caught where he didn't belong.

"Just the kind of carelessness that will get us all killed someday." One of the crew said. He pushed the metal door shut and slid the locking mechanism in place.

Majic was panicking now, what should he do? If he banged on the door acknowledging that he was there, they would throw him off the ship and he may go to jail. On the other hand, he may be trapped in here for the entire cruise. He flicked his lighter and looked around him. He was in a circular room with a grated floor. Along one of the walls he saw his answer. It was ladder leading up to an open sky high above. He grabbed the first rung of the ladder and started climbing out.

About twenty feet up, he came to a platform. The floor to this platform was also grated metal. He again flicked his lighter and saw a door. Below him he heard a tremendously loud noise. The ship's engines were starting up. Frantically he ran to the door and started pounding on it. The round enclosure was getting hot quick, sweat was pouring off of him and his skin felt as if it were on fire.

Pammie was walking past the round stack that climbed through the center of the ship when she heard a banging noise from inside.

“Is someone in there?” She shouted.

“Yes, it’s me Majic.” He responded. “Please open the door, the engines are starting and it’s getting extremely hot in here.”

“Did you say Majic?” She asked.

“YES!” He yelled back. “Open the door for God’s sake!”

“It’s getting hot in there?”

“Yes damn it, now open the door!”

Pammie looked around. There was no one else in the area. She smiled and walked away. She was whistling as she walked out of the area and got on the elevator. It was almost time for departure and she didn’t want to miss out on the Bon Voyage party.

When she reached the Poe Deck and got to the railing she heard a loud horn and looked up. Black smoke began billowing out of the smoke stack. Part of her felt guilty, but, the majority of her felt perfectly fine. She’d go back and let him out after they launched.

Majic continued to bang on the door. He couldn’t hear anyone on the other side now and assumed they were unable to unlock the door and went to get help. The heat grew more and more intense. The soles of his shoes melted on the metal grate and then the skin began burning off his feet.

He screamed and ran to the ladder. He reached out and grabbed it. When he realized it too would be hot, it was too late. His hands were welded to the ladder. His screams were barely audible now and there was no way anyone could hear them over the roar of the ship’s engine, he was doomed.

Slowly, the skin began melting off his body, he could no longer scream because his throat was burnt. It wasn’t a quick death by any means, it continued to get hotter and slowly and mercilessly he suffered. Ten agonizing minutes later, he was dead. All of his skin had melted his organs were oozing through the second level grating down into the darkness below.

When the ship pulled away from the dock streamers were flying freely and everyone was shouting in the excitement. The party was officially underway! Pammie walked back inside and got on the elevator. She went down to the Steinbeck Deck and walked back to the area of the giant stack. She tried to open the door, it wouldn’t budge. She pulled harder and harder, but to no avail.

A crew member saw her struggling to open the door and approached her quickly. “What are you doing?”

“I’m trying to open this door.” She responded.

“No!” He shouted. “You can’t open that door. They are sealed via magnetic locks and for very good reason. Inside that stack now the temperature is over a thousand degrees.”

Pammie’s eyes grew wide. “What if someone was in there when the engines were started?”

“That’s not possible. These doors are always locked immediately after maintenance. The only door that is accessible is the one in the main engine room and even it has a safety lock.”

“So there’s no way anyone could be inside there?” She asked.

“No way” He answered smiling.

“But I thought I heard someone yelling from inside and heard them banging on it to let them out.”

“It was obviously someone playing a gag on you. Wait here.” He walked away from her. Seconds later she heard the same banging noise and a voice shout out, “I’m stuck in the smoke stack!”

The crew member walked back to her. “Is that about what you heard?”

“That’s exactly what I heard.” She said.

“It was a gag. If you go around the corner and yell in that enclosed room it will sound like someone is actually inside the stack.”

“I’m gonna kill him when I see him.” She muttered.

“Just try not to lock him in the stack. I can’t imagine how painful that death would be.” The crew member laughed. “Enjoy your cruise.”

The crew member walked back to the inner area of the Steinbeck Deck. Pammie was fuming as she made her way back to the elevator, although an announcement made her much happier.

“There will be a Bon Voyage party in Haunted Holiday Lounge on the Poe Deck in ten minutes. All passengers are encouraged to attend.”

She stepped on the elevator smiling, it was party time.

Back down on the Dante Deck another passenger was wandering around the baggage area. Drew, who was also known online as Capt Avatar and more recently Mighty Quinn, was officially lost. He’d been venturing around the enormous, dimly lit area of the Dante Deck and now was entering an area that he wouldn’t have ordinarily. The sign above the door that he didn’t see read, “Caution Live Animal Area”.

He entered the room and walked past large crates. He was stunned to see an enormous Plexiglas encasement filled with snakes. He jumped back away from it when a cobra struck the side in his direction. His leap knocked

over the crate behind him, which in-turn jarred the crate next to it dislodging the lock.

Slowly, the beast that was previously confined moved out of its cage and sniffed the air. He smelled fresh blood and moved quietly, stalking his prey.

Drew walked through the cargo area until he reached the opposite end and saw there was no exit. He turned around and made his way back the direction he came from, unaware that danger awaited him.

When he walked near the snake encasement, he walked as far away from them as possible. He walked sideways with his head facing the snakes. He passed the cage that was behind him and turned to walk straight. Suddenly, he felt an intense pain in his groin area. He screamed in agony and then saw what had happened. Standing next to him was a huge silverback gorilla! It had ripped his genitalia off. His eyes grew wide with horror, the pain was unbelievable.

The gorilla roared and reached out. It grabbed Drew by his shirt and flung him across the room. Drew's body hit the wall hard and fell to the floor. Blood was everywhere from his wound. Before he could pull himself up to his feet the gorilla grabbed him again. He was tossed across the cargo area again, this time slamming hard into the snake enclosure knocking it over and releasing twenty deadly snakes.

He screamed in agony as the very same cobra that had struck at him before nailed him in the cheek. The cobra set up for another strike, but the gorilla picked him up before it had a chance and threw him again. He knocked over four more crates, all of which sprung open.

His eyes were hazing over. The poison from the cobra's bite was taking effect. The last thing he saw before his throat was ripped out was a large male cougar standing over him.

The cougar bit him in the throat and ferociously moved its head from side to side. The gorilla then grabbed the cougar and threw it across the room. Drew's dead body was now a meal for whatever animal was able to establish its dominance. There were seven deadly animals now freed along with the twenty snakes.

Back up on the Poe Deck, everyone was in the Haunted Holiday Lounge oblivious to the dangers that were unleashed below. The Lead Cruise Director stepped up on stage.

"Good evening everyone my name is Beth and I am the Lead Cruise Director. Welcome aboard the Cinatas Pacific!" She began. After the roar of the crowd died down, she continued. "Enjoy your drinks and snacks, but don't ruin your appetites. In one hour the banquet room on the Poe Deck

will be open for your welcome aboard dinner with the menu including lobster, prime rib and various exotic foods from around the world. Throughout your cruise there will be an announcement fifteen minutes prior to all special events. You are not required to attend any of these events. It is at your discretion. You should all have a map of the ship and a booklet with all the amenities available to you. If you don't, get with me and I will give you this information."

She paused before continuing. "Tonight's activities include three lounges featuring different music. On the Twain Deck we have our Zombie Lounge featuring disco. On the Poe Deck we have two lounges. Our Witch's Brew Lounge is featuring a great staff band. They play everything from country, to classic rock and roll to swing music. The Blast from the Past Lounge features music from the 50s and 60s. On the Hemingway Deck, the Ghostly Lounge features a wonderful DJ who plays all varieties of music for your dancing pleasure. The casino located on the Poe Deck is open 24 hours a day."

"Our staff is always willing to help and answer any questions. Feel free to pick up any of the courtesy phones located throughout the ship if you need information on anything. We are here to make your cruise the most pleasant experience of your life. Again welcome aboard!" She stepped down off the stage and spoke to the passengers privately.

The party had indeed commenced and they were on their way to Mexico. With ninety-nine people present at the party, no one missed the only registered passenger who didn't attend. The cruise was going to be an exciting one and all of the passengers were looking forward to it.

This concludes the introductory chapter one! Chapter two will be coming soon. ☺

CHAPTER TWO

At 7:15 everyone was seated in the main dining hall. The feast was unbelievable and when it was over, no one left hungry. This was the last time that as many as ninety people were together for the festivities.

After dinner, ten of the passengers went to the Disco. Pecoswilly, Mistynite, Brenda, Puppieluv, XCaliber, Ladydazzle41, NightGracie, Skully, RDavids and Dave were enjoying free cocktails and the music of the late 1970s. Pecoswilly and NightGracie were the first to brave the dance floor when Night Fever by the Bee Gees began playing.

Everyone else sat back and laughed. Willy's dancing looked like a combination chimp, raccoon and John Travolta with a broken leg and a groin pull. RDavids figured that he couldn't possibly do worse than Willy so he and Puppieluv took the floor and danced as well, literally, as well as Willy and Gracie. Brenda nagged Dave to dance, but he informed her it would take a lot more alcohol to coax him into that, so she ordered him a double and took the floor with Skully. By the time More Than a Woman by the Tavares started, everyone was on the floor but Dave who was enjoying the floor show and his double.

After Boogie Shoes by K.C. and the Sunshine Band finished the disc jockey announced, "Next up, here is PecosWilly's personal favorite song from the Disco Era."

The music started and Willy immediately ran to the dance floor, it was his secret favorite, DISCO DUCK! He was flapping his arms and quacking loudly, it didn't take long for him to be joined by Mistynite, Ladydazzle41 and Puppieluv. Everyone else enjoyed their drinks and watched the four of them do the duck.

As is generally the case when you send alcohol down, it was ready to come back out soon after. Dave staggered to the bathroom after having one normal drink and two doubles.

The restroom was extravagant, Dave chuckled at the basin used for cleaning yourself afterwards and remarked, "I don't think I wanna shoot water up my ass."

He made his way to the line of urinals and began to relieve himself. "Ah, drain the lizard just to refill him. What a waste of good alcohol."

Behind him, a much larger lizard had made his way through the ventilation system and found this particular restroom. When he was finished and turned around, he saw the eight inch black snake on the floor. He

stepped on its head with his boot, reached down and picked it up. The snake hissed and looked at Dave menacingly.

“Tough little bastard are you?” Dave chuckled. He put his hand in front of the snake’s mouth. “Here, give it your best shot.”

The snake bit his hand hard and Dave screamed from the pain. “What the hell kind of black snake are you?”

He threw the snake down on the floor and crushed its head with his boot. Suddenly, he began to feel woozy, he staggered backwards, everything started getting blurry. He could see the snake was still alive and moving away from him. He tried to walk to it and kill it, but fell up against the wall.

He opened the door by sheer luck and fell into the arms of someone he couldn’t recognize. The only thing he could make out were two bright red dots near where their eyes should’ve been.

“Help me” Dave muttered.

“Don’t you worry about a thing” A woman’s voice replied. She had a thick Cajun accent. “I’ll surely be taken good care of you.”

Everyone else at the party assumed Dave had left no one saw the woman drag him out the back entrance.

Ace Warrior, AJW, Bobbi, Cabbie, Deb, Fairmaiden, Fishnfool, Gr8 Skeleton, Hunnypooh, Joy1, Lolita, MB, NativeNE, Paragod, Rustyrose, Seco, Sunflower78 and Wiccan Lydia were gathered at the single most popular spot on the ship, the casino.

Paragod, Ace Warrior, Deb, NativeNE, Seco and Sunflower78 were all playing a Texas Hold Em tournament. A \$20 buy-in, \$5000 in chips, last person standing takes all. After three hands, Seco was busted when he tried to bluff by going all in with a three of hearts and a nine of clubs. Unfortunately for him, Ace Warrior was holding pocket kings with one on the board after the flop. Then there were five.

Hunnypooh, Bobbi, AJW and Gr8 Skeleton were indulged in some blackjack. Fortunately, the dealer was being generous early on. But with AJW at the table, it was a matter of more alcohol before the bets got bigger and his pockets got emptier.

Rustyrose, Wiccan Lydia, Cabbie and Fishnfool were playing another card game called Caribbean Stud. An easy enough game to play, you are dealt five cards and if you feel your five cards are better than the dealer you wager twice your ante. Depending on what you are dealt, you are paid out based on the odds. If the dealer beats you however, you lose your ass.

Cabbie was dealt a nice straight flush on the second hand. With a five dollar ante, fifteen dollar wager, the payout was a very nice \$750. Rustyrose, on the other hand, was not very happy. Two straight hands she had a high pair only to be beaten by the dealer having three of a kind.

The remaining four players were playing various one-armed bandits, a.k.a. slot machines. MB was the most secluded of the group, she was playing a slot machine located at the back of the casino. No one was within fifty feet of her in any direction. The only thing that could see her was slithering with purpose in her direction. It was a death adder, one of the fifteen deadliest snakes in the world.

The adder moved undetected up to her foot, as it was passing over her foot she kicked as a reflex action. She had no idea what she had stirred up until she was bitten in the calf. The snake coiled up and struck her again and again, she screamed weakly, no one heard her.

She fell to the floor, completely paralyzed. In her mind, she knew that she was going to die. No one had heard her scream and in her remote location by the time she was found it would be too late. Suddenly, someone appeared. She recognized the face from the party, only now it was different. The woman standing over her now had glowing red eyes. She blinked in disbelief. Obviously the venom from the snake bite was distorting her vision.

The woman bent down and picked her up. Instead of walking through the main area of the casino, she went through a back door and down a dimly lit corridor. They stopped at an elevator and the woman inserted a keycard. Getting on the elevator was the last conscious thought MB had. By the time they reached the Elite Deck, she was out cold. Her breathing was raspy and shallow, she wouldn't live much longer.

Botridingbabe, Fireangel01, Caresses, Danigirl, Fallon, Fairmaiden, IndianaRose, IndianaWoodie, Irish Eyes, Jonilee, Lil Lacy, Lacy, Mamarosa, Morsky, Rosie, SimplySweet, Slowhndeasytouch, Trachelle and Texanna1 were all in the Witches Brew Lounge listening to the live band and dancing.

IndianaWoodie was dancing with at least two women at all times, mostly three of four. IndianaRose on the other hand, was sitting down enjoying some of the wonderful refreshments the bartender had concocted. Since there were only three men and seventeen women, the men's dance card was extremely full. Even Fallon who looked like someone had set a chicken's ass on fire when he danced fast and when he slow danced, there wasn't a toe on his partner's feet that wasn't bruised.

Slowhndeasytouch was the middle of the dancing scale between Woodie, who was pretty good and Fallon who was well, pretty bad to put it mildly. It didn't seem to matter to anyone how good or bad the dancing was because everyone was having a great time.

Danigirl and Jonilee ran to the floor when the band started playing the song "Fire" by the Ohio Players and everyone sang along loudly.

"Fiiiiiiiire, Fiiiiiiiire Fiiiiiiiire, Fiiiiiiiire, the way you walk and talk really set's me off to a full alarm child..."

Everyone hit the dance floor and danced except for Lil Lacy. She was following a snake down the corridor off to the right of the lounge. She had snakes and spiders for pets and loved them. She had never seen one like this one and it intrigued her. It stopped moving and coiled up looking in her direction.

It wasn't hissing or acting in a threatening manner, it actually looked to be in a defensive mode. She bent down and quickly reached out to grab it. The snake bit her hand, but she still managed to grab it through the pain. She held it with two fingers at the back of its head and examined it. Then she looked at the two small holes in her hand. Having a decent knowledge of snakes, her eyes grew wide when she realized what had just bitten her.

She turned to go back up the corridor still holding the snake in her hand. But after only one step, she grew dizzy and fell hard up against the wall. The eastern tiger snake she held dropped to the floor and bit her in the ankle repeatedly. The venom rushed through her system and she fell hard on the floor.

A figure appeared seemingly from nowhere, it glowed with a bright white light. It lifted Lil Lacy lovingly and carried her away.

April99, BJAM, Boris, DeShadow, Devilishangel, Gargoyle King, Jannelly, Ladyace, Littlesugar, MBabyreb, Mlilreb, Pammie, Pepsiholic, Punkiegirl, Rex2, Sampire, Scott9343, Softie, Sudit and Xanth were all in the Blast From the Past lounge and having a wonderful time.

Initially the music was fantastic, featuring everything from Bill Haley and the Comets to Jerry Lee Lewis for the faster dance music to Johnny Ace's "Pledging My Love" and Elvis Presley's "Love Me Tender" for slow dancing. After several drinks, the DJ asked if anyone would like to do some karaoke, everyone yelled out in approval and the musical talent went downhill fast, but the fun went off the charts.

Jannelly went first singing, "Hula Hoop" by Teresa Brewer. She got a standing ovation from the crowd, not necessarily for her talent, but her

bravery in going first! Boris went next singing Jimmy Barnes' Working Class Man in his thick Australian Accent.

MBabyreb, MLilreb, Sampire and Sudit all took the stage together and did four songs. "Stop in the Name of Love", "Baby Love", "I Hear a Symphony" and "Reflections" by Diana Ross and the Supremes. Each took turns singing lead.

The crowd was really into it, it didn't matter how bad the singing was, everyone received a big ovation.

Softie followed singing a song that everyone sang a long with, "Think of you fellow man, lend him a helping hand, put a little love in your heart..."

Xanth took the stage next and sang "These Boots are Made for Walkin'" by Nancy Sinatra. April99 sang a song that was much newer called "Unwritten" by Natasha Bedingfield.

BJAM climbed on the stage next and sang "Me and Bobby McGee" by Janis Joplin. She was relieved when everyone sang the chorus along with her and it helped her get into it for the latter verses.

Scott9343 staggered on the stage, intoxication was obvious not only in his swagger but in his voice. He chose Jackie Wilson's "Higher and Higher" as his tune. When he was finished he received a standing ovation as well although laughter was rampant.

Punkiegirl took the stage as the youngest member of the group and sang another more current song called "Black Horse and the Cherry Tree" by KT Tunstall. This prompted Gargoyle King and Jannelly to hit the dance floor. They were joined quickly by three other couples.

Since he was nearest the stage at the end of the song, Gargoyle King climbed up on the stage next. While he was looking through the play list to choose a song, BJAM yelled out, "CONWAY!"

"I don't think so!" He yelled back. Instead he asked Rex2, Dshadow, Boris and Scott9343 to join him for the backup vocals on The Temptations "Ain't Too Proud to Beg." No one was surprised by this song choice.

When the song was over the five of them stayed on stage and Dshadow took over lead vocals on "Fun Fun Fun" by the Beach Boys. They sang "I Wanna Hold Your Hand" by The Beatles before they climbed off the stage and left Rex2 alone to sing his solo.

Rex2 chose to slow things down. "Gonna sing some buckle polishing music for you guys." He proceeded to sing "Stand By Me" by Ben E. King.

The party continued with Littlesugar singing "Nowhere to Run" by Martha and the Vandellas. Ladyace sang "When Will I Be Loved" by Linda

Ronstadt and Devilishangel sang Tina Turner's rendition of "Proud Mary" Gargoyle King provided the Ike bass.

Pepsiholic sang the Contours big hit, "Do You Love Me" which prompted everyone to sing along as well.

Only Pammie was left to take the stage and she did so reluctantly.
****Special Note before continuing, I can assure you Pammie is now going, "OH SHIT! Now back to the story!"****

She looked through the choice of songs carefully before making her selection, she narrowed it down to three, "Respect" by Aretha Franklin, "Hit Me With Your Best Shot" by Pat Benatar and the one she ultimately chose. When the music started only a few recognized it and they instantly began laughing. When Pammie belted out the opening line: "I rode my bicycle past your window last night, I roller skated to your door at daylight. It almost seems like you're avoiding me, I'm okay alone but you've got something I need. I've got a brand new pair of roller skates. You got a brand new key..."

People were literally rolling on the floor with laughter. Gargoyle King yelled out, "Damn, I didn't think anyone could make that song worse!" This prompted a finger gesture from Pammie but she continued.

When Pammie was finished and the DJ began playing dance music again, Pepsiholic decided to call it a night as did Littlesugar and Xanth. Xanth went to the private elevator and used her keycard to go up to her suite on the Elite deck, Pepsiholic and Littlesugar both went down to the Shakespeare Deck.

When they got off the elevator there was something lying on the floor. Littlesugar picked it up and Pepsiholic looked at it.

"What the hell is that?" Pepsiholic asked.

"I'm not sure. It looks like an infant's penis." Littlesugar said.

Pepsiholic cringed at the thought of penis removal. "Whatever it is throw it away. Even if it is a penis, it isn't going to do anyone any good, that's for sure."

Littlesugar threw it in the trashcan next to the elevator. She went to the right towards her room, SH18 and Pepsiholic went left to his room SH7. Pepsiholic didn't have far to go, his room was just three doors down on the left. Littlesugar had to go down the hall and turn to the left and then again to the right to get to hers. When she made the left turn she saw a crewmember, or at least what appeared to be a crewmember standing in the hallway.

She said "hello" as she walked past then felt a sharp pain in her kidney area. She reached back with her hand and was shocked to see it full of blood when she pulled it back. She spun around and a sharp knife

plunged into her chest just below the heart. She screamed for help, but only briefly as the knife slid across her throat. Littlesugar grabbed her throat and then fell onto the floor. The psychopath didn't stop, he plunged the knife into her again and again. Then he grabbed her body and dragged her down the hall and into an elevator. He took her down to the Dante deck and threw her in a closet. He then returned up to the Shakespeare deck cleaning up the mess as he went.

On the Hemingway Deck Auntie, Deb, Barb, BGjr, Briandixon, Bumsie9, Candysosweet, Clairvoyant, Kcinick, Maresy, Melon, NWHoney and Stardust were listening to more modern music in the Ghostly Lounge. Before being drunk both Stardust and Melon climbed on a table and started dancing to "Hypnotize" by Notorious B.I.G. ala Julia Style in "Ten Things I Hate About You".

"Geesh, can't wait to see what they do when they get drunk." Briandixon told Kcinick.

"I know, may even get a strip show." Kcinick agreed.

Unfortunately for them, Stardust heard it and kicked Kcinick in the chest knocking his chair back and sending him flipping in the air. Everyone laughed, including Kcinick after he managed to get back to his feet.

The second song to play was Black Eyed Peas' "Let's Get it Started.". This brought everyone onto the dance floor immediately except Barb who was still sampling drinks at the bar to decide which one she wanted.

Deb looked like an elderly woman trying to dance hip hop, which was convenient since that was the case.

****NOTE...I'm gonna pay dearly for that one!****

Everyone found a groove though and the party was indeed started! The song faded out and the next song kept everyone up, it was Rhianna's "SOS". The party was kicking and the DJ was doing his job, keeping everyone on the floor. Of course, every minute or so several of the dancers were taking a break to grab a drink. Candysosweet and Maresy even brought their drinks on the floor with them. As "SOS" faded, "I Wanna be Bad" by Willa Ford began playing and again no one sat down.

Halfway through the song, Maresy, Auntie and NWHoney sat down to grab some air. "They need an oxygen bar here." Auntie said out of breath.

"I second that." NWHoney agreed.

Barb joined the table and sat down her drink, "What's wrong with you guys?"

"You go dance to three or four straight and let's see how you feel." Maresy told her.

Barb has sampled thirteen drinks before choosing one, so she was feeling pretty good when she hit the floor. She sang the chorus loudly as she took the floor, "I wanna be bad, make bad look so good. I got things on my mind I never thought I would..." All of the women joined her in the chorus.

"Party people" The DJ yelled out, let's keep it goin' and stay bad. When the next song began, everyone remained on the floor and Auntie, Maresy and NWHoney couldn't resist joining back in the fun. "O.P.P. by Naughty by Nature kicked up with its awesome bass.

"Let's go with some old school" The DJ said.

As "O.P.P." faded out, "Baby Got Back" by Sir Mix-a-lot began. That was followed immediately by "Too Much Booty" by the Def Bass All Stars.

The party was in full swing when Kcinick began feeling ill. "I'm going to head back to my room for a bit." He said. "If I feel better I'll be back, looks like the party will be going all night here."

Everyone said goodbye and Kcinick left the party and made his way down to the Shakespeare deck. He stepped off the elevator and went to the right, when he turned down the next hall he saw a crewmember cleaning up a mess. He approached the crewmember instead of going into his room.

"Wow what happened here? It looks like something out of the Texas Chainsaw Massacre."

He didn't like the response. A sharp blade came out of nowhere and sliced through his chest. He jumped back and the blow didn't cut too deeply. He turned to run but the man tripped him and he fell face first onto the hallway carpet. He screamed when he felt the blade hit the back of his neck, his scream was cut short as the blade came out the front of his neck. The man picked him up by the knife handle. Kcinick's body hung from it lifeless. The mysterious crewmember seemed agitated by the interruption and the new need for more cleaning. He took Kcinick's body down to the Dante Deck and began kicking him in anger.

After his tirade, he returned back to the Shakespeare deck cleaning the mess as he went.

On the Steinbeck Deck there was a spades game going on, actually it was now the sixth game. Illiniguay and Mackdaddy were playing against Ladybug and Gr8 Skeleton. So far the scores were, 512 to -135, 527 to -142, 513 to -197, 531 to -12 and 516 to 3 all games won by Ladybug and Gr8 Skeleton. Considering they were playing for \$20 a game each, the baggy bug and boney were thoroughly enjoying themselves.

Illiniguy and Mackdaddy, however, were not getting along so well. They were being set constantly and blaming the other person for it. Neither accepted responsibility for their poor play and their tempers were increasing. After they lost the sixth straight game by over 500 points they left the cabin to fight in the hallway.

Ladybug and Gr8 Skeleton just stayed in the room to wait. Both were laughing at how poorly their opponents played.

Before either of the two men could throw a punch, a voice boomed down the hallway. "A little hot under the collar are we gentlemen?"

"Mind your own damn business" Mackdaddy shouted before he actually saw where the voice came from.

A shadowy figure made its way slowly toward them. It had a black cape on that covered most of its face and it moved as if it were floating above the floor rather than walking.

"Little early for Halloween don't you think?" Illiniguy laughed. "Ooh, Dracula's coming to get me, I'm so afraid."

"Yeah, I'm shaking." Mackdaddy agreed.

The man was now just in front of them both and they laughed at him and his costume. The laughter came to a stop when he opened the rope and revealed his face. It was skeletal in appearance with menacing jaws and teeth. The eyes were dark as pitch and the nose wasn't there, it was simply a skull nose.

They tried to turn and run back into the cabin with Ladybug and Gr8 Skeleton. A hand grabbed each of them and in a split second they burst into flames. The two men screamed, but the dark figure behind them said, "Silence" and their screams were muted. The heat was intense and within a minute there was nothing left of either of them but a pile of ashes. The dark figure looked down and blew at the ashes, they vanished.

Ladybug opened the cabin door just as the cloaked figure vanished. She blinked her eyes and shook her head, she thought she saw something, but dismissed it as her imagination. When there was no sign of either man, she and Gr8 Skeleton left and went up above to spend some of their newly acquired cash in the casino.

The ship sailed on the dark water southward toward Mexico, the first night was coming to a close. The next day was certainly going to be an exciting one.

End Chapter Two

CHAPTER THREE

Breakfast was served the morning of the 30th in three dining facilities. Everyone was buzzing with excitement at what lied ahead. When the ship was pulling in to the dock at Balzatlán, Mexico everyone was on the outer decks watching. Everyone was there, except one that is.

Up on the Elite Deck in one of the luxury suites, the blinds were closed and the room was dark. A mat laid on the floor with a pentagram on it. Candles were burning at all five points and the woman over the mat was chanting and dropping melted wax on various areas of the pentagram.

Lying on the floor next to the pentagram was the dead body of MB. She had succumbed to the venom in her system after eleven hours, much longer than the voodoo priestess expected. Now that she was deceased it was time to bring her back. Having a servant to cater to her needs on-board was wonderful, having one to cater to her darker whims was better.

The priestess placed her hand above the center of the pentagram and sliced it with a knife. The blood dripped almost on queue, first to the center, then to air, then to water, then to fire, then to earth and finally to the eye. After a few more lines of incantation, MB's eyes opened.

She sat up stiffly and then stood. The voodoo priestess stood as well and spoke to her slave.

"You are MB. When I summon you, you will come. Otherwise you will act normally, with no recollection of the events of last night or this morning. Do you understand?"

"Yes, priestess" MB said blankly.

The priestess placed a necklace on MB with an onyx charm on it. "Go to your room, when you get inside you will forget about me. As far as you know, you just woke up and are looking forward to visiting Balzatlán, Mexico."

MB walked in a semi-normal fashion past the priestess and out of the room. Paineternal, one of the Elite Deck staff, was at the elevator and knew this person was a guest. He used his pass card and opened the elevator door for her.

"Have a nice day, ma'am." He smiled.

The woman didn't respond, she didn't even acknowledge his existence. When she was on the elevator and the doors were closed, he muttered to himself, "Bitch."

From inside the closed elevator he heard a woman yell out, "I HEARD THAT!"

He went from smiling to himself to being very worried about losing his job. He'd apologize if he saw her back on the Elite deck. The time came much quicker than he expected. The elevator doors opened and the woman stepped back out.

"I'm sorry." He said.

She reached out and grabbed his neck. With an easy twist of her wrist, she snapped it and carried his body to the voodoo priestess' room.

The door opened as she arrived at it. The priestess was obviously annoyed at her zombie's actions. "Get in here!" She screeched.

Inside the room, MB tossed Paineternal's body on the floor. The priestess sat MB down on the floor and began a new spell. Obviously she had underestimated the woman she had turned into her servant. After twenty minutes, MB left the room much more subservient. A new crewmember was at the elevator now looking confused that the post was abandoned.

He opened the doors for MB and said, "Have a wonderful ma'am." She didn't respond, but he didn't care. The doors went shut and he picked up the phone next to the elevator and called the head purser to report Paineternal's abandonment of his post.

Back in the room, the priestess hid the body and left. She hung a "Do Not Disturb" sign on the door as she left and told the new elevator crewmember that no one was to enter her room while she was gone. He made note of it and told her to have a wonderful day.

"Thank you. You have a lovely day as well." She responded with a smile.

When the gangplank was lowered and firmly in place, everyone walked off the ship and went ashore. McGowan007 was the crew member in charge of counting how many people got off. When no one else was waiting to leave the ship, she finished her count at 94.

"How many are left on board?" Realnut, one of the ship's activities director, asked.

"Six." McGowan007 replied.

"Surprisingly high number I figured everyone would be getting off." Realnut said. "I'll announce an onboard activity. Just not sure what that will be yet."

"Could play Russian Roulette" McGowan007 joked.

"Knowing my luck, they'd miss and shoot me." Realnut responded.

On shore there was two buses filled with people going to explore the Mayan Ruins, sixty-two people in all. A group of sixteen women headed for the stores to do some shopping and the remaining sixteen went to the beach.

When the buses arrived at the ruins, they were all lined up and the director of relations for the site, Fibber, addressed them.

“Good morning everyone” She began. “The brochures you are receiving now contain maps and information about the ruins. You are free to explore any area you wish with the exception of the areas clearly marked with a red line on the ground and a sign saying do not enter. This is a very sacred area. Crossing the red lines could land you in jail, so please do not be tempted to do so. Ruin employees are stationed throughout the area to answer any questions that you may have. Along the way you will see speaker boxes. If you press the button on these boxes you will be given information about that particular area.”

“We feel that most people prefer the excitement of exploring on their own rather than guided tours. However, if you wish to have a guided tour, stay here after my announcements and I’ll arrange one for you. We hope that you enjoy your visit with us and we are here to assist you in any way you may need. Don’t hesitate to ask for anything. Does anyone have any questions?”

“Yeah, where’s the bar?” Ace Warrior yelled out.

Amidst the laughter, Fibber responded, “There are several cantinas in town. We’ll be happy to give you a ride back to them if you’d like.”

“Not much of a sense of humor.” Caresses told Ace.

“None at all, apparently” He responded.

“Any real questions” Fibber prompted. “No? Okay, enjoy your exploration.”

No one stayed behind for a guided tour. Given her response to Ace Warrior, no one wanted to spend more time with her than necessary. The large group of people set out to the ruins. There were ancient buildings to explore and caves. The caves were by far the most intriguing.

Inside the caves there were torches on the wall for lighting, at the entrance was a ruin employee but inside there seemed to be none. Everyone was using their map of the caves to explore every detail.

Smokinn had broken off from everyone else and was exploring alone. The passageways were astonishing, carvings were etched on the walls and inside the pamphlets they were given were translations of what the etchings meant. She came to an area that was a dead end, except for a small dark cave with a “Do Not Enter” sign and a red line on the ground. Etched on the wall were symbols that translated to, “Within this cave lies one of the two secrets to the Mayan culture. Be warned he who enters, the idol of the evil King Handasu must not be removed.”

Smokinnn looked inside the dark cave. She flicked her lighter to see inside. Something caught her eye just a few feet from the cave entrance. It glimmered, she looked closer at it. It looked like gold. She turned around and looked behind her. Scanning the area, she saw no one was in sight. Quickly she ran into the small cave and grabbed the golden idol. She placed it into her purse and ran back out.

She sat down in the dead end area and smoked a cigarette to calm her nerves. After she put the cigarette out, she walked back out of the area and into a main tunnel where several people were walking. She joined them nonchalantly and smiled. She had gotten away undetected.

On the far side of the caves, IndianaWoodie came across a forbidden cave with writings on the wall that translated to: "Evil King Handasu lies at rest within. Be warned all who may enter." He looked inside the cave and just two steps away was an emerald colored statue. It was about six inches high and exquisitely carved. The eyes on the idol were onyx and it had a golden band around its neck. The temptation was too great to resist, no one was around so he stepped in quickly and grabbed the statue.

He had a small bag from a souvenir store he'd stopped at immediately upon debarking from the ship. He stuffed the idol in the bag and walked out of the area.

When everyone was out of the caves, Fibber did a walk-through. She knew of the two idols. The last time they were removed, eleven people were killed. The history of the two idols was bleak. Over one hundred people had died after handling them. When she stepped in the area of the golden one, she shined her flashlight in. She panicked when she saw it was gone. Quickly she ran through the caves to where the emerald idol was. It was gone as well.

She turned to go catch up with the group before they boarded the buses. She froze in her tracks when she saw Mayan King Handasu standing in the cave entryway. There was no way out. She yelled for help as he moved rapidly toward her. It was the final sound she would ever make. He placed his hands on her head and she began convulsing. The blood began draining from her body, she shriveled and grew thinner. Her skin evaporated. Within minutes, she was nothing more than a skeleton. The king grew noticeably stronger as Fibber grew weaker. When he was done, he carried her bones into the small cave. He pushed on an area of rock and a sliding panel opened. Inside was an enormous pile of skeletons. He threw hers on top and closed the hidden cave.

Outside the caves, Slowhndeasytouch realized that he'd left his cell phone inside. He knew the location because he'd used the camera and sat it

down afterwards when he urinated in the corner of one of the cave rooms. He went back inside and down the passageways leading to the cave room. He entered the enclosed room and picked up his cell phone, when he turned around, there was a man dressed in Mayan clothing standing in the doorway.

“You dare defile the soil of my ancestors.” The man said menacingly.

“Sorry about that, when you have to go you have to go.”

Slowhndeasytouch responded. “I wasn’t aware that you guys had cameras in here. Hope someone enjoyed the show.”

Slowhndeasytouch walked toward the man with the intention of walking past and leaving the caves. But the man blocked the entryway.

“Could you move please?” He asked. “I’m in a hurry.”

The man grabbed him by the throat and threw him up against the back wall of the cave room. Slowhndeasytouch got up quickly and felt the back of his head. When he pulled his hand back, there was blood on it. “You just got yourself a lawsuit and an ass-kicking.”

He walked at the man quickly and threw a punch. The man grabbed his hand and squeezed. The bones in Slowhndeasytouch’s hands crumbled. He screamed in agony. “Let go!” He jerked his hand back, the pain was severe. “Your ass is grass now. What’s your name asshole?”

“Handasu” the man replied.

“Get out of my way. I need to get to a hospital.”

Again Slowhndeasytouch approached the man and tried to walk past him. Once again the man grabbed him, this time by his testicles, and threw him hard against the far wall.

Slowhndeasytouch was nearly unconscious when he landed and he moved very slowly getting back up. The pain in his body was immeasurable, he’d never felt anything like it. “Look, please just let me out of here. I won’t tell anyone what transpired here. I have to get to a hospital.”

He walked slowly now, barely able to stay on his feet. His good hand was clutching his testicles, the pain there was much worse than anywhere else. This time the man grabbed the top of his head. He felt a burning sensation rush through him as if his blood was boiling. He started to convulse and tried to drop to his knees to escape the man’s grip. Instead the man lifted him into the air. Blood began spilling out of his mouth, his eyes fell back into his skull and his body shook violently. By the time merciful death arrived, there was very little left of him.

Handasu maintained his grip until his victim was nothing more than a skeleton. He carried the bones through the passageways and threw them in with the rest. He walked to the entrance of the cave and vanished as he exited.

AJW, Paragod, Ghattoman, R Davids and Briandixon never got a chance to see the ruins. They had heard from a crewman that the beach was topless and that was where they'd gone and spent the entire day.

"It's 5:30" Briandixon said. "We probably should be getting back to the ship."

"I guess if we must, we must. This is very nice and all but I would rather not be stuck here." Ghattoman said.

"I could think of much worse places to be stranded." AJW remarked. "But, I agree we need to get back."

They watched as April99, Melon, Stardust, Rosie, Mistynite, Brenda and Candysosweet approached them. "You can put your eyes back in your heads and go to the ship now perverts." Brenda told them.

"Yeah we can do that." Paragod agreed. "We have pictures."

"No you don't, there's no cameras allowed on the beach." Rosie argued.

"Ah, but it doesn't say anything about cell phones." R Davids smiled.

"Give me that phone!" Stardust yelled.

The men jumped up and ran as the women chased them. They ran all the way to the ship and straight to Paragod's room. Quickly, they unloaded their cell phone cameras via his laptop.

When they were confronted in the hall afterwards by the women, they deleted the photos in front of them and asked for forgiveness. It was given reluctantly.

Back on the shore, Gargoyle King and Jannelly ran into another online gamer named David. David had flown there to catch up with the ship and was looking forward to joining the party.

"Just walk on with us." Gargoyle King told him. "If nothing else you can crash in my cabin, I have two beds in there."

David walked up the ramp with Gargoyle King and Jannelly, McGowan007 counted him as if he were one of the passengers that had gotten off.

At 6:00 p.m. the count was 94, the same number that had gotten off at Balzatlan. So the ship left the dock at 6:15, none the wiser that one original passenger was missing.

"Only one crew member is unaccounted for." The captain said to his crew members in a closed meeting. "If you happen to see Paineternal around the ship, send him to me."

The captain left the meeting and went into the main dining hall. There was a raffle drawing done to see what ten passengers were going to be seated at the captain's table. Barb, Botridingbabe, Creampuff,

Dropdeadfred, Lacy, Maresy, Pecoswilly, Skully, The Mack and Wiccan Lydia were the lucky winners.

After a wonderful dinner, the passengers divided up to enjoy the various activities on the ship. In cabin T9, Smokinnn was admiring her new prize possession. Dollar signs ran through her head, if this was solid gold she was rich! As she polished it, she felt a presence in her room. It was as if someone was in there with her. She checked the cabin thoroughly and found no one. "Just my nerves getting the better of me I guess." She whispered to herself.

She wrapped the idol up in a hand towel and placed it back in her purse. She wasn't going to risk leaving something this valuable in her cabin.

In Cabin P16 IndianaWoodie was admiring his prize as well. The detail of the idol was astounding. It was the likeness of a man, most likely a king. The face was sculpted to amazing detail. He had a gold chain hanging around his neck with a ruby pendant. As he rubbed the idol to clean it, he felt as if he was being watched. A strange wind came from out of nowhere and blew across his face.

He stood up and walked around his cabin looking to make sure he was alone. He walked to his cabin window, it was shut tight. "Okay Woodie, don't start freaking out here." He said to himself. He decided to carry the idol in a leather fanny pack. It was a tight squeeze but it fit. Leaving it behind would not only be risking losing it, but also an extended stay in a Mexican jail and he'd heard enough horror stories to know he didn't want that.

At dinner, Smokinnn was seated next to IndianaWoodie. An uninvited guest seized the opportunity to increase his power exponentially. The two idols were united when the ghostly king removed the emerald statue from IndianaWoodie's pack undetected. It was placed in with the golden idol. No one noticed the green glow emanating from Smokinnn's purse for several minutes. When the glow faded, only one idol remained and it resembled the fate that lied ahead for several unknowing passengers.

Back in the dining area, MB informed David that Slowhndeasytouch did not get back on the ship at Balzatlan so there would be an empty cabin. So after dinner David went to the activities director and informed her that he'd lost his room key and that he was Slowhndeasytouch.

The activities director gave him a new key without question. He went to room P8, knocked on the door cautiously and then entered the room. Slowhndeasytouch's personal effects were gone so David felt comfortable taking over his room. He'd snuck changes of clothes and other items on board in shopping bags.

After dinner people split up in various areas of the ship as they had the night before. In cabin P26, a small group of four gathered to play spades. IndianaRose, IndianaWoodie, Fishnfool and Cardshark2 ordered room service and played two games without incident. As the clock in the room chimed for 9:00 p.m. things started getting strange.

At first, it was viewed in amazement as the cards lifted off the table and floated in the air. All four of the players stopped and gazed at what was transpiring in front of them. Cardshark2 threw a card down on the table to test this freakish occurrence. His card also floated up into the air. But, then it began spinning rapidly. It was spinning so quickly, that it was just a blur. Then it flew in his direction and hit him in the throat.

Everyone jumped up from the table and looked at Cardshark2. He had a look of shock on his face, but he didn't say anything nor move. Slowly his body slumped forward and his head fell off onto the table. It rolled across the table and onto the floor in front of IndianaRose's feet. She screamed and ran to the door. She tried frantically to open it, but it wouldn't budge.

When she turned back around another card flew into Fishnfool's chest. It continued spinning like a saw blade until it vanished inside of him. Blood spewed out into the room, Fishnfool fell backwards onto the bed clutching his chest. Then the card came back out through his throat and flew across the room at IndianaRose. She was barely able to duck out of its way, but she did. He cut into the door and went right through.

IndianaWoodie looked at the now dead body of Fishnfool in horror. Then it dawned on him that it could very well be the idol in his pack that was the cause. He reached around and grabbed the pack. Immediately, he knew it was empty.

"BEHIND YOU" IndianaRose screamed.

Woodie spun around and saw King Handasu standing there. He was six feet seven inches tall and massively built. His face exuded pure rage. "Thief" he boomed.

"What's he talking about Woodie?" IndianaRose cried.

Before Woodie could answer, Handasu held his hand out in her direction. She clutched at her throat. She could feel the pressure of being strangled. Woodie spun around and saw her gasping for air and struggling. He tried hitting Handasu's arm. Handasu struck him in the chest with his other arm and sent Woodie flying hard against the wall, rendering him unconscious.

IndianaRose was lifted in the air. She floated across the room toward Handasu. When she reached him he lowered her back to the floor and

removed his grip on her throat. She gasped in a deep breath. Before she could turn to run away, he placed his hand on top of her head. Her body started quivering. She felt enormous heat rush through her. Her eyes bulged and then popped out of her head. They hung from the sockets like fuzzy dice from a car mirror. Handasu grabbed them with his other hand then he pulled them off and ate them.

IndianaRose was still fighting for her life, but the fight was lost soon after. Her body began to shrivel up until there was nothing left but her skeletal remains. Handasu threw her into the open bathroom. She slammed so hard against the wall that her bones exploded. The shards of bone and the few remaining in tact landed on the bathroom floor.

IndianaWoodie was just regaining consciousness when he saw the skeleton fly by. He jumped to his feet and ran for the cabin door. He pulled at it frantically, but to no avail.

“You dare steal from me.” Handasu spoke. “I show you what we do with thieves in my culture.”

IndianaWoodie slammed hard against the wall with his arms outstretched. A pressure held him there, he could not move. He saw one of the cards lift from the table and begin spinning.

“Please don’t” he cried. “I’m sorry. I don’t know where your statue is or I’d give it back.”

Handasu did not respond, the card flew in IndianaWoodie’s direction and sawed through his left hand. The hand fell to the floor with an eerie thud. Then it flew back out and sawed through his right hand. It too fell to the floor. IndianaWoodie screamed in agony. “Help me! Oh God, please someone help me.”

Handasu walked over to him. He bent down and picked up the two hands. He slapped IndianaWoodie hard across the face with his own left hand and then again with the right. He continued slapping him harder and harder. Woodie was defenseless. He was still pinned against the wall. A hard blow from the right crushed his jaw. His teeth went flying into the back of his throat. Then the other jaw was crushed. His face was barely recognizable now and it continued to get worse as the blows intensified. Finally, a sharp blow from the right caved in his skull and sent grey matter spewing out.

The blows stopped at that point. Handasu placed his hand on Woodie’s head and held it there until, like his other victims, there was nothing left but skeleton. The skull was barely more than small shards now. Handasu threw what was left of Woodie’s body into the bathroom. It shattered against the wall and crumbled to the floor as well.

He drained the fluids, organs and dermal tissue from Fishnfool and Cardshark2 also. He tossed their skeletons into the bathroom. Then with a gesture of his hand, the bathroom door slammed shut and locked.

Again he disappeared into the air. A dangerous unseen predator with a vendetta, anyone who got in his way was certainly going to suffer.

Chapter 4

In cabin ST11, the screams were blood-curdling. But no one was on the lower decks to hear them.

“This is much better than last night’s menu.” Crewman Hannibal said in a psychotic voice. “You see the fresher the meat, the better the meal.”

He said this while standing over a hot plate. In the plate there was a little virgin olive oil and five strips of skin off his victim’s chest.

The man tied in the chair was frantic. He’d been screaming so loudly for so long that his voice was cracking and frail. “You can’t be Hannibal, he’s not real. There are good psychiatrists out there that can help you dude.”

“Do tell. Psychiatry is a passion of mine you know. You see, at this stage you are trying to bond with me. But I must say. It’s rather weak of you to insist that I need mental help. Is that the best you can do?”

“Screw you asshole.”

“Ah, now we’re back to anger. That’s much better for me anyway, makes it a much more delightful eating experience.”

Hannibal removed the strips of skin and placed them in a warmer. He ate one just to enjoy the succulence. “Delicious, you really must try a piece.”

He brought a piece over to his victim. Quickly his victim clamped his mouth shut tight. Hannibal grabbed the man’s hair and pulled hard. His mouth flew open in pain and he shoved the strip of skin into his mouth and held it closed. The man bucked wildly and violently but Hannibal kept his hand clamped over his mouth until he heard a swallow. The man gagged and wretched, Hannibal held his hand over his mouth and forced him to choke back down his own regurgitation. After the man was done he passed out.

Hannibal got out a scalpel and made an incision in the back of the man’s head. He used surgical precision to remove two pieces of the man’s brain and then sewed the area closed. He placed the portions of brain on the hot plate and then smiled as his victim awoke.

The man looked at the hot plate immediately when he woke up. He knew yet another piece of him was sizzling, but he couldn’t determine what part it was. His body was in so much agony from his chest, that he just couldn’t decipher what part of him had been cut while he was unconscious.

“I saw you last night dancing. So I’ve taken the liberty of bringing some music. I personally am more partial to The Fugue but, since this

dinner is in your honor.” Hannibal stopped talking and pressed play on the cabin’s CD player.

The music that played was not disco. It was the chicken dance. “I know what you are thinking, that’s not disco. Well, this is very apropos for your particular style of dance.”

Hannibal smiled and continued preparing his meal. He seasoned his current morsel delicately with a pinch of salt and some garlic.

Fallon tried to speak, but he was unable to. All that came out was gibberish. “What’s wrong with me?” The man thought to himself. “Get a grip, if you can’t speak you can’t talk your way out of this.” He tried again to speak and again gibberish flowed from his mouth.

Hannibal removed the morsels from the hot plate and placed them in a warmer as well. “Now, this is going to hurt. But it’s for you. I don’t eat the meat from this area, but I like to serve it to my dinner guests. It really is priceless to see the look on their faces.”

Hannibal placed a surgical bag on the ground in front of the man and then removed his pants. The man’s eyes grew large and he bucked wildly, trying to free himself. His words were still incoherent and when he saw the scalpel moving towards his genitals he shrieked in a pitch reminiscent of a teenage girl. Hannibal laughed, “That’s the pitch your voice will have after I’m done. That was a very good imitation of yourself if I do say so.”

Hannibal continued to talk while he cut. “You see, if I remove your penis, you will bleed to death. So, instead, I am just neutering you. Testicles are a delicacy amongst certain cannibalistic tribes in Africa. I think you will enjoy them as well, I prepare them in a white wine ginger sauce that really brings out the flavor.”

The man resisted futilely. When Hannibal was done, he sewed the area closed. He placed a small saucepan on the second burner of his hot plate, poured in some wine and added fresh ginger. After it was heated, he placed the testicles in and placed a lid on them. “That’s going to take awhile, so while we’re waiting, let’s get something else shall we?”

Hannibal moved around behind the man and a minute later he could feel the scalpel cutting into his lower back. The burning sensation and the overall pain was intense and he blacked out.

When he regained consciousness he was shocked at what he saw. Lying on the floor was Hannibal, or at least what was left of him. The head was missing but he recognized the suit. There was blood everywhere and the pot that contained his testicles was still simmering.

Then a woman appeared in front of him. He recognized her as one of the passengers. “Oh thank God.” He muttered. “I can talk!” He realized

that he was also untied, but for some reason he couldn't seem to move anything but his head.

"God?" The woman said in a deep Cajun accent. "I suppose you could thank Him. But if I were you, I'd be thanking me. My name is Marie Laveau."

The man laughed hysterically, it wasn't nearly as funny when she glared at him. "You're kidding right?"

"Do I look like I be joking?" She questioned.

"No, you don't. It's just that I feel like I have slipped into Dante's seventh level of hell right now. First, Hannibal Lector and now Marie Laveau you must see the irony?"

"What I see is insolence. For that, I think I let you enjoy the feast this monster had prepared for you. She reached into the pot and removed the cooked testicles."

Immediately the man saw that she just placed her hand inside a pot that had been at a full boil and showed no signs of pain. The reality of the situation sunk in at that point. "Okay this is either the worst nightmare in history or someone slipped me some bad acid when I was looking." He meant to just think this but the words seemed to echo throughout the room.

Her face turned angry, the scowl that was on her face turned into what resembled a vicious cat. Her eyes went from round to oval and turned a golden yellow. She threw her head back and screamed. When she lowered her head again, her face was back to the original scowl. This did not make him feel any better.

She held out her hand and against his will, his mouth opened. He started shaking his head and uttering, "No, no please no." She placed the testicles in his mouth. They were extremely hot. He tried to spit them out or at least he wanted to. Instead he started chewing. "What is happening to me?" He thought to himself.

"You are in my power now." Marie's voice echoed in his mind.

Suddenly the music changed and K.C. and the Sunshine Band's "Get down tonight" began playing. But the words seemed a little garbled, it almost sounded as if they were saying, "Get dead tonight..."

He continued to chew his own testicles and then swallowed. A horrible thought flashed through his mind, just briefly. "You know, those were pretty tasty." He shook his head and cleared that disgusting thought out quickly.

Marie smiled now. "I'm glad that you enjoyed them."

He felt woozy now, his stomach was sickened and he knew that he was about to faint. “Fictitious characters Hannibal and Marie Laveau. What next, Dracula, Frankenstein and the Wolfman?” He thought to himself.

“Fictitious” Marie shrieked. “I am not fictitious you imbecile! I am going to enjoy playing with you like a puppet on a string. You will pay dearly for this insolence.”

This was the last thing the man heard as he drifted off into the realm of unconsciousness. What he didn’t know was while they spoke, he was bleeding to death from a wound in his back. When he opened his eyes again, he felt completely different. He had full range of motion in his body, but his mind was no longer his. “You will do whatever I say.” Marie told him.

“Yes my queen.” He responded.

“I want you to go up to the Blast from the Past Lounge where they are doing karaoke. I want you to sing the song that will be in your head when you take the microphone. When you are done, you will go to the rear of the ship and jump off.”

“Yes my queen.” He repeated. Then he stood up and walked out of the room.

Up in the Blast from the Past Lounge, Rex2 was on the stage singing something a little more modern and a little more loud. “Sleep with one eye open, grippin your pillow tight. Exit light, enter night, take my hand, off to never never land.”

“What in the hell is Rex doing singing Metallica?” Pecoswilly asked.

“Paybacks a bitch” Gargoyle King responded smiling.

When he was done, he came over to the table. His face was a nice shade of red from embarrassment.

“You should be embarrassed.” Jannelly told him. “You actually made that song worse!”

Rex2 didn’t respond. He just took a drink of his Bloody Mary, a big one.

Pecoswilly stepped on stage next. He was looking forward to this. The music began and Willy belted out: “Went to a party the other night, all the ladies were treatin’ me right. Movin’ my feet to the disco beat, how in the world could I keep my seat. All of a sudden I began to change. I was on the dance floor acting strange. Flapping my arms I began to cluck, look at me I’m the disco duck...”

His duck impersonation was amazingly accurate. For the second night in the row he was able to enjoy his favorite song only this time he was able to sing it as well as dance to it.

When he was almost finished, Fallon99 walked into the lounge and walked straight to the stage. Willy handed him the microphone and walked back to his table.

The song Fallon99 chose was a strange one to say the least. He didn't sing the first two lines, but then chimed in. "Christmas, Christmas time is near, time for toys and time for cheer. We've been good, but we can't last. Hurry Christmas hurry fast..."

Everyone watched in amazement. He sounded just like a chipmunk! "He must have sucked on a helium balloon before he came in." Bobbi said.

"I've never seen helium affects last this long." Devilishangel responded.

Fallon99 finished the song and walked to the exit. His intention was to leave without speaking to anyone but he was stopped by April99.

"How in the world did you get your voice so high?" She asked.

"Nothing to it" He responded in a high-pitched shrill that sounded like a chipmunk on helium. He walked past her and down the corridor. He had only one thing on his mind now and nothing was going to stop him from his task. He went out on the back of the Poe Deck, stepped up on the railing and jumped into the dark water below.

****Before continuing I'd like to give credit to Thomas Harris. He is the genius who created Hannibal Lecter. You have a sick mind my friend, I can certainly appreciate that! Also, in case the legend is true that Marie was powerful enough to resurrect from the dead. Love your work, truly inspiring!****

In the casino, the voodoo priestess felt the strong presence of a rival. She knew instinctively that it was the voodoo queen. The only thing she couldn't decipher was who it was. She walked through the casino cautiously, if she sensed the presence of Marie Laveau, most assuredly Marie knew she was here and who she was.

She used the power of her mind to summon MB to her side. MB was in the Ghostly Lounge when she felt her master's call and left immediately to come to her.

When she stepped into the elevator, Dave stepped in with her. When the elevator doors opened one deck later, Dave was holding MB's head in his hands.

“Well done my minion.” A woman’s voice echoed in Dave’s mind. “Now dispose of the body cleanly, leave no trace.”

Dave looked at the bloody mess in the elevator and panicked. He pushed the button and went down to the Dante Deck. He used a piece of metal to prop the door open then carried MB’s body away. He pried open the doors to the smoke stack, the heat was unbearable but he didn’t seem to mind. He tossed her in and closed the door. He got some cleaning material and returned to the elevator cleaning up the floor as he went.

McGowan007 was standing at the elevator door in horror when he returned. She didn’t see him immediately and when she finally did, it was too late. He grabbed her by the throat and ripped it out. Then he carried her body away and placed her inside the fiery stack as well. More of a mess was made and he was frantic, hoping no one else came along while he cleaned.

Twenty minutes later he was almost done when Realnut appeared in the doorway of the elevator. She couldn’t see much of a mess, just that a passenger was cleaning.

“What are you doing?” She asked.

Dave spun around and the mop swung around with him. It hit her hard in the head breaking her neck. She fell to the ground. Dave smiled, “no blood this time” he thought. When he was finished cleaning, he carried her body and tossed it in to burn.

Finally, he was finished and he removed the piece of metal and pushed the button to return to the Hemingway Deck.

The elevator went up one floor and stopped. At the Steinbeck Deck a woman stepped on, her eyes were red and seemed to glow. She pushed the button for the Shakespeare Deck.

When the door opened, she stepped off smiling. Dave stayed on and went up to the Witches Brew Lounge. There was thirty-one people in the lounge and the show they were about to witness was one they’d never forget.

Dave walked to the middle of the dance floor and pulled down his pants. He then began to sing. “I’m a little teacup short and stout, here is my handle (he held up his arm), here is my spout (he grabbed his penis).”

“Awful short spout ” Deb quipped causing even more laughter.

Dave stopped the little song and began barking like a dog, then clucking like a chicken. Then he grabbed a chair and broke it. In his hand he held a single leg from it. He then slammed the leg of the chair into his balls and shrieked with a huge smile on his face. He did this repeatedly and when he was done he announced in a falsetto voice. “I’m going to spread magical dust over the entire ship.”

Then he skipped out of the lounge and down the hall a few people watched him skip away. Then he went through a door and was out of sight. He continued skipping to the rear of the boat and then skipped right off the back into the water.

The voodoo priestess smiled to herself. She had lost her servant to Marie, now Marie had lost hers as well.

Inside the Witches Brew Lounge everyone was laughing hysterically. It was the general consensus that Dave was drunk out of his mind.

****As I wrote this I was thinking: Why couldn't it have been someone else I turned into Marie's zombie? I wanted to go back and edit, but, too late now. So, if ya'll never see me again you know I've been banned for life!!!****

Smokinnn returned to her cabin completely oblivious to what she had unleashed on the world. She pulled the idol out of her purse and unwrapped it. Shock swept over her face when she looked at it and realized that it had changed in appearance drastically.

“You dare pillage my crypt.” A voice rang out from behind her.

She turned slowly, in her heart she knew what she was going to see what it didn't prepare her. She jumped back startled and tripped over the corner of the bed. She fell hard onto the cabin floor. When she pulled herself up, the man was gone. Or at least, she thought so.

She felt something grab her hand, even though she couldn't see anything there. Quickly her arm twisted and her right hand snapped off. She screamed in agony and fell to the floor. She tried to crawl away but she was grabbed by her ankles. She lifted into the air and swung around in circles. She flew faster and faster and then felt the grip release. She flew head first into the cabin wall. She was thrown so hard that her head went straight through.

Her nose was broken and she had numerous cuts on her face. Barely conscious, she felt something grab her feet and yank her out onto the floor. Something started pushing down on her stomach. She looked down in horror and saw her flesh open up. Her internal organ began flying out from the wound. She was weakened and sickly when the final organ was removed, it was her heart and it was still beating.

“This isn't possible.” She thought to herself looking at her heart. Her mouth was pried open and her heart was shoved in. She felt the taste of blood and muscle before she succumbed to merciful death. King Handasu appeared and knelt down over his victim. Again he placed his hand on her

head, this time sucking the energy from her, stealing her soul and making himself increasingly powerful.

When there was nothing left of her but bone, he was gone.

On the Shakespeare Deck Stardust staggered down the hallway in search of her room. She looked down at her key hoping the number would be on it, but it wasn't. She stuck the key into every door trying to open it, completely oblivious that she wasn't even in the right hall.

She placed her left hand against a door to brace herself and then went to enter the key. Much to her surprise the door flew open and she fell, face first, breaking her nose and knocking herself out. Standing beside her was a ghost that was absolutely giddy.

"That'll teach you to kick me you little shit." He screeched. Then he pulled back his foot and kicked her, to his chagrin, his foot went through her. He growled and jumped on top of her. He hopped up and down trying to make contact, but he just kept passing through.

"Damn it, this isn't fair!" He yelled.

Stardust regained consciousness and looked at around the room. She was in a broom closet. Her nose was humping, but fortunately the alcohol numbed the pain considerably. She managed to stand up and stagger back out into the hallway. She saw what appeared to be a ghost flying down the hall away from her. She shook her head and blinked her eyes. This caused a rush that made her fall against the wall. Then she heard a voice down the hall say, "Here kitty kitty kitty."

She recognized the voice, it sounded like Kcinick. Then a cat started walking up the hallway toward her. "Aw, cute little kitty." She said and knelt down clumsily.

When the cat was a few feet from her, she realized it wasn't any ordinary kitty. It was an ocelot. She made this distinction a few seconds too late. In her drunken state, she was no match for the fury of this cat. It ripped into her tearing at her flesh. She screamed and tried to fight, but it was relentless in its attack. It gaped open her chest with a powerful strike and then her face. The pain was intense and grew worse with every strike of the cat's razor sharp claws.

It dealt the final blow after ten full minutes of ripping at her flesh. It tore her throat from one side to the other. The cat began feasting on her flesh. A ghost stood nearby enjoying the show. Then he felt a presence behind him. It was the ghost of stardust, something that he hadn't thought about. "I am going to make eternity a living hell for you." She said.

He disappeared and moved rapidly down the hallway, with her in hot pursuit. A woman walked slowly down the hall toward here the cat was feasting on its prey. "Now, we can't have you leaving such a mess here little kitty. It would ruin my plans."

She picked up the body, tossing Stardust's stomach to it to appease it. The cat ate hungrily then followed the woman down the hall.

MsHeyU stood out in the night air, breathing in its crisp cleanness. The wind blew through her hair. It was a wonderful night, the temperature was in the mid 70s and the breeze was warm. The moonlight on the waves was awe-inspiring. It was something out of a dream.

She closed her eyes and felt the wind on her face. This was true enjoyment, away from the smoky lounges and casino, away from the noise and the other passengers, just her and the ocean.

And something she was unaware of. Winding its way down the rail of the ship was an enormous anaconda. It had traveled through the ship's hull and finally found fresh air just fifty feet away from where she was standing. Considering the beast was thirty feet long and two feet in circumference, it made up the distance between it and its meal very quickly.

MsHeyU opened her eyes and stared out at the darkness. Then she felt a presence, as if she was being watched. She turned around and saw the snake's gigantic mouth closing in on her head. She barely had time to scream before the snake engulfed her and wrapped itself around her body.

Her feet were moving rapidly and she fell over the rail, she and the snake plunged into the ocean below. This didn't stop the enormous predator from having its meal. They sunk into the dark blue water.

Down in the ship's library, Paragod and AJW were up to no good. They'd printed out the photos taken on the beach earlier in the day and now were using the ship's photocopier to blow them up to 16"X20" size.

"We'll wait until morning and then hang them up in the main dining hall for everyone to see." Paragod said smiling.

"I think we should also take the original pictures and make copies to pass around the ship tonight." AJW said. "They think we deleted our pictures so we'll just say someone else must've taken some."

The two of them laughed heartily as the photos of April99 and Mistynite printed out enlarged.

They'd already printed out one's of the late Stardust.

Up on the elite deck, two of the passengers were face to face with one another. It was time for a showdown between a priestess and the legendary queen of voodoo.

CHAPTER FIVE

*Crystal water turns to dark
Where ere it's presence leaves it's mark
And boiling currents pound like drums
When something wicked this way comes...*

Ray Bradbury

As the ship moved through the night a strange atmospheric phenomenon awaited just ahead. To the ship's crew it appeared to be a mild storm. The water seemed calm and all readings on the ship's control deck indicated it was safe to continue on course. After assuring themselves of that, they sent out an announcement over the intercom: "Attention passengers, in five minutes we will be entering into a thunderstorm. There's reason to be alarmed, the water current is perfectly fine and the storm should only last a few minutes before we are through to the other side."

Until now they had experienced warm and somewhat balmy weather so a little thunderstorm at sea sounded exciting to many of the passengers who went to the outer decks to experience it fully.

The sky above them was perfectly clear with millions of stars dancing playfully. Up ahead they could see darkened clouds that covered the sky with occasional lightning and claps of thunder.

"Why do I suddenly feel like that guy from Titanic who was unfortunate enough to be outside and see the iceberg?" R Davids asked everyone in general.

"On the bright side, it's not an iceberg. It's a storm. It's not like a solid object that would sink us." Amanda Panda responded.

"Just sit right back and you'll hear a tale, a tale of a fateful trip..." Trachelle sang and ended with a taunting smirk.

"Oh, now that's cheerful." NativeNE said.

The ship was moving rapidly toward the storm. At least it seemed that way, while in truth the storm wasn't waiting for them. It was moving at them.

Everyone quickly ran inside as the wind picked up and the rain began to soak them. NativeNE decided to remain outside. He removed one of the table umbrellas to use as shelter from the rain.

As the storm grew stronger it soon engulfed the ship and although it cut smoothly through the choppy ocean, the weather around it was attacking fiercely. Still, NativeNE was enjoying himself even though with the strong

winds his newly acquired umbrella provided little shelter. He was in a rare mood so adding to the stupidity of gripping a metal pole in a lightning storm, he also began to sing. "I'm singing in the rain, just singing in the rain. What a glorious feeee..." Standing on a water soaked deck while holding a metal pole connected to an umbrella, there was only one thing that could happen. And it did.

Lightning struck the umbrella and NativeNE making the hair on his head stand straight up, his teeth clenched and his eyes widened. Instead of a quick strike, this lightning bolt acted as if it had a purpose. It continued to electrify the umbrella non-stop. His body convulsed violently and when a second and more intense bolt hit the umbrella the added charge caused his body to explode. Pieces of him flew in all directions, most landing in the ocean. The umbrella fell to the deck and flipped on its side. Then a gust of wind picked it up and carried it over the rail and out into the darkness.

No one was close by to witness NativeNE's demise. Everyone was in the largest lounge on the Poe Deck, the Blast from the Past Lounge. The music played and people tried to remain calm, but most were filled with terror and thoughts that perhaps they were indeed on a disastrous course. Being on a ship in the middle of the ocean in such a treacherous storm did not sit well and things were about to get worse. Suddenly the music stopped and all of the lights went out.

People were screaming and running into each other frantically. No one knew where they should go, but they instinctively they moved. It soon became complete pandemonium. The beam of a flashlight made its way through the lounge's main entrance. Holding it was Beth the cruise director who promptly addressed the crowd. "Everyone remain calm please. The ship is structurally fine but the lightning has hit one of our generators. We'll be restoring power to the passenger area very soon."

With Beth's reassurance eighty percent of the terrified crowd calmed down. Then from the darkness Danigirl spoke up. "You know, they told the people on the Titanic not to panic as well. What are you supposed to tell us? The ship's power source is gone therefore we can't lower the life boats and you're all gonna die?"

"Oh gee, you are just a ray of sunshine aren't you?" Pammie stated.

"Everyone, please let me assure you that if this ship were sinking, I would not be standing here smiling. I'm not a puppet I'm a human being." Beth responded. "Please, don't panic. The bartender will be handing out candles to everyone who wants one. I'd suggest you make the best of this, tell some ghost stories. It is, after all, a Halloween cruise."

"What a stupid idea." Mistynite said.

“Great idea” Gargoyle King chimed. He grabbed a candle and headed to the front of the stage. He put a chair on the stage and sat down. “Anyone who wants to hear a wonderful Irish legend, come on down.”

Some people were anxious to hear a ghost story, anything to get their mind off of what was outside. Some were extremely reluctant but had nothing better to do so all the remaining passengers settled in for a ghost story, except for two.

Up on the Elite deck, there were two women who relished the darkness that enveloped the entire ship. It also didn't keep them from staring each other down as if sizing up the other. But they had not made a move of aggression toward their opponent and in fact had not moved at all from their position other than when they killed two crewmembers that happened to be unlucky enough to encounter them.

“You dare challenge me.” Marie Laveau said in a coarse Cajun accent.

“You are queen of the past. I am queen of the present and future.” The priestess responded.

In Marie's hand there was a clay talisman. Without looking she moved the talisman around, shaping it, molding it to a perfect image of the priestess.

The priestess was using a chicken's foot to scratch on a small piece of alligator hide while silently evoking an incantation.

Marie could sense the priestess was working on a spell, but she wasn't quite sure exactly what it was. Without knowing what her opponent was conjuring, a defense would be difficult. She could only hope that the power of her talisman would work first.

A blast of lightning lit up the elite deck where the two women were standing. Even though it was a closed corridor, a fierce wind began howling through it. The forces of nature were being tampered with in a very powerful way and they both knew it and suddenly froze. Their senses alert to an ominous presence looming near them.

The priestess was distracted for just enough time to give Marie a window of opportunity. She thrust her hand forward and plunged the clay talisman into the body of the priestess. While her hand was inside the chest of her rival, she used her thumb and flicked the head off the talisman. The priestess' head flew off and landed on the floor twenty feet behind her body which was still standing but completely lifeless. Marie removed her hand from the woman's chest and the body fell to the floor.

She knelt down and removed the woman's room key. She walked over to room E1 and placed her victim's body as well as the two dead

crewmembers inside. She reached down to grab the woman's head. She looked at it and spit in her face. Upon doing this the Priestess' eyes opened, and they burned the color of bright red blood. "No, this can't be!" Marie fell back into room E1 as she tried to throw the head away. Then the door slammed shut behind her. But try as she might, she could not release Ellie's head. The blood red eyes continued to burn into Marie's skull and as her brain began to melt it found release as it oozed out of her ears. Her hands started shaking, even though life itself was escaping her rapidly, the pain continued. She fell hard against a dessert tray knocking it over. She was on the floor now, still holding her victim's head, with its eyes glowing so brightly they lit up the entire room.

"Wish on me, I wish on you. On this day we both are through. But with your power again I'll rise, while you suffer a cursed demise. Hell awaits you former power and I'll arise as you this hour."

As Marie's lifeless body lay upon the floor the beams shooting out of Ellie's eyes went into Softie's. Her head twitched as Ellie's mind entered and filled it. The storm raged outside and in her weakened state, Ellie could not sense that an evil far greater than even she could imagine was near.

Back in the Blast from the Past lounge everyone had settled in for a Halloween ghost story courtesy of Gargoyle King.

The legend you are about to hear is that of a banshee. In Irish mythology, when a citizen of a village died, a woman would sing a lament at their funeral. According to legend five families in ancient Ireland, the O'Grady's, the O'Neills, the O'Briens, the O'Connors, and the Kavanaghs would have their lament sung by a fairy woman. The fairy wore a beautiful white gown with long flowing blonde hair. Thereafter, the fairy woman's voice would always be heard soon after a family member would die.

Legend says that a member of the O'Grady family happened upon the fairy shortly after a funeral was held. When he looked at her face, he was blinded. The blinded O'Grady was found wandering lost in the countryside, nearly dead from dehydration and starvation. He spoke of his encounter with the fairy woman as he lay dying. He told the two men that her face was hideous. Darkened like a shadow, her eyes were aglow with a sinister red tint and she was evil. She was singing to send the soul of the departed to eternal damnation.

The fairy vowed vengeance upon everyone at that point as punishment for someone seeing her and telling false tales. That night, both of the men that O'Grady had told the story to were coming home from the local pub. A figure appeared before them. She was no longer dressed in a beautiful white

gown. She was dressed in black with a charcoal grey robe that covered her entire body. The lining of the coat was a blood red and her face was barely visible.

The once sweet song of lament was now a shrill, blood chilling cry. The pitch was so high it blew the windows out of nearby homes. An onlooker saw the figure in front of the two men briefly before it flew away into the night sky. The next day, the two men were found dead only one hundred yards from where they had the encounter. Their faces were frozen in a look of shock and terror.

The witness who had heard the shrill cry and saw the back of the cloaked figure near the two men before they died was the mother of two children. Two days later, both of her children grew sick and died while having violent seizures.

As the months passed, everyone who heard the cry of the fairy had a death in their immediate family. And anyone who had the misfortune of seeing the woman's face and hearing her cry, passed away themselves soon after. She was no longer referred to as a fairy woman. Instead she became the banshee or death messenger.

The banshee legend has since traveled away from Ireland, and away from Europe as families traveled abroad. Many families settled in the United States that were descendants of one of the five prominent families of Ireland. Now, the banshee chooses her victims randomly. She can appear at any time. If you hear her mournful cry, someone you are close to is going to die. If you happen to look upon her face, you're soon to meet your own doomed fate.

As if on cue, when Gargoyle King came to the end of his story a shrill blood curdling scream came from the direction of the dark corridor just outside the dimly lit lounge. Most of the listeners jumped, startled at the cry or at least at the timing. They held on to their candles tightly. The combination of the storm, the story and the scream caused absolute pandemonium. It didn't seem to matter if you believed in the banshee or not, everyone was visibly rattled.

“What is that smell?” Jannelly asked loudly.

“I don't know but it smells like something died!” David responded.

The foul stench permeated the room causing people to wretch. It was Ladygreywolf who pinpointed where the odor was coming from. She was standing by the doors when Deb walked past. She could see the look of embarrassment on Deb's face.

“Oh my God, Deb shit herself.” Ladygreywolf yelled out.

Deb ran out the doors, humiliated. She ran down the corridor in the direction of her room. Everyone in the room went from panic to hysterics. Tears came down some people's eyes because they were laughing so hard.

Through the chaos Gargoyle King disappeared. Everyone searched around the lounge for him.

"He couldn't have gone far." RDavids said.

Everyone was looking around the room, but no one saw him. NWHoney held her candle high in the air and squinted to see into the darkness. Something dripped down, extinguished the flame and splattered on her arm.

"Could you relight my candle with yours?" She asked Ladyace. "A drop of water dripped down and put mine out."

Ladyace smiled and gladly obliged. When NWHoney's candle was relit they noticed the smear on her arm. It wasn't a clear liquid, it was red. They examined her arm closely and then both looked up toward the ceiling. At first, they didn't see anything and then they saw Gargoyle King. His eyes were wide open and fixed in a horrified gaze. His mouth was agape and blood dripped from it. His chest was ripped open from the base of his neck clear down to his groin. His inner organs and intestines dangled from his body. Blood was dripping all around where the two women stood. His intestines resembled sausage links like the ones they have hanging behind the counter at a delicatessen.

In shock the women's eyes were fixed on Gargoyle King's body but then they saw something move. Next to him was the figure of a woman who appeared to be floating with her back to the ceiling and staring straight down at them. She wore black clothing with a charcoal grey cape. The hood was pulled up over her head and her face was black and horrifying. Her eyes had a reddish tint and glowed ever so dimly. Suddenly, she opened her mouth and the scream they had originally heard in the corridor resonated throughout the lounge.

The mirror behind the bar shattered, glasses exploded sending shards throughout the shadowy room. People covered their ears as the shrill sound pierced their brain. Before Ladyace and NWHoney could move, the banshee swooped down on them. It swiped at Ladyace's head tearing the top of her skull completely off exposing her brain. Then it swiped violently at NWHoney carving her into several pieces.

Blood and pieces of NWHoney's body flew through the room and splattered against tables, walls and people. It was all happening so fast, no one could react. Some were screaming and some were just standing looking

around trying to make sense of the commotion. Many ran from the lounge and down the corridor.

Just moments later the banshee was gone. Although still in a state of utter shock things settled down as people struggled in their minds to sort out what had just transpired. Ace Warrior stood over Ladyace's body in disbelief. Boris2006, Flea, April99, Amanda Panda, Brenda, Caresses and Scott9343 stood very still in the lounge area surveying the bloody mess. Everyone else had scattered throughout the ship as they fled the lounge.

Amanda Panda walked across the floor and looked down at an area just to the right of where Ladyace's body lay. Gargoyle King's body broke free from the light fixture he had been impaled on and as he fell to the ground one leg hit Amanda Panda on the shoulder. Falling to the bloodied floor her screams echoed across the nearly deserted room. Frantically, she tried to get back to her feet but in her panicked state she kept slipping on the slick surface of the blood covered dance floor. Scott9343 helped her up and steadied her as they all ran from the lounge in search of a crewmember to report what had just occurred. They knew there was a vicious killer amongst them but none had actually seen the banshee so they had no idea what had actually killed their three friends.

Deb was fumbling with her key. She couldn't believe what had just happened to her. After several attempts to open the door she let out a frustrated scream, this only served to exacerbate her situation. A man appeared beside her.

"Can I offer you some assistance?" He asked.

She jumped back, startled. Normally, she would have said no, get lost. But she really wanted to get inside to take a shower. "Yes, thank you." She said.

She placed her key in his hand and felt a small jolt of electricity. It was a little more than a normal carpet shock. "Wow, you must be absorbing the storm or something. That was quite a shock you gave."

"You have no idea." He replied and smiled. He placed the key in the lock and opened the door for her. "Have a nice night." He told her.

She thanked him and walked into her cabin. She undressed quickly and went straight to the shower. She sang while she bathed herself. ****Click here to enjoy Deb's singing**** When a shadow appeared outside of her shower, she was washing her face and had her eyes closed. She didn't see a hand slip past the curtain and touch the water coming out of the shower head.

When the electricity first hit her body she opened her eyes, soap went in them and burned her. She reached around frantically trying to grab

something, she stepped in what she thought was the direction of her bathroom. Instead she slammed face first into the shower wall. The electrical current intensified gradually, before she could regain her composure and stand back up the voltage was extreme.

Her skin began to char and bubble, she wanted to scream but her throat was welded shut from the heat within her. She had no idea what had happened and when the life finally passed out of her body, once again she shit herself.

SistuhM and Texanna1 ran out of the lounge and into the casino while people were screaming. They hid under the blackjack table in complete darkness. Neither of them saw Gargoyle King's body or what had happened to NWHoney and Ladyace.

"Do you think maybe we are afraid for nothing?" Texanna1 asked.

"What do you mean?" SistuhM queried.

"Well, think about it. Gargoyle King tells us a story then there is a scream followed by everyone panicking over what appeared to be blood followed by yet another scream. Did you actually see anyone get hurt?"

SistuhM pondered this. The more she thought about it, the angrier she became. "Damn it, I ran and hid in her for nothing!" She crawled out from the table and walked toward the exit. "I'm going to kill him."

Texanna1 scrambled out of her hiding place also and walked beside her. A flash of lightning revealed a person standing just a few feet in front of them. They both stopped, frozen in their tracks.

"Who's there?" SistuhM asked.

There was no response from the mysterious stranger. Another bright flash of lightning lasted just long enough for them to make out an outline of the person in front of them. He appeared to be wearing a gaucho type coat with a cowboy hat.

"I said, who are you" SistuhM asked again.

When the man did not respond, she grabbed Texanna1's arm and walked quickly to the right of the man. He moved very quickly and stepped in front of them. He placed his hands out and touched their chests. It seemed like nothing more than a gentle touch when it happened, but the result said otherwise. Texanna1 flew fifty feet backward and crashed hard against the craps table. She hit it with such force that the table broke in two pieces and collapsed and two of her ribs fractured.

SistuhM flew back and landed against the bar, her momentum flipped her over the bar and into the glasses behind it. She cut her arms, legs and back. But the worst cut of all was a shard of glass that stuck into her cheek.

She grabbed the glass and pulled it out. Tears were streaming down her face from the pain. But anger overcame the pain quickly.

She grabbed a bottle of Bacardi and busted it over the counter. She climbed back over the bar holding the jagged remains of the bottle in her hand. "I'm gonna mess you up." She screamed and charged at the man.

He moved at the last minute and stuck his foot out. She tripped over his foot and flew face first into a slot machine. The glass tore into her skull and her neck snapped. She died in the very position she landed.

Texanna had quietly moved in the direction of the doors. When she saw what happened to SistuhM she ran. She was just a few steps away from freedom and thinking she had a chance when the doors slammed shut. She crashed hard into the metal doors, they did not give at all. Her nose and jaw shattered and she fell backward onto the floor. She was barely conscious and about to drift into blackness when the reality of her situation sank in. She moved quickly and placed her back against the doors.

She could see the man standing just in front of her. "Please, don't kill me." She muttered. It was barely recognizable through the blood in her mouth and the shards of bone from her busted jaw. It hurt badly to speak and she started crying from the agony. She reached up slowly to the door handle. She didn't expect it to open, but was pleasantly surprised when it did.

Somehow she mustered up the strength to jump up and run out into the corridor. She felt a sharp pain in her lower back and flew forward into the netting that went from the railing to the ceiling. It ripped like tissue paper and she flew over the railing and landed hard on the Shakespeare Deck.

She crawled to the outer railing of the ship. The rain water beating down on her felt good, it washed away the blood pouring out of her skull. She saw the man on the Poe Deck and then with a flash of lightning, he moved from a deck up to just inches in front of her.

Her eyes widened with fear. She tried to speak but the pain was too intense when she opened her mouth. She pulled herself up and stood facing him. He barely moved, or at least that's what she thought. A force hit her in the stomach sending her over the outer railing of the ship and down toward the ocean below.

Calmness fell over her. She wasn't afraid anymore, she knew she was going to die but in that instant she was at peace. She saw the water coming at her and closed her eyes. Just before she hit the water a lightning bolt came out of the sky and struck her body. An enormous amount of electrical current flowed through her when she touched the salty water. There was a

crackle and a flash, then a vapor arose from the water. Texanna1's badly charred body drifted down to her watery grave.

Three people climbed the steps from the Dante Deck. They had been stowed away on the cruise, but the darkness brought them out of hiding.

"We'll just mingle in with the crowd." Kittytoy2004 said.

"Sounds good to me" Jokid responded. Jomama agreed as well. They reached the Poe Deck and opened the door. Through the darkness they saw a shadow move toward them. It didn't appear to be a person, if it was then it was an awful short one. Then there was a second shadow moving in their direction as well.

Kittytoy2004 was about to slam the door shut when they heard a low menacing growl behind them. Jokid jumped back when he heard the growl exposing Jomama to whatever was lurking in the darkness. A ferocious sound emanated through the stairway and Jomama screamed.

Jokid reached out to try and pull her to safety, but she was no longer there. The sound of her body thumping down the stairs was unmistakable. A bolt of lightning crashed and lit up the area and they saw an enormous wolf with his teeth sunken into Jomama's neck. In the light his eyes were terrifying. Blood from her arteries covered his face adding to the fierceness of the beast's appearance.

"I'm outta here." Jokid yelled and ran through the open door.

Kittytoy2004 was about to run behind him when he flew back in through the door and fell hard down the steps. She had no idea what was happening at first until another bolt of lightning revealed a golden jackal tearing at his flesh. He didn't scream or make any movement. The fall down the steps rendered him unconscious and an easy meal for the creature.

Kittytoy2004 opted to run up the steps to the next deck rather than try to escape onto the Poe Deck. She flung the door open at the Twain Deck and ran out into the enclosed corridor screaming. The lightning flashed lighting up the area in front of her. She stopped dead in her tracks. She saw something black several feet in front of her. It appeared to be very small, but she wasn't certain. She backed up slowly.

A loud screech came from the darkness and she heard footsteps coming at her rapidly. She turned to run but something bit into and through her ankle. She crashed hard to the deck's floor. Her attacker bit into her side, it made a growling sound as it attacked.

She swung her hand down and hit it in the back but it seemed to not be phased. After biting into her side several times, it stopped. She listened for signs of movement. But she could hear nothing. She was about to try and run again when another flash of lightning came. Standing inches away

from her face was what appeared to be a small wild boar. Only it had black fur and no protruding fangs. It screeched again and bit down into her neck before she could fend it off. The bite pierced her jugular and the Tasmanian devil enjoyed his feast.

Xanth was stressed. Since the power had gone out she couldn't use the elevator to the Elite floor and she wasn't sure of where the staircase was that led there. She'd tried the courtesy phone but it was dead. She walked from the main area of the Poe Deck down a narrow corridor. She lifted her candle and saw a sign on a door that said, "STAIRS".

She opened the door and went inside. She climbed up a flight and saw that she was at the Twain Deck. She continued to climb and saw a sign saying Hemingway Deck. "One more flight" she thought to herself. She climbed up and saw the door saying "Elite Deck." She grabbed the door handle and it wouldn't open. She moved her candle down and saw a keycard slot next to the door. She inserted her card, but with the power down nothing happened.

"Damn it" she yelled. "Can anyone hear me? Hello is anyone out there?" She hoped that someone would be on the deck and open the door for her.

After several minutes, she turned to go back down the stairs. Then the door opened. "Oh thank God." She said in relief. She grabbed the doorknob and pulled it open slowly. There was no one around. She lifted her candle and looked around the main corridor. There wasn't any sign of anyone nearby.

She walked into the hallway and down to room E8. A feeling of dread overcame her when she realized that her keycard was the only way she could enter her suite. "Oh you have got to be kidding me!" She said.

She yelled out again for assistance. She knew there should be at least one crewperson up here to serve as a valet. No one responded. "I know someone is here because you opened the door."

Suddenly a wind came out of nowhere, her candle flickered and then went out. "Perfect" she exclaimed. "Can this night get any worse?"

"As a matter of fact, yes it can." A voice whispered behind her. The whisper sent chills down her spine.

"Who is there?" She asked nervously.

"What is your biggest fear" was the response.

"Don't you know it's impolite to answer a question with a question?" She asked shakily.

"Ah, your mind has answered for me. Your fear is the flame."

“What?” She asked. In her mind she was really freaking now because fire was her biggest fear.

Her candle lit suddenly. She was startled and dropped it on the floor. It did not go out, it continued to flicker. She knelt down cautiously and picked it up. She reached out, looking for the person who had just lit her candle. She saw nothing but stationary shadows dancing in the flame.

Quickly she turned and ran toward the door. She would escape this floor one way or another. She grabbed the handle, but it would not turn. A small sign on the door said, “Keycard required for access to stairwell. In case of emergency pick up the courtesy phone and dial three.”

She spun back around and the flame on her candle blew sideways just enough to touch her shirt sleeve. In an instant her arm was ablaze. She screamed in agony and horror. She fell to the floor to try and extinguish the fire by rolling on it. But it only made things worse, her other arm caught fire, then both of her legs.

She screamed loudly and shrilly, tears streamed down her face, the agony was unbearable. “Help me, oh God please help me.” She yelled.

The flame burned at her arms and legs, she rolled around on the floor trying desperately to put them out. The nerve endings seared and she mercifully couldn’t feel anything in her extremities, but then the flame spread to her pelvis, stomach and chest. She rolled over and her back lit up with white hot flames.

Her screams dissipated after another minute. Her body lay on the floor and the flames went out. The smoke filled the corridor as did the smell of charred flesh. Her head was perfectly in tact, no sign of burn whatsoever. Her eyes were melted in their sockets from the heat and her mouth was gaped open. Her tongue was black.

A door opened on the Elite Deck, it was the door to Suite E1. Ellie’s transference into Softie’s body was nearly completed when she heard the door open and sensed a presence.

“Who be there?” She said in a thick Cajun voice.

There was no answer and she needed none. “Lord watch over and keeps me safe from the forces in this room. Cast him out Lord.”

She wasn’t able to say anything else. Softie’s head was severed. Both of the women’s heads floated upward in the room. Then, they flew out the suite’s window and landed in the cold ocean water. The door to Suite E1 opened again and then closed. Anyone watching would have seen just that and nothing else. The darkness was on the move.

CHAPTER SIX

At 2:00 a.m. aboard the Cinatas Pacific, absolute pandemonium was breaking out for the twenty-six passengers who had not already gone to bed. No one could reach any of the crewmembers and none were to be found throughout the ships decks.

They decided to divide up into two groups of thirteen. Half were going to make their way up to the command deck located at the front of the Hemingway Deck and thirteen were going down to the Dante Deck where the crew's quarters were. After wishing each other good luck, the groups went on their way.

Ace Warrior, Brenda, Briandixon, Dropdeadfred, Imtrble2u, Ladydazzle41, Mannextdoor, Melon, Pepsiholic, Puppieluv, Rosie, Seco and XCaliber were the group going down to the Dante Deck.

They left the main concourse of the Poe Deck and immediately went to the stairway located to the left of the elevators. They followed this stairway to the Steinbeck Deck and walked out into the blood colored hallways.

"Okay, we have to find a stairway that leads down to the Dante Deck. Does anyone know off hand where that might be?" Puppieluv asked.

"I just know my cabin is on this deck so I don't have far to run if whatever was in the lounge comes here." Melon said.

"You're in cabin ST13 aren't you?" Rosie asked.

"Yes." She replied.

"Sounds like a lucky place to go to me." Briandixon quipped.

"We have to think positive that whatever was on the Poe Deck isn't here." Brenda suggested.

Suddenly there was music playing over the corridor speaker system.

****CLICK****

"I recognize that song." Dropdeadfred said. "It's the Supremes.

Then it quit as suddenly as it began. The lyrics that played were the opening lines to Nowhere to Run by Martha and the Vandellas.

"First, that wasn't the Supremes. Second, based on the lyrics, I have a feeling someone is trying to tell us something." Ladydazzle41 spoke up shakily.

"Let's not panic. For all we know that was broadcast throughout the entire ship." Ace Warrior said. "Let's just find the way down to the Dante Deck and get the crew of this boat to earn their pay."

“Ah, The Grapes of Wrath are such sweet fruit.” A hauntingly deep voice rang out over the intercom.

“What the heck is that supposed to mean?” Seco asked.

No one in the group knew. So they carried on down the hallway in search of the stairway leading down.

When they reached the end of the corridor, they found a door with a sign “Stairs”. However, when they opened it, the stairs only went up.

“Maybe that’s why there’s no crew. They can’t get off the damn Dante Deck without the elevator.” Pepsiholic exclaimed.

“Not to change the subject. But, we’re missing someone.” XCaliber pointed this out matter-of-factly.

They did a quick head count and found they were only a group of twelve.

Melon opened the door of her room and went inside the darkened cabin. She had decided it was time to escape the hallway and leave the others to their fate. She fell back to the back of the group and walked back to her room quietly so no one would notice she was gone.

Inside her room there was a very small round cabin window. The lightning from outside lit her room casting mysterious shadows throughout. She walked cautiously over to the window to close the curtains. The darkness was bad enough without the freaky shadows.

Suddenly the hair on the back of her neck and on her legs stood on end. “Is someone here?” She asked nervously.

“Think clearly so I may hear, what indeed is your biggest fear?” A voice whispered in the darkness. It didn’t seem to come from one location, it echoed throughout the room as if the darkness itself was speaking to her.

Instantly, without warning her mind flashed on a fear that she’d had in her life. Then she turned and ran back to her cabin door, the candle in her hand flickered but did not go out. She grabbed the door handle and it did not open.

She closed her eyes. “This isn’t happening. It’s only your imagination.” She whispered to herself. Then she listened closely, there was no sound anywhere, but the feeling that she was not alone had not gone away.

Slowly and cautiously she opened her eyes, first the left and then the right. She squinted wanting to see but not really wanting to see. She saw nothing moving and breathed a deep sigh of relief. Then the lightning flashed, it was an instant flash it seemed to be constantly lighting up her cabin. She saw movement on the ceiling and looked up.

There was the body of a small child, its hands and feet were on the ceiling and it hung down. But its head was turned downward looking at her with a very evil grin. The thing moved toward her like a spider crawling across the ceiling.

“What are you?” She shrieked in panic.

****CLICK****

“I’m the devil.” It replied.

She envisioned the fear she felt the first time she watched The Exorcist. Now, the thing above her resembled Linda Blair’s character but it was much more sinister looking. It moved directly above her and she lost control of all bodily functions simultaneously urinating and defecating.

“Please don’t make your head turn around.” She thought to herself.

“Oh, it’s not my head that’s going to do that.” The creature said in the same evil voice.

Just when she was processing what the beast was saying it reached down and grabbed her head. It twisted completely around twice until it popped off. Her body fell to the floor with a thud just as someone knocked on her door.

“Someone’s in there.” Puppeluv exclaimed.

Seco opened the door and stretched out his arms to shine the candle into the room. “Melon are you here?” He asked nervously.

Suddenly her head flew into his arms. He caught it at first. When he realized what he was he screamed and jerked his arms back sending her severed head flying up into the air and landing at Rosie’s feet.

In their extreme panic, the group of twelve separated into two smaller groups of six. Ace Warrior, Briandixon, Dropdeadfred, Mannextdoor, Pepsiholic and XCaliber all went down the corridor to the left. They found a door with a sign reading “stairs” and flew through it. This stairway only lead down and they did not hesitate in going down to the Dante Deck.

They flung open the door and ran down the hall yelling for help. They had no way of finding a crewmember’s cabin door at this point, the hall down here had a very dim red lighting system which was all they had since their candles had all blown out when they ran.

They ran around a corner and down another passageway at the end was a double door and they ran inside. Out of breath, they started throwing things in front of the door and when they felt sufficiently barricaded they sat down along the wall to rest.

The rest was short lived when Briandixon, who was at the far end away from the barricade screamed like a little girl who had just seen a

mouse. Everyone jumped up completely startled and struggled to see what was going on through the dim red lighting.

CLICK

Briandixon was lying on the ground barely moving then they all saw something crawl over him. The narrow shadowy figure moved onto the floor in front of him then slithered to his face. By the time they realized it was a snake, it was too late to save Briandixon.

The South American Coral Snake had already bitten him five times. Unlike his North American cousin, his venom worked much quicker and his victim was nearly paralyzed. Briandixon's breathing was short and raspy and his muscles began to twitch. White foam started pouring out of his mouth and then the deadly snake bit him in the throat. Mercifully, he lost consciousness and would never again wake up.

XCaliber moved quickly grabbing a heavy pole lamp. He ran over to the snake and when it moved toward him, he slammed the fixture down on its head and severed it. "I hate snakes!" He exclaimed.

He was kneeling down to check on Briandixon when he felt a sting in his right hip. "Ouch" he yelled and fell over to his left. He and everyone else saw what had bit him. Another snake was wrapped around the pole lamp and now slithering off of it toward him. He shuffled himself backward until he was up against a wall with nowhere else to go.

"Help me for God's sake." He screamed at the other four men. Ace Warrior looked around for something to kill the snake with and found nothing. He decided to just try and step on it with his boot.

The Tree Viper moved rapidly and bit XCaliber's hand when he tried to grab it to save himself. XCaliber screamed from the pain of the bite. When Ace Warrior reached them, the snake crawled under his victim and delivered three more quick bites. XCaliber began to get woozy and the room became a blur. The viper came out from under him and Ace Warrior slammed his boot down on it. The snake flopped around on the floor lashing out in all directions and Ace lowered his boot down hard a second time catching it just behind its head. Slowly, the snake turned over and died.

Ace knelt down to XCaliber, his eyes were closed. He checked his neck to try and find a pulse, it was very faint. He didn't know enough CPR to help him and considering the length of time it would take to undo the barricade and find help, things were very bleak for XCaliber.

Everyone's attention was on the man dying in the room, everyone's except Mannextdoor. He had been bitten on the ass by a Ceylonese Boa. Unlike the rest of the boa family, the Ceylonese Boa had developed a

venomous bite similar to that of a viper but delivered in a much larger dose. The bite instantly paralyzed its victim.

Mannextdoor's mind raced. He could feel the large snake wrapping around him but he couldn't move nor scream for help. His eyes were wide with fear and anxiety and tears streamed down his face. He wanted badly to yell or fight for his survival, but he couldn't. The nine foot snake wrapped slowly around him covering his body from his feet to his neck.

He felt it tighten around him and then the sound of his bones crushing echoed through the room.

"What the hell is that?" Dropdeadfred asked and looked over at Mannextdoor who was standing just a foot away from him. His jaw dropped open and he turned white at what he saw.

"Holy shit" Pepsiholic yelled out.

The sound continued to echo through the room. Mannextdoor's face registered what was happening to him, but he could not speak or move. His expression was changing from one of panic to one of dread as the life was being squeezed out of him.

"That's it. I'm getting the hell out of here." Ace Warrior yelled. He ran to the barricade and began throwing things across the room. Dropdeadfred and Pepsiholic joined him. They could still hear the cracking sound as the snake tightened the grip on his victim. Pepsiholic looked over briefly at Mannextdoor. His eyes were open but glazed over. He was no longer suffering.

The three men dug frantically at the items they'd placed against the doors. Pepsiholic felt a sting in his hand and yelled out. He withdrew his hand from the back of the cabinet he was moving and there was a small snake still with his fangs dug into him.

He grabbed the snake and threw it across the room. Then he moved over quickly and smashed its head before it could bite him again. Initially he breathed a sigh of relief thinking that he was out of the woods, the snake had only bit him once after all. Then he knelt down to take a close look and his heart began to beat rapidly. He'd watched a show called The Crocodile Hunter with Steve Irwin that featured this very snake. It was a Taipan.

He fell backwards onto the floor and the room began spinning. Ace Warrior and Dropdeadfred ran over to him. "What's going on?" Dropdeadfred asked.

Pepsiholic tried to speak, but was unable to do so. His voice was weak and sounded like nothing more than him exhaling. Ace Warrior went over to the snake and looked at it closely, he too was a Steve Irwin fan like

most everyone else in the world and he saw what he thought it was. “Oh shit, he’s screwed.” He whispered.

Ace Warrior grabbed Dropdeadfred and said, “There’s nothing we can do for him now. Let’s get out of here.”

They left Pepsiholic on the floor to die and went back to the barricade. They moved much more cautiously now. Dropdeadfred tossed a chair off to his left and continued to move things very slowly.

He wasn’t paying attention when a brown snake with darker brown markings crawled out from under the chair and slithered in his direction. The Habu Pit Viper resembles a rattlesnake with two distinct differences, one it gives no warning and two it’s aggressive.

The snake moved behind Dropdeadfred before he threw the next item to his left. Ace Warrior saw it just when it struck Dropdeadfred. “Look out.” He yelled simultaneously to the pain shooting up Fred’s leg.

Dropdeadfred fell to the floor which was a terrible mistake with this aggressive species of snake. It struck his arm, his chest and then his eye moving very rapidly. It continued to strike at his victim until Ace Warrior managed to sever its head with a steel file drawer. The snake’s body flopped around and Ace Warrior kicked it away.

By the time Ace Warrior could focus his attention back to Fred, he’d already dropped dead. “SHIT!” Ace yelled. He could see the boa still moving on Mannextdoor’s body. There was no way to kill that gigantic beast and it was only a matter of time before it came for him.

He could see the door now and moved the final two items out of the way. He moved cautiously to the door and pulled it open. He ran through the door and thought he was safe but something grabbed his foot and he fell hard to the corridor floor.

A Reticulated Python was wrapped around his ankle. Ace Warrior looked up in horror at the length of the snake. With the exception of an anaconda, the reticulated python is the largest snake in the world and this one was at least thirty feet long. Ace tried frantically to free himself from the snake’s grasp.

The extremely large and powerful snake picked his body off the ground and held him upside down. As Ace Warrior continued to struggle the snake swung him and he hit the wall of the corridor hard face first shattering several teeth and breaking his nose.

The python lowered him back to the floor and then quickly wrapped around his body. Ace Warrior struggled continually and the snake hissed in anger. It squeezed him hard and fast causing yet another passenger on board the Cinatas Pacific to lose control of bodily functions. The scent of Ace

Warrior's fecal matter and urine did not dissuade it in the least. It wrapped around his neck and with one quick squeeze Ace Warrior's eyeballs shot out of their sockets like ping pong balls. His tongue flopped out of his mouth and his head tilted off to the side.

The python opened its enormous mouth and devoured Ace Warrior. Within a minute, he was nothing more than a bulge in the snake's large body.

Back on the Steinbeck Deck the remaining six passengers who'd ventured down were inside of cabin ST3.

"Figures I get five women in my room at one time and I'm too terrified to even get aroused." Seco quipped trying to ease the tension.

"We're not your type anyway, Seco. We're have tits not utters." Brenda said half-heartedly.

"I don't know. Yours look pretty close to utters to me." Seco volleyed back.

"I'm sure if you looked around the room you'd find some Viagra somewhere." Rosie added.

"All I know is we have terrible luck. Out of seven men, we get stuck with Seco to protect us!" Ladydazzle41 laughed.

Though they were joking around, inside each of them was a fear like they've never faced before. They'd been inside the cabin for quite some time and so far there was no sign of anything dangerous lurking nearby.

Suddenly music pervaded the room. ****CLICK****

Everyone jumped up in panic and ran for the door. They had no idea what was in store but the sound of Alice Cooper's voice ringing out in the darkness was not something they wanted to hear more of.

The women were the first ones out the door into the hallway. Seco had been tripped by Puppieluv on the way to the door and he was a few steps behind. He was just enough behind to allow the door to slam shut and lock him in.

Seco beat on the door screaming. His voice was frantic and squeaky. Suddenly a whisper emanated through the room. "Little mouse, little mouse squeaking so, what fear lies below. Think it now, think it quick. Ah that's nice. You've made your pick."

"What?" Seco asked. "What are you talking about?"

Suddenly there was a sound he'd heard before followed by loud footsteps. In his mind he knew it couldn't possibly be what he thought it was, but a feeling of terror gripped him.

Across the room he saw two round eyes glowing in the darkness, there seemed to be a vapor in front of them. Then he heard the sound again, there was no mistaking it. It was the snort of a Brahma bull. He couldn't see the beast in the darkness only its eyes. They were stationary at this point.

Then a flash of lightning lit up his cabin and what stood just a few feet away from him was no ordinary bull. It had razor sharp teeth that jutted from its mouth like a wild boar. Its face was distorted a large knot protruded from the top of its skull and the eyes were side set on either side of the monster's head. It snorted again and this time instead of smoke exuding from its nostrils two blue flames came out.

The fiendish looking creature let out a blood curdling roar and charged at him angrily. It lowered its head just before impact and jerked it upward at the last second. The outward teeth caught him in the scrotum and ripped it open. The force of the blow from the animal carried his body through the wall, into the corridor and through the next wall.

The bull like monster slammed him hard against yet a third wall and shook its head freeing its teeth from his scrotum and flinging flesh and blood everywhere. Seco fell to the floor in agony. His sac was ripped open and ribs were shattered like toothpicks. He placed his hands on his stomach and groaned in agony while curling up in a fetal position.

The beast stood directly over him looking down menacingly. With the injuries he'd sustained death was not far away and the monster knew it. It raised its head and let out another roar. Then it snorted, exploding flames down on Seco's face. The flames continued, melting the skin completely off and charring his skull. A second later the enormous beast vanished into thin air.

Rosie ran straight to her room, hurried in and slammed the door shut. She crawled under her bed and placed her hands over her ears. She no longer wanted to see nor hear anything. She just wanted this nightmare to be over.

Suddenly she felt a chill and a lot less cramped. She moved her hands off her ears and felt upward for the bed frame. It wasn't there. She began to cry. "Please, don't kill me. I'll do whatever you want, just don't kill me."

"Begging and pleading will be of no use. Your mind has already chosen your abuse." A voice whispered. The sound came from all directions and the words echoed through her mind.

As soon as the echoes faded, a scream filled the room. Not just a normal scream, no, this was one that would send chills up the most courageous of spines. She'd heard it before and not that long ago. It was the sound of the banshee that Gargoyle King had told them about.

What she forgot was that the banshee could not harm her if she didn't look upon its face. She looked beside her and inches away from her face was the horrible darkness of the banshee's. The evil being screamed again this time gleefully and tore into Rosie's flesh ripping her back open from her shoulder blade to her kidney.

The wound burned like fire and Rosie instinctively rolled over grasping at her back. She cried out in anguish. The banshee laughed shrilly it flew around the room circling Rosie, who lay helpless on the floor. Rosie saw it fly down toward her and felt the sharp pain as it ripped through her face. It tore open the flesh of her cheek exposing her jaw bone.

Rosie through her right hand over her facial wound and cried out yet again. The pain was more intense than anything she'd ever imagined. Again the banshee lashed out this time ripping open her arm from the wrist to the elbow. Her body grew colder as the warm blood leaked out of her rapidly now.

The banshee became more ferocious knowing that her victim was about to die. She tore mercilessly at Rosie flesh flew off the bone, the pain intensified with each blow. Rosie let out one final agonizing scream and lost consciousness. The banshee vanished into the darkness seconds later.

Imtrble2u and Puppieluv dashed down the corridor and into a nearby stairwell, they ran down the steps to the Dante Deck. This corridor had emergency lighting, but it was a very dim red light. They moved stealthily down the hallway trying to open every door as they went. Finally, they found a door that opened. Puppieluv pushed the door open slowly and looked inside. It was a crewmember's room, or at least they assumed so since passengers weren't boarded on this deck.

"Hello, is anyone in here?" Puppieluv asked nervously. When there was no response they walked into the room and closed the door behind them. It made a metallic clang when it shut and they heard something slide and then a click.

Imtrble2u grabbed the door and tried to open it, but it was of no use. It would not open. Puppieluv tried to assist her but it was of no use. In their initial panic they didn't feel the water on their shoes. When it reached their ankles however, they felt it clearly.

"Oh my God, where's the water coming from?" Puppieluv shrieked.

"I don't know." Imtrble2u responded.

They frantically felt around the room for a nozzle to turn the water off, but it continued to rise rapidly. It went past their waist, they their stomachs when it reached their necks, the flow of water stopped.

The women bobbed up and down in the water both seeking higher footing. Puppieluv found a chair and stood on it. The water was freezing cold and her teeth chattered while she shivered. She felt something brush against her leg and then felt a sharp pain.

She yelled out and lost her balance falling down off the chair and into the water. Imtrble2u was standing on a table and yelling for her. She got no response. Then she saw a glow from under the water, it was like lightning coming from the water rather than the sky.

Puppieluv's body lit up from the charge and Imtrble2u could just make out the large eel swimming beside her. She saw Puppieluv's frantic face and the woman holding her hand up toward her begging for help. Imtrble2u closed her eyes and prayed.

Puppieluv never resurfaced and when Imtrble2u opened her eyes again the water was black. She looked around the darkness, trying to find something she could climb on to get out of the water. She knew it was only a matter of time before the eel that electrocuted Puppieluv would get her as well.

She saw a bookcase just five feet away. She didn't hesitate. She dove into the water and in two swimming strokes reached the shelves. Hastily she placed her feet on a shelf and grabbed the top shelf with her hands. She had just a brief slip before gaining her footing and using her arms to pull herself up. A blue and black striped sea krait slithered rapidly in her direction and bit her just as her foot was coming out of the water.

She screamed from the pain of the bite but was relieved to be completely in a dry area. She reached down and felt her ankle where she was bitten. It was very tender to the touch.

She leaned back against the wall and tried to relax but began to feel woozy. The room became blurred and her movement was sluggish. Minutes later, she fell clumsily back into the water where the sea krait waited to finish the job.

It bit her repeatedly until she lost consciousness and drowned in the black water. After she gasped her final breath the water drained from the room and Imtrble2u and Puppieluv's soaked bodies sprawled out on the floor.

Brenda and Ladydazzle41 ran up the steps all the way to the Hemingway Deck. They were very happy to see the better lit burgundy hallways of an upper area instead of the dark red of the Steinbeck Deck. The walls down there were chilling. They walked toward the bow in search of the other thirteen people who'd opted to go find the command deck.

CHAPTER SEVEN

News and notes: For those keeping score at home the death toll through six chapters is 47 including 9 people who weren't in the passenger manifest. This leaves at least 62 more to die. You know what that means a MASSIVE death chapter! I've seen a few people say two people died by eel. However a sea krait is not an eel it's actually the fifth deadliest snake in the world, yes another snake!

The story takes an average of 5.5 hours per chapter to write. A chapter averages between 4200 and 4800 words, which means that on a bad day I'm averaging 12.72 words per minute. (Sounds awful slow until you add in the time it takes to think about what to write!!) Since this is the 5th anniversary, some past story trivia. The 2003 story took 6 and ½ weeks to complete, the longest by far!

I understand there are a couple of new readers out there. I would like to say hello to Dancingtaz21. I'd include you in the story but I'm not sadistic enough to do anything evil to a pregnant woman. (Yes, even my warped mind draws the line at children.) However, some suggested reading for you would include Rosemary's Baby, The Omen and for future reference The Exorcist. ☺ The other new reader will be included in either chapter 7 or most likely chapter 8. I won't give out the nick though don't want to spoil the surprise.

Ladydazzle41 and Brenda walked slowly down the outer corridor of the Hemingway Deck. It was lit up by the lightning flashes outside, otherwise it was completely dark. The sky around then was ominous to say the least. There was very thick cloud cover and they took on a menacing reddish tint.

They were halfway down the hallway when music came from the deck's speaker system. ***CLICK*** The song did not thrill either of them, but unlike the previous music it did not seem relatively important. After all, it wasn't like ghosts were going to ride out of the sky on horses.

"Nice song, but I'm not particularly in the mood for it right now." Ladydazzle41 said quietly.

"I'm not in the mood to hear any music from the speakers unless it is accompanied by lights throughout the ship." Brenda responded in a whispering tone.

Outside the sky lit up in a strange light. The lightning appeared to be running through the clouds like veins in all directions. Then the clouds parted slowly first close to them then further out.

“Maybe we’re almost out of this storm.” Ladydazzle41 said excitedly.

Brenda was excited as well and even managed a smile. Seconds later, that smile faded. Appearing in the cloud cover were two enormous shapes. Both of them thought the same thing initially, it was two airplanes and they were headed right for the ship! They started moving down the corridor keeping their eyes on the two objects moving at them at high speed. Suddenly they were able to make out clearly what the two massive objects were.

There were two black horses, about ten times the size of a regular horse. They didn’t have wings, but they were galloping through the sky in their direction. On the horses were two skeletal figures. Both were wearing black vests covering their ribcage, black pants and cowboy boots with spurs. Their eyes were black as onyx and shined evilly. The only difference between them was their hat. One had a black hat and the other was wearing a white hat with a red and black feather protruding from the left side.

Brenda and Ladydazzle41 stood looking at the two riders in complete disbelief. It was unfathomable that this could actually be happening. Suddenly both riders began twirling a rope over their heads. Brenda was the first to react to what was happening and she grabbed Ladydazzle41 and pulled her down the hall.

Both women ran as fast as they could without looking back. They were almost to the stairway door at the end of the hall when they heard a crash behind them. Two lassos came in from behind them and with absolute precision ensnared their targets. Before they knew what was happening, they were pulled off the deck and through the windows. The two horsemen turned and galloped away from the ship with them in tow.

Brenda screamed and cried for God to save her. Ladydazzle41 was frozen in a state of shock. She couldn’t speak, looking down she saw a thin layer of clouds and the sea.

The rider towing Brenda behind him stopped and began twirling the rope around above his head. Brenda flew in circles through the sky slowly at first then more rapidly. Her speed increased to a level that made it impossible to breath.

The second rider moved a short distance from the first and began twirling Ladydazzle41 as well. She closed her eyes as the speed began increasing. When the speed reached its peak, she vomited. All of the

regurgitation flew right back into her face except for the portion that didn't make it out at all and was now stuck in her throat choking her.

Both of the women were merely seconds away from losing consciousness when they saw the other coming straight at them. They collided in mid-air. The impact had so much force behind it that their skeletons disintegrated instantly and their organs were liquefied. The powdery substance that was once their skeletal system scattered into the clouds along with blood and flesh.

April99, BGjr, Clairvoyant, Creampuff, Fairmaiden, Ghattoman, Hunnypoo, Ladybug, Mbabyreb, Perky One, Punkiegirl, Rustyrose and The Mack were the thirteen that went upward to find their way to the Command Deck.

They wandered the halls of the Hemingway Deck with no luck at all. The boat was enormous with hallways going in several directions and for security reasons there were no signs indicating the way to the command deck. They decided to split up into three groups with the general consensus that a group of four people would be safe from whatever was out there.

One man went with each of the three groups of women. Hunnypoo, Perky One, Punkiegirl and Ghattoman made up one of the search groups. Punkiegirl had a suite on the Elite Deck so they were assigned to go up and see if they could find a crewmember since one was supposed to always be available for Elite Deck passengers.

After an extensive search, they found a stairway that led upward and ascended to the ship's top floor. The door at the top of the stairs was ajar and they walked out into the dark blue corridor. Immediately Punkiegirl knew something wasn't right. There was no one sitting at the desk in the Elite Deck entryway and the floor and walls had what appeared to be blood on them.

She stopped and suggested to everyone that they go back down immediately. They agreed and turned to exit, but the door would not open. She tried inserting her keycard, but with no electricity it did nothing. Ghattoman told the women to stand aside and he kicked the door as hard as he could. There was a loud shattering sound, unfortunately it was Ghattoman's ankle and not the door. He fell to the floor and burst into tears from the pain.

Punkiegirl and Hunnypoo tried to comfort him while Perky One examined his ankle. The bone was sticking out through the skin and was splintered. Punkiegirl unlocked the door to her suite and propped the door

open. When they were helping him up the enclosed corridor was enveloped in darkness and a menacing voice echoed out, "DIE!"

The women dropped Ghattoman on his ass and ran into Punkiegirl's suite. They slammed the door shut behind him leaving him in the hallway to fend for himself.

"Gee thanks ladies" he yelled out with a tearful cry.

He heard Perky One's voice yell back to him, "Make it to the door and we'll let you in, hurry."

Ghattoman rolled over on his stomach and crawled in the direction of the suite. The pain was intense shooting up and down his leg as he moved. Suddenly a man appeared in front of him. Though the entire corridor was still dark, the man emanated a glow that made him visible. He was a large man wearing what appeared to be a Mayan wardrobe. He'd seen pictures back at Balzatlan that resembled the man now in front of him.

"Who or what are you?" Ghattoman asked.

"I am King Handasu. You are an infidel and must be punished. My God's demand it."

"Infidel" Ghattoman said in a puzzled voice. "Exactly what does that mean?"

"It means you do not pay homage to my God's. They demand your soul."

"I have no idea what the hell you are talking about. There's only one true God and everyone knows that." Ghattoman responded. "Besides..."

He did not get a chance to finish his sentence before Handasu placed his hand on top of Ghattoman's head. There was initially a burning sensation followed by the feeling of being in a vice. He tried to speak but was unable to. His body began shaking violently his foot resembled a fish out of water as it flopped around the floor. He began to implode, his skin sunk inward exposing his skeleton. Then his skin was gone leaving nothing but exposed bone.

Handasu laid the bones on the floor and removed all of Ghattoman's organs so that he could offer them to his God's.

Inside Suite E9, Punkiegirl and Perky One listened at the door for Ghattoman. There were voices in the hallway but they could not determine what was being said and by whom. Back in the suite Hunnypooch was hiding in the sitting room.

She cowered behind the ottoman whimpering slightly. Inside her mind she heard a voice. It said, "What you think, what you see. Fear that's darkest soon will be."

She knew it was in her mind, but she still spoke aloud. “What is that supposed to mean?”

The answer began moving across the floor in the darkness. She could not see them, nor hear them but an army was headed her way on a mission. She felt something crawling on her arm and shrieked, when she jerked her arm it bit her and fell off.

She felt a slight sting like the bite of a mosquito but did not panic. Then she felt another bite on her leg and another and then several throughout her body. She jumped up from behind the sofa and flailed her arms frantically. She stomped her feet and shook her body trying to rid herself of whatever it was that was biting her.

Perky One heard the commotion and came in with a flashlight that they’d found in the suite. She shined it at Hunnypooch and her eyes widened at what she saw. Hunnypooch was covered from head to toe in black widow spiders, they were crawling in her mouth as she tried to scream.

She watched the woman spinning in circles, slamming herself up against the wall and flailing her arms frenetically. She was frozen with no idea how to help her. By the time she was able to move, Hunnypooch was lying motionless on the floor. Then, right in front of her eyes, the spiders vanished. Thousands of them were there one second and gone the next.

Punkiegirl walked over to see what the hullabaloo was and saw Hunnypooch covered in small red welts. Her face was no longer distinguishable from all of the bite marks. “Oh my God, what happened?”

“Spiders” Perky One muttered. “Lots of spiders.”

“What, where are they?”

“Gone, poof, gone” Perky One spoke incoherently.

“What do you mean? They couldn’t have just vanished.”

“Gone, poof gone” Perky One repeated.

“Let’s get out of here.” Punkiegirl said. She stepped in front of Perky One. She grabbed her arms and shook her, but her friend continued to stare blankly. “We have to get out of here.” She said again.

Perky One could not snap out of the trance. In her mind she heard a voice at the same time she saw Punkiegirl’s mouth move. “I’m going to kill you.” The voice said. It sounded just like Punkiegirl.

Perky One glared at Punkiegirl, she could see the woman speaking but could hear nothing. She took the steel flashlight and smashed it into Punkiegirl’s temple. Punkiegirl fell to the floor and looked up at Perky One astonished. Then she saw the flashlight swing down at her again. She tried to put up her arms to defend herself but the blows from the flashlight broke her wrist and then her forearm.

Perky One continued to swing the flashlight furiously into Punkiegirl's face. In her mind she could hear Punkiegirl's voice screaming. "I'm going to kill you."

She caved in Punkiegirl's skull and after each blow with the flashlight now grey matter flew through the room. She stopped several minutes later and the reality of what she had just done filled her.

She stood up and screamed then ran across the suite, through the glass doors and jumped off the balcony. It seemed like she was falling in slow motion, but when there was finally impact it was a forceful one. She crashed through the skylight of the Twain Deck dining facility. Shards of glass ripped through her flesh but in her current mental state she felt nothing. A second later she landed on the buffet snapping her back into two pieces and killing her instantly.

April99, Clairvoyant, Mbabyreb and The Mack walked to the inner corridor of the Hemingway Deck and into a large area toward the bow of the ship. They were taking turns having a lit candle because all of the candles were melting rapidly now and they didn't want to be completely without.

They came to a door marked, "Crew Only". They tried to open it but it wouldn't budge. Beside the door was a numerical pad and unlike the rest of the ship, the L.E.D. readout was working. A small cursor blinked in anticipation of a numerical sequence.

April99 banged on the door yelling for anyone inside to open the door. There was no response. The Mack punched in a random sequence of numbers and hit the enter key. Amazingly there was a small electric hum and the door unlocked.

"No freaking way" Clairvoyant exclaimed. She grabbed the door handle and pulled it open. They stepped into the command center of the ship and a feeling of utter dread filled them immediately. The instrument panel was still lit and functional but there was no crew to be found. They looked through the windows out at the cloud that surrounded them. Lightning flashed constantly sending bright light into their eyes. The water was not visible through the low cloud cover. All that could be seen was the deck below them and the reddish tint of the clouds.

The Mack looked at the compass built into the panel, it was flipping wildly to all points. The panel with the ship's speed indicator was showing 85 knots, but it seemed as if the ship was hardly moving at all.

Mbabyreb was looking to the port side of the ship and saw what appeared to be a crewman standing on the Poe Deck looking out at the ocean. She beat on the window and yelled. "Hey, up here! Hello can you hear me?"

Everyone ran over to see what she was yelling at and saw the crewman. They joined her in yelling for help. The crewman turned slowly toward them, when they could see him they stopped yelling and pounding on the window. He had no face, the entire front of his skull was missing and yet he was moving as if he were alive.

They saw the frightening countenance tilt up toward them. The crewman's arm slowly raised and pointed straight in their direction.

"I'm getting the hell out of here." The Mack exclaimed and turned to run as did the three women. They reached the door and another crewman entered. At first they were startled, then relieved and then startled again. This one had no face either and it closed the door behind them.

Suddenly the faceless anomaly in front of them began laughing hysterically. "DIE!" It yelled.

There was nowhere to run. The command deck was approximately twenty feet in length by twenty feet in width. There was only one door and right now this beast was standing between them and it.

The Mack charged at the creature, it stuck its arm up and grabbed him by the throat. He beat on the beast trying to free himself. Then, with a flick of its wrist, The Mack flew through the command deck, crashed out of the window and flew into the clouds.

He had no sooner vanished then the abomination grabbed Clairvoyant and threw her through yet another window and out into the stormy skies. Mbabyreb and April99 but had the same thought at the same time. They ran to the now open areas of the window and jumped.

They landed one deck down on the Twain Deck. Mbabyreb sprained her ankle in the fall and when April 99 landed her head went against a fiberglass panel and shattered it. Fortunately, her hard head was fine.

Even with her ankle throbbing with pain Mbabyreb was able to get up and run. They ran all the way to the bow of the Twain Deck. At the very front of the ship was an enclosed Caribbean style bar. They went under the bar's roof for shelter from the rain but the wind still whipped through.

The two of them stood there shivering from the cold storm air looking back at the main area of the ship. The sky was still dark but they could see the rest of the deck when the lightning flashed and it was doing so very frequently.

They backed up to where the only thing behind them was four feet of open bar space and the railing that separated them from the Poe Deck. Behind them the clouds parted slowly and two daunting figures emerged. The horsemen closed on them rapidly and neither knew what was happening when the enormous ropes wrapped around them.

They had no time to react as the horseman yanked them out into the sky. Mbabyreb and April99 screamed once they saw the two horsemen. They began to twirl the ropes slowly in opposite directions. The two women were narrowly missing each other. The ropes moved faster and faster. It was like being on a ride where the force pushes you up against the wall and the floor vanishes only there was no wall and no floor.

They could barely see one another now as they passed by. It was growing increasingly difficult to breath. They passed by one another so closely that their hair touched. Suddenly they were thrust upward into the sky. They climbed higher and higher, the air grew thin around them. Both gasped for breath and very little oxygen was fed into their lungs. They reached a point where they stopped climbing. They had no idea their current altitude was 2500 feet.

Another realization hit just as they began descending back down to earth, the ropes were no longer wrapped around them. They were free-falling back down toward the water. Mbabyreb closed her eyes and prayed, April99 urinated from fright. The urine ran upward and soaked her body and head.

The descent was rapid and grew increasingly so as they got closer to the ground. They both looked down at the same time and for a split second saw their fate. The two horsemen were directly under them with their enormous mouths wide open. The women went into their mouths. The horsemen lowered their head and looked forward. One was very content with his meal and laughed heartily. The other had a sour look on his face from the urine taste, he belched and beat on his chest. Then they both let out a loud cry and their horses went back into the clouds.

And now, the rest of the seven:

*****CLICK*****

Completely lost would be the only way to describe the current status of Creampuff, Fairmaiden, Ladybug, Rustyrose and BGjr. They'd searched the entire Hemingway Deck for hours and found nothing. Now on the Twain Deck, they heard screams or thought they did, the thunder engulfed the sound quickly so they couldn't be sure.

“I don’t like this one bit.” Rustyrose said. “I’m going to my room and go to bed. If I die before I wake up at least I won’t die scared to death like out here.”

Everyone understood and they escorted her down to cabin SH8 on the Shakespeare Deck. She said good night and went into her room. No longer did she close the door and lock it, she heard the sound of someone or something breathing deeply behind her. Her heart sunk in her chest, after walking around for hours terrified, she finally goes to the one place she felt safe and finds the killer. “Just my luck” She whispered.

She slowly turned the bolt on her door, it made a clicking sound that although wasn’t very loud, in her mind it resonated throughout the room like the firing of a gun. She turned the doorknob slowly then yanked it open quickly. Initially she felt a sense of relief because at least she was going to get a running start. That was short lived when she slammed into the chest of something very large and very solid. She fell back into the room. Her mind raced. There were obviously not one but two killers.

“Only one I am, only one I need to be. Everything dark is encompassed in me. Your mind is a vessel shows me the way. Your deepest fear you will face today.” The man whispered into the darkness. Only it didn’t seem to come from his direction. It seemed to come from everywhere in the room as well as from inside of her own head. She’d never heard sound like this before.

While she was deciphering what was happening, the man disappeared from the doorway. He didn’t move away, he vanished. “What is happening here?” She yelled out into the dark room.

Her mind was trapped on one visual image. One from a movie she’d seen long ago. She shook her head to try and escape the visual but it would not leave. Suddenly the door slammed shut and she heard a sound that made her heart skip a beat. It was loud and it was unmistakable. “This can’t be happening!” She screamed. She ran to the door, but this time it would not open. The sound came closer to her and grew louder.

She couldn’t see the man coming toward her, the room was too dark. But she certainly heard that sound and fear coursed through her veins. Then she felt her flesh tearing at her right shoulder. Before she could react her arm fell to the floor, the chainsaw ripped through it like it was melted butter. The shock and horror swept through her, she couldn’t run and she couldn’t hide. He obviously could see her but she could not see him. She thrust her left hand out in front of her instinctively for protection and the chainsaw ripped through it severing all of her fingers and the tip of her thumb.

She withdrew her hand and screamed from the pain. It was intense and hurt in everyway imaginable. There was a searing pain and a dull throbbing. The blood rushed out of her body from and she felt cold. She heard the chainsaw roar to full capacity and come down toward her. She felt the initial grinding into her skull, then felt nothing.

The remaining four people were starting to tire as well and decided that they too would go to bed. They went to the Poe Deck initially and walked Creampuff and Ladybug to their rooms. Then there was a dilemma. BGjr was on the Twain Deck while Fairmaiden was down on the Steinbeck Deck. Though he did not want to do it, he knew he had to fulfill the obligation and walk Fairmaiden to her room.

She opened her door and thanked him. He said goodnight and she closed the door. He walked down the dark corridor holding the nearly depleted candle in his hand. Everything was calm and quiet and he was unafraid for the first time. There seemed to be a feeling throughout the darkness of peace.

He began climbing the main stairwell in the center of the boat. It was a spiral staircase that was long and cumbersome. Its main design was so that passengers could enjoy the intricate designs of the columns, the beautiful chandeliers and the ivory statues. At 3:35 a.m. with no electricity however, it was just a long tiring climb.

He was on the landing of the Poe Deck and stopped to catch his breath. The lightning outside was much less frequent and the clouds seemed to be thinning finally. The storm was almost gone and he looked forward to clear blue skies when he awoke. Hovering a few feet behind him was a shadowy figure wearing a dark grey cloak.

The banshee screamed loudly, it startled him. He spun around and saw the banshee's face. He jumped backward, his momentum carried him over the railing and down on the Shakespeare Deck's floor. With the adrenalin pumping through his veins he barely felt the pain in his body from the fall. He jumped up and ran down the outer corridor of the Shakespeare Deck. If he could only make it to the enclosed stairs he thought, he would be able to lock the door behind him and make it safely to his room.

No longer did he have any light source and he relied solely on the lightning to provide him with some illumination. There was a long period of time between flashes and when one finally came, he saw the banshee standing in front of him blocking the stairway door.

He was tired and afraid, the combination made him decide that he was not going to run from her again, he was going to attack. He charged at the creature and swung his right hand hard at her head. To his chagrin, he did

not make contact with her instead he connected with the wall behind her. The force of the blow shattered three of his knuckles and broke his right wrist.

She screamed again, this time from just to the left of him. He spun around and swung at her with his left fist. She grabbed his fist in mid air. His hand and arm went instantly cold. Not the kind of cold that you get when you walk into an air-conditioned house after working outside in 100 degree heat, but the kind of cold you get when you fall through ice into a frozen lake.

It took every ounce of strength he could muster to pull his arm away from her. It remained frozen, he couldn't bend it and the only feeling he had was that fiery sensation of frostbite. His arm dropped down to his side, it felt like it weighed a thousand pounds. He tried to raise it, but he couldn't. He spun around and decided to run, but with both of his arms incapacitated he couldn't open the door to the stairwell.

Quickly he turned back to the hallway and attempted to run away. He felt a sharp pain in his right hip as he went past the banshee. Then he fell to the floor when he tried to take another step on that leg. The pain was immeasurable. It felt as if someone was holding a soldering iron to his side. He screamed in agony and the banshee literally glowed with enjoyment at his suffering. She released yet another shrilled cry that shattered several windows along the outer passageway.

Then the banshee moved down toward him. She began furiously lashing out at her victim. She tore at his chest, his face and finally sliced his neck. Blood shot from his artery and his eyes were staring upward at her with a look of horror that brought her tremendous joy. Finally the look faded and his eyes glazed over. The banshee's smile left her face as well and she flew off down the dark corridor in search of another wayward soul.

******CLICK******

On the bow of the ship lightning struck fiercely and made contact with two stone statues. The menacing looking creatures originally created to provide protection for cathedrals against evil spirits started to move slowly. The stone fell away and their black fur glistened in the night. They spread their enormous wings for the first time ever and looked at one another. A sinister grin swept over their faces and they swooped down from their perch.

They landed on the main deck and moved slowly toward the inner area. The door to the Poe Deck was ajar and they moved inside and down the outer corridor. They stopped just outside the first room they came to, P20. They could smell fresh blood on the other side. One of the gargoyles

tapped the door and they stood in the darkness waiting. A sleepy voice came from inside, "I'm coming, just a second."

When Creampuff opened the door she saw two enormous shadowy figures. Initially she thought it was two people, then a lightning flash lit up the corridor and she saw the daunting creatures. She screamed and tried to slam the door but one of the grabbed her arm with his giant claw and pulled her out into the hallway. They ripped at her flesh hungrily, their first ever meal and they were enjoying every bite.

Creampuff screamed and flailed while they tore pieces of her flesh off and devoured it. Her heart raced from the terror of being eaten alive. The gargoyles almost meticulously chose what parts her of body to eat, prolonging her life and making her suffering last. It took several minutes before one of them finally drove his massive paw through her ribcage and clutched her heart. She felt the sensation, it was strange and eerie. It was perhaps worse than any of the pain she had endured to this point. The feeling of a massive hand closing around her heart was the last sensation she would ever feel.

Once she was dead they continued to devour her. They ripped at her savagely until there was nothing left but a broken skeleton. Their hunger still raged so they sniffed the air for yet another victim. They smelt fresh meat on a deck that was below them. They rushed to the open area in the center of the ship and swooped down to the Steinbeck Deck. They moved quickly down the corridor in search of their prey.

They saw the figure in the darkness coming toward them, it was Fairmaiden carrying ice. Even though she was scared, she was thirsty and assumed she could make it down the hall and back safely. She was wrong. The gargoyles attacked her savagely. The ice flew from her hands and down the hallway. She tried to crawl to her room just a few feet away while they ripped pieces of flesh from her back and legs.

She could hear them eating chunks of her body. The sound made her gag and sent chills through her body. The pain she was feeling intensified with each attack. She managed to make it to her door that she had left ajar in case she needed to get in quickly. She pushed it open while the energy drained from her with every drop of blood.

It was an effort in futility, even though she'd managed to crawl halfway into her room, they had entered with her. She felt every piercing blow from them as they tore away her flesh, she felt the agony when one of them broke off her rib and gnawed at the bone. When the end mercifully came it wasn't from a final blow from the loss of a vital organ, it was from the extreme loss of blood. The gargoyles sensed her demise and tore

hungrily at her organs. One of them ripped her head off and ate the skin from her face and neck savagely. Several minutes later, they were gone. Off into the night air. Their stomachs were full and the storm was calling them.

Ladybug curled up in her bed and closed her heavy eyelids. The day had been long and the night even longer. Her body was worn out and had no energy remaining. She sensed something in her room while she drifted off to sleep. The air around her felt thick and she distinctly heard something breathing heavily.

She pulled the covers over her head, her mind began to race. Something was closing in on her she could feel it. It was a race between the darkness and blissful slumber. She felt a tug at the blanket. It was slight at first then more forceful. She sighed deeply and drifted off to sleep.

A roar echoed through her room. The frustration of the presence that encompassed the entire room was apparent. He'd lost this battle, the last of the night.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Halloween morning was one of confusion and chaos. By 9:15 a.m. all of the remaining passengers had awakened. There was no breakfast and the phones were all out of order. Various groups of people searched throughout the ship for a crewmember to no avail. Those passengers on the Elite Deck expecting a valet to bring them breakfast were highly disappointed. The electricity had been restored, the storm was gone and the skies were absolutely beautiful. But there was no sign of any ship personnel and several passengers had not been seen.

By 9:30 most of the hungry passengers found the galley and prepared their own meals. It wasn't nearly the breakfast everyone had anticipated, but it was sustenance.

At 9:45 a.m. the Island came into view. Word spread rapidly and there was a hum of excitement throughout the ship. The view of the Island grew larger as they got closer to it and nearly everyone went to the bow of the ship and watched eagerly. The ship stayed at a steady clip even as they moved closer and closer.

"Why aren't we slowing down?" AJW asked rhetorically.

"Something's not right. We're coming in way to fast." Sunflower78 replied.

People began to scramble in panic as it became obvious there had been no attempt to slow the vessel down. They ran from the bow and into the inner deck areas where they felt safer. Five people stayed on the bow, disbelieving that the captain of this ship would actually ram an island.

"That's the most ridiculous thing I have ever heard." Auntie said looking back at the people running away. "There's no way we're going to crash into an island. The captain wouldn't be here if he was that bad of a driver."

Ladygreywolf, Scott9343, Gr8 Skeleton and Mlilreb were in agreement although they weren't quite as certain as Auntie was.

"I can't wait to harass those guys for running." Auntie continued. "How stupid can you be?"

Less than a minute later everyone but Auntie had moved back away from the bow of the ship. By the time Auntie realized she was wrong, it was too late. She barely managed to take just a few steps from the railing of the Twain Deck's bow before the ship crashed hard into the island.

The impact was devastating catapulting Auntie headfirst into a tree breaking her neck and silencing her forever. Her body fell to the ground and was buried under some of the wreckage.

When the impact occurred Ladygreywolf and Gr8 Skeleton who had not yet made it inside were thrown into the railing with such force that their bodies were sliced in half. The lower portion of their body became embedded in the railing while their upper torsos flew out amidst the wreckage.

Mlilreb had just made it to the outer corridor of the Twain Deck when the impact sent her flying backwards into the door knocking it off its hinges and sending her careening across the deck on her stomach. She saw the lower bar of the railing coming at her for just a brief instant before her face made contact with it and when it did the force was so powerful that her torso and legs folded like an accordion.

Scott9343 managed to secure himself just before impact. He was braced against a wall that faced the bow of the ship. Unfortunately for him, not everything was as secured. A replica statue of the Venus De Milo flew at him at high velocity. The head of the statue slammed into his skull. Two other smaller statues broke loose as well, one hit on him right side and one on him left. By the time it was over, his arms were missing and the head of Venus had taken the place of his.

Following paragraph written by Jannelly

Greeneyedblonde had stayed up late the night before and had arisen long after most had already fed themselves. As the others had done earlier she had made her way to the kitchen to prepare some food. She was done cooking the bacon and was frying some eggs when the collision took place. Everything that wasn't bolted down began crashing about the room object flying everywhere and when a heavy food prep table broke free of its binding it careened into the gas stove setting off a chain of explosions. The hot cast iron pan containing her eggs frying in bacon grease went flying into her face. It burned her terribly and rendered her nearly unconscious. Simultaneously, a butcher knife and some other loose utensils flew straight at her like shrapnel imbedding deeply into her body. The horrible pain was short lived when a butcher knife pierced through her heart.

The inner area of the ship that extended from the Shakespeare Deck all the way up to the Hemingway Deck resembled a battlefield. Bodies were strewn throughout and blood covered the floors and walls. Several people

had locked themselves in their rooms braced for impact while others had been completely unaware of the danger that lay ahead despite seeing the chaotic scene prior to the collision.

Jannelly, Lacy, Trachelle, Danigirl and Flea were perhaps the most fortunate. They were thrown from the ship off to the port side and landed into the blue water just off shore. All of them managed to resurface and swim safely to land.

When the ship finally stopped moving and the explosions had ended and the fires had been extinguished by the sea only the aft area of the ship remained in tact. Every other part of the enormous luxury liner was demolished.

AJW was semi-conscious on the Steinbeck Deck. He groaned in agony and put his hand up to his head where it hurt. There was a small gouge in his head and a little blood was coming out. His left shoulder was hurting intensely and his vision was just a bit blurred. After a few minutes, he pulled himself up to a seated position and surveyed the damage around him.

When he looked to his immediate right, he saw an enormous gorilla lying there. From the way its head was laying it was easy to see that it had died from a broken neck. "Now there's something you don't see on every cruise." He muttered. "Glad I didn't meet you an hour ago big guy." Easing himself up to his feet he walked slowly through the debris.

Everyone on the ship still alive was injured. Amazingly, all were minor with the exception of one passenger. Paragod, Rdavids, Rex2, Wabbitt, Amanda Panda and Wiccan Lydia had found an area they deemed as a safe exit from the ship. They combined their efforts by helping those who had followed them get off the ship and going back into the wreckage to assist in guiding people to the exit. Rdavids took a head count as they disembarked. Three crewmembers, Diva420, Katsue and Summerwitch climbed through rubble from the Dante Deck and managed to surface on the Shakespeare Deck.

When they approached the others, they were asked where the rest of the crew had gone. "They all disappeared last night." All three women responded. In the midst of all the commotion taking place, no one bothered to ask for more details. They stepped off the ship and tended to people's injuries on the shore.

It took nearly two hours to evacuate the ship and when it was completed, forty-five people survived the crash. Several of the passengers went back into the rubble to look for more survivors but their search was

fruitless. They hadn't even found bodies other than the five who were killed in the collision.

On the shore everyone's attention was turned to Deshadow. He was badly injured and his wounds required treatment that could not be found on a deserted island. Deshadow motioned for the two crewmembers to lean down to him. They both crouched and asked what they could do for him.

"This is the last time I fly your airline." He muttered softly then passed away.

Several hours later and still dazed from their ordeal most of the remaining passengers sat on the beach looking out at the water and the scattered wreckage floating near what was left of the ship. The conversations were morbid and pessimistic and tainted with the feeling of hopeless despair. The severely damaged ship began to creak and moan giving warning to those who had volunteered to gather food and rations from the ship. They wasted no time running to the bow leaping off onto the ground. Joining the others they watched in awe as the battered ocean liners disheveled bow lifted into the air tilted slightly on its side and sank just a few feet from where they stood. "What the hell?" Pecoswilly said astonished. "How could that happen? Shouldn't there be a gradual slope before it gets deep enough for a ship of that size to sink"?

They walked over to the waters edge and looked down. There seemed to be no slight drop off at all. You could not see the bottom merely inches away from shore. Rdavids and Boris carried a narrow twelve-foot fallen palm tree over to edge. They held it straight up and began slowly submerging it to test the depth. The entire tree vanished in the depth before they lost their grasp on it. It popped back up and floated away.

Several people scattered to various areas of the beach and tried the same using even longer markers but the island seemed not to have a shelf beyond the shore. The beach had a quarter-moon shape, and beyond it were rocky cliffs jutting out here and there. Inland they observed a narrow pathway leading up a steep slope to the main body of the island. On either side of the path grew dense vegetation and jungle. It was agreed by all that they should start moving inland before high tide came in and covered the entire beach.

They began their trek up the pathway cautiously and in twos. Every capable body carried food supplies. The jungle around them was incredibly dense with trees and foliage. It was so thick that to wander off the trail would be very difficult and anyone needing to relieve themselves need only step into the bush. Fireangel02 and Morsky were up front and as they reached the top of the hill they just stood there in awe.

After being nudged by the people behind them they stepped forward and off to the side. Two by two everyone made it up the hill and stood on a flat open area looking at a site no one was expecting.

Before them was a very large clear blue pond. It was approximately thirty feet wide and two hundred feet long. Concrete spanned all four sides and palm trees lined the entire length. Beyond the pond was an enormous structure that resembled a Sultan's Castle. They counted eight stories and it was at least two hundred feet long.

There seemed to be a welcoming committee of six people approaching them. They were all smiling as they walked alongside the pond toward them. After what they had been through they were a very welcome sight. One was wearing a black tuxedo, three wore bellboy outfits and two women were in red dresses.

The man in the tuxedo approached them while the other five stopped a short distance away.

"Good afternoon and welcome to Fantasy Island." The man said in a thick Polynesian accent. "I am the concierge for the Sultan's Dream Resort. My name is Henry, that's spelled as Henry but pronounced "OnRey" You must be the passengers of the Cinatas Pacific. We have been expecting you."

Everyone was dumbfounded and stood staring at the man in complete silence. Finally Rex2 responded. "Okay Henry. If this is Fantasy Island, where's the midget?"

"I beg your pardon sir?" Henry replied.

"Well, if you are replacing Mr. Roarke then shouldn't there be a Tattoo type person shouting, the boat the boat, or something like that."

"I'm afraid I do not understand sir."

"No big surprise there." Rex2 quipped.

"I thought this island was uninhabited?" Lacy asked suspiciously.

"That's a tourism gimmick. You see we here at the island don't accommodate guests often. Cinatas Pacific has us on their agenda only three times a year" Henry explained.

"Will you be providing accommodations for us?" Cabbie inquired.

"You are due back aboard ship by 6:00 p.m. are you not?"

"Ain't nobody getting back on that ship, Henry." Devilishangel responded.

"Why is that" Henry questioned.

"You didn't hear the crash up here?" Devilishangel asked incredulously.

"I'm afraid not my dear. Was anyone injured?"

“Everyone was injured Henry and we lost so many.” Summerwitch responded.

“I’m terribly sorry to hear this news. Please come with us and we will see to your accommodations at once.”

They led the exhausted passengers back to the resort, where they each were assigned a lavish room. Medical assistance was also provided for those in need.

To try and brighten the mood the hotel staff put together a Halloween party for their unexpected guests to begin at 8:00 p.m. Until then they arranged for various activities including scuba diving, nature walks, a volcano exploration and something they called fantasia. When asked what fantasia was, the staff refused to elaborate saying simply, “An opportunity for fantasies to come true.”

Twelve people went scuba diving, thirteen went for the volcano exploration, six went on nature walks, and one abstained from activity and elected to get some rest instead. Twelve decided on fantasia.

Henry personally led the twelve who chose fantasia to an absolutely beautiful part of the island. There were exactly twelve paths that fanned out before them. “This is where I stop.” He told them. “Each of you must choose a path. No two may take the same.”

“What’s at the end of the paths?” BJAM asked.

“Each path has a different ending that is formed by your imagination.” He responded.

No one understood what he meant by that but somehow knew they would get no more of an explanation out of him.

“Sounds like bullshit to me.” Skully popped off. “But I’ve already wasted this much time walking out here so what the hell.”

Skully walked down one of the paths quickly. Everyone else watched until he was out of sight.

“I see no reason to turn down a chance at adventure.” Irish Eyes said next. And hoping for a fun excursion she strolled down her path.

BJAM, Caresses, Devilishangel, Mistynite, Katsue, Mamarosa, NightGracie, Simply Sweet and Sunflower78 all chose paths as well. Summerwitch stood behind and watched skeptically.

“I don’t think I’m gonna do this.” She said and looked over at Henry. He was no longer there. She looked back toward the path they had all traveled but saw nothing but thick underbrush.

Turning round and round she had no idea how to return on her own. She looked back toward the twelve paths and saw that now there was only one.

“You can’t make me go down there!” She yelled. “I’m staying right here until everyone else returns!”

She sat down on a hollow log and looked around at the scenery. She stared at the path that remained. Her mind began to ponder while she sat there, if the paths could disappear perhaps there really was a fantasy waiting for her. Reluctantly she stood up and headed down the path. She would go a little way figuring she could always turn back and wait for the others. She followed it for quite some time and was disappointed when she reached a cliff. She looked down at the rocks and water below and off to either side of her. There was nowhere to go other than back the way she had come.

As she turned to go back her eyes grew wide with astonishment. Sitting in front of her was a candy apple red Chevy stock car and it was located on a race track. She looked around her, the cliff was no longer there and she found instead that she was standing in the infield area of a speedway.

Since she had been an adolescent she had always dreamed of being a race car driver. She didn’t hesitate a minute. Running to the car she climbed in giggling giddily. She donned the helmet that was on the floor next to her, engaged the safety belt and started the engine. She shifted into gear and accelerated down the raceway exhilarated by the power beneath her. Adrenalin coursed through her veins as she went into the first turn shifting gears as she gained speed and after the second turn she slammed the pedal to the floor as she entered the back straightaway.

“This is awesome!” She yelled out in total rapture.

Then, just as suddenly as it had disappeared, the cliff reappeared directly in front of her. She slammed on the brake but she was going far too fast to stop. As she skidded off the cliff and into the air, the car disappeared around her. Free falling down the steep cliff she screamed all the way until her body splattered on the jagged rocks below.

BJAM felt like she’d been walking forever. Finally she came to a beautiful house. She approached it cautiously, and as she came closer she realized it was just exactly like the dream house she had always conjured in her mind but knew she would never have. It even had a mailbox and she saw that it had her last name on it. She couldn’t help but embrace this fantasy.

Opening the gate of the white picket fence she walked up the path lined with all her favorite flowers and up on to the front porch. She rang the doorbell but no one answered. After waiting several minutes, she turned the doorknob and walked in. No sooner did she pass the entryway, the door slammed shut behind her.

She spun around in a panic and tugged at the door knob, it would not budge. "What have I gotten myself into?" She asked aloud.

The answer was moving at her from all directions. She turned around and her eyes widened and her jaw dropped open. Millions of spiders were moving in on her and she had no where to run. She screamed just as the first one bit her. It was only a matter of seconds before her entire body was covered from head to toe with funnel web spiders. Their toxin paralyzed her. She fell to the floor unable to move. Tears streamed down her face as the spiders crawled into her mouth and down her throat causing her to choke.

She tried to push them back up out of her mouth, but they continued to flow in. They closed off her trachea and a combination of their deadly venom and the loss of oxygen finally ended her life.

Skully wandered aimlessly down the path he'd chosen and suddenly he found himself on a dirt road. On either side of him were nineteenth century western buildings including a saloon and a blacksmith. Then he realized that his clothing had changed as well. He was wearing a vest, jeans and chaps and the most interesting addition was a gun belt complete with an old colt. Standing fifty feet ahead of him was a man dressed completely in black.

******CLICK******

"Who are you?" Skully asked.

"I'm your huckleberry" The man responded.

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"It means we're about to play a game, a game of blood."

The word "game" stood out in Skully's mind. It finally sunk in he was going to have an old time western shootout. He smiled then and decided to play along. "What's your name partner? I like to know the men I kill."

"My name is Holiday sir. John Henry Holiday to be exact. But folks just call me Doc."

"You're Doc holiday?"

"That would be correct, sir."

"Great, I always wanted to see if I was faster than you." Skully beamed now with happiness.

"You're only going to find the answer to that once."

Skully said no more. He took a stance that he'd seen in old westerns and placed his hand down by his colt. He moved his fingers around like the old gunfighter movies for effect and then he drew. Well, he attempted to draw anyway. His hand no sooner hit the weapon than a bullet hit him

between his eyes. With a shocked look on his face, he fell backward and as he hit the ground, the town and his opponent disappeared.

Caresses, Devilishangel, Katsue and NightGracie all wished for the same thing. Vast wealth! Their paths all converged, one coming in from all directions of the compass and they ended up standing before a man that resembled Bill Gates.

“Hello ladies.” He spoke.

They all responded with pleasantries. Before you are four suitcases, each suitcase contains ten million dollars. The money is yours.

All of them opened their suitcases hurriedly and were shocked at the site of all the money in front of them. “What’s the catch?” Katsue asked.

“I’m glad you asked. With great wealth comes great responsibility. There are four doors behind me. I want each of you to enter through one of the doors. You will be given a choice. It is entirely up to you what you choose, but it is a test of wealth.”

None of them hesitated. They walked past him and through a door. NightGracie was the first one to walk through. Her door closed behind her and the man who appeared to be Bill Gates appeared in front of her. “Your question is. You are inflicted with a terrible disease that will shorten your life considerably. There is a cure, but the cost is ten million dollars. Do you keep the money and live out the rest of your time or pay the price for health?”

“I’ll keep the money thanks.” She smiled.

“Very well” He responded.

Suddenly, Bill Gates vanished into thin air and she was in a very dark room. She felt a sharp pain in her left arm and then in her chest. She grabbed at her arm and the flesh peeled off in her right hand. The same thing happened with her chest. She screamed in horror. “I changed my mind!”

But it was too late. The flesh eating disease spread through her body like wildfire. Her skin dropped to the ground. She fell to the floor crying from the pain. It was too late to stop and it was rampant. It only took seconds for her to bleed to death, she died clutching her suitcase. No sooner did she take her last breath, it vanished.

Caresses walked through her door and the man who appeared to be Bill Gates was there as well. “You are hanging from a rope over a pit filled with highly venomous snakes. You must hang on to the rope for ten seconds before the pit disappears and you are again over solid ground. However, if you pay ten million dollars the rope, the pit and the snakes will vanish. What do you do?”

Caresse didn't think twice, ten seconds was no time at all. "Bring on the pit." She said confidently.

"Very well" He answered and then he was gone.

Suddenly a rope was in her hand and she was dangling above a pit. She could see the snakes slithering below her and her heart rate increased dramatically. "I thought this was hypothetical!" She screamed.

Two seconds later the rope was engulfed in flames burning the skin off her hand. The pain was far too intense and she let go. She fell into the pit was eastern brown snakes. They bit into her furiously. Between the pain in her hand and the pain of the bites, she blacked out. Minutes later she was dead and the pit, the snakes, the rope and the building around her was gone. She lay in the brush, becoming part of the circle of life.

Katsue walked through the door with a huge grin on her face. She saw the man that appeared to be Bill Gates and didn't even care that he had changed positions so rapidly.

"You are to be hung by your neck until you are dead for crimes that you have committed. The price for your freedom is ten million dollars. Do you choose your fate or do you choose freedom?"

"Bring on the noose." She said confidently.

"Very well" he responded.

He vanished into darkness and a rope wrapped around her neck. It lifted her up into the air and she could feel the tightness. She dropped the suitcase and tried frantically to pull the rope away from her neck. She gasped for air, but it was futile. Her body flailed violently while she choked to death. Her eyes bulged from her face as it turned a dark violet. She grabbed the rope with both hands and tried to pull herself up to allow her to breathe but it was too late. She didn't have any strength left in her arms.

Her arms dropped to her side and her head fell slightly to the left. The last site she saw before she faded into darkness was the suitcase lying on the ground beneath her.

******CLICK******

Devilshangel walked through her door with the same confidence and swagger that Katsue had. She was rich and didn't care what anyone said she was going to stay that way. The man she had just seen in the other room appeared before her once again. "You are doomed to an eternity of burning in hell. For ten million dollars your soul can be saved. What do you choose?"

"I'm not giving up my money." She replied. "So burn baby burn."

“Very well” The man replied. His voice changed drastically between the start and end of those two words. Suddenly Bill Gates was no longer in front of her, he became a hideous beast.

“Welcome to hell.” He boomed at her. The scenery around her changed almost instantly. She was on a small stone pillar and flames shot up all around her burning her flesh. She screamed in agony. “I changed my mind.”

“No refunds, no exchanges.” The devil said to her. “All sales are final!”

He vanished leaving her to her fate. After several minutes of her flesh being singed from her body, she decided to jump into the fire to end this torment. She felt the searing heat rush over her, the agony was immense. But for a brief second it was over. Then she was right back on the pillar again. She was doomed to burn for eternity and there was nothing she could do about it. She dove once again into the flames, only to return back to the pillar.

CHAPTER NINE

Mistynite found herself in an incredible oasis. There was desert as far as the eye could see. The area she was in was palm trees, a fresh water pond, a camel and a man dressed in Egyptian garb. The man held a large palm leaf in his hand, he gesture for her to sit in the plush green grass. She did so unquestioningly and he began fanning her gently.

“Did I die and go to Heaven?” She asked.

“What was your fantasy?” He responded.

“To be secluded and close to a man”

“Then this would be the right place.”

She laid her head back and enjoyed the sun coming down on her. Suddenly, she felt something behind her ears. She reached up with both hands to find out what it was. “Oh my God” she gasped in horror. “These can’t be what I think they are.”

“They certainly are.” The manservant replied. “You said you wanted to be close to a man. You can’t get any closer than having testicles.”

“But behind my ears!” She shrieked.

“You know the old saying, a man thinks with his...?”

“Yes, I’m well aware of that saying.”

“Well now you are.”

She lied back down and pondered this. Certainly it was a drawback, but she could live with it. The more he fanned her and she watched his muscles in the sun. The more excited she became. Suddenly she felt pressure within her head like a tremendous sinus buildup. She became dizzy and could no longer see anything clearly. Seconds later her head exploded.

Irish Eyes wondered her pathway taking in the scenery and it became noticeably different. Rolling green hillsides, beautiful mountains and wild flowers had taken the place of the jungle. She had been dreaming of her homeland, beautiful Ireland and it appeared that she was there.

She continued walking with a huge smile on her face. The crisp clean smell of the air and the clover filled ground put her in a state of euphoria. She came upon a white picket fence that was enclosing an area of approximately two hundred square feet. Inside were small headstones. She opened the gate and entered the tiny cemetery. No sooner did she step in, the daylight turned to night.

She could see stars in the sky and a bright full moon up above lit up the cemetery nicely. Off to the right standing beside a tombstone was a woman wearing a dark cloak. She had her back to her and appeared to be

praying over the loss of a loved one. She walked over to her and stood behind her, not wanting to disturb the woman's mourning.

The woman wheeled around and glared at her with a dark evil face. Irish Eyes jumped backward startled at what she was seeing. A blood curdling, spine chilling scream emanated from the woman and she swarmed down on Irish Eyes before she had any chance to react. She felt her flesh ripping open from sharp nails on the woman's hands. She screamed again lifting her head to the skies as she did so. Then she attacked Irish Eyes more furiously than before. Irish Eyes tried to fight back but it was of no use the woman's hands moved with lightning speed and tore her to shreds. Just as she was fading away to death, she saw the sun again. She turned her head to the left and saw the jungle scenery had returned. A tear fell down her cheek and she took her last breath.

Simply Sweet, Mamarosa and Sunflower78 all followed their paths for quite some time and then found themselves merging in the center of an arena. They watched as walls closed around them encasing them in a large area of dirt. Bleachers appeared rising what seemed like 100s of rows back and then people appeared out of nowhere and started cheering them.

"What is going on?" Sunflower78 asked.

"I have no idea." Mamarosa responded.

"What did you guys fantasize about?" Simply Sweet asked them.

"To perform before a large crowd." They both responded simultaneously.

Simply Sweet told them that she had the same fantasy. They looked around for microphones, a band or even musical instruments. They saw nothing. "What are we supposed to do?" Sunflower78 asked.

The answer appeared immediately after. Three bulls entered the arena from behind wooden panels. These weren't just any bulls, these were twice the size of any normal bull and their eyes were red. They all snorted at the same time and fire came from their nostrils.

At first the women froze in fear and then the bulls charged at them. They ran off together at first and then broke off into different directions. All of them had the same idea, try to climb a wall and get out of the arena!

Simply Sweet reached the wall first, she was almost over the other side when people shoved her back into the arena. She stood up but had no time to move. The enormous bull charged down on her and smashed her against the stone wall ripping her in half.

Mamarosa tried to climb the wall but the bull was too close and she opted to keep running around the outside of the arena for a quick escape route. She could feel the enormous beast closing in on her. Then she could

feel his breath on her back. The bull lowered his head and closed the last few feet rapidly. When he was directly on her he lifted his head up hard and fast. His horns caught her in the ass and sent her flying into the air. She climbed up and up, over the wall, over the bleachers and out of the arena. She began her decent to earth and looked down. There was nothing there, just blackness. It engulfed her, the smell of sulfur surrounded her as she fell into the bottomless pit to hell.

Sunflower78 was cunning and was able to evade her bull, but what she didn't count on was the other two coming to its aid. One came at her from the front left, one from the front right and one from behind. She had nowhere to go. She tried to jump over one of them but her leg hit its enormous head and she flipped into the air landing hard on her back. The bulls charged at her and ran over her one at a time stomping down hard as they did. She felt the blows from their gigantic hooves and rolled over onto her back. Her ribcage was caved in and blood rushed out of her mouth. The bulls charged back over her, the last of them crashed down hard on the back of her head and caved in her skull. A split second after he made contact, the bulls, people and arena vanished and her body was in an area of brush awaiting a predator to have her for a meal.

The nature walk was incredible. The paths were narrowly cut through thick jungle. Paragod, Pecoswilly, Sudit, Trachelle, Joy1 and Lacy strolled down the paths enjoying every step. Beautiful Polynesian flowers lined the walkways and they could hear the sound of rushing water up ahead. All of them envisioned an enormous waterfall but when they came to the clearing they couldn't have imagined anything as grandiose as what they encountered.

They stood on a rock edge overlooking a waterfall that rivaled Niagara. It was as wide as the eyes could see and the water came down with unbelievable force. The area that it was falling down into was narrow but seemed to hold the onslaught of water very well.

"I wish I had a camera." Sudit exclaimed nearly breathless.

"This is something that you remember for life. It almost makes the catastrophic boat crash bearable." Paragod said.

"I could just die happy here." Joy1 responded.

As she uttered those words they all noticed the water level below rising quickly. Initially it was fifty feet below them, now it was thirty and coming closer.

"I think it's time to haul ass." Pecoswilly said nervously.

Lacy looked around for an area where the water would run off at a certain height, but there wasn't one. It was coming up and doing so quickly.

“I’m outta here.” She said and turned to run back down the path. The path was no longer there. It was just dense jungle now. “Oh shit.” She exclaimed. “This is worse than last Halloween! I somehow survived that nightmare, but I have a feeling my luck has just ran out.”

She pushed her way through the vines opting to take her chance on the jungle than stand there and drown. The water had risen to just ten feet below where they were standing and everyone followed her. Moving through the vines and underbrush was very slow and exhausting. They could not see past the brush immediately in front of them to see what lied beyond.

In the rush to escape the water, the group of six was no longer together. Lacy was off on her own, Sudit and Paragod were paired up and Pecoswilly and Trachelle were creating their own path. Joy1 had fallen way behind after tripping over a vine. She yelled for help, but no one heard her. She couldn’t see where they went, the jungle seemed undisturbed as if it was regenerating instantly after someone passed through.

She pushed her way through a dense area and tripped over more vines. She landed on a clear area and rolled down hill frantically trying to stop her momentum. It was to no avail, she rolled off the side of the very cliff she had started from and landed in the tumultuous water. The force of the waterfall made the water below impossible to navigate. She was pushed under and continued moving downward. Her lungs filled with water as she plunged deep into the water. Then she felt warmth throughout her body.

Her mind raced as the light from above disappeared. She always thought the water was colder as you went down, but this water was getting warmer. In fact, it was getting downright hot. Her skin boiled and she opened her mouth to scream. What little oxygen remained in her lungs escaped her and made a few tiny bubbles. She could feel her skin cooking and wanted badly for the end to finally come. The heat burned her from the outside to the inside. Her organs cooked as if they were in a pot of water on a stove. The pain was unbearable and she prayed for a merciful end to this suffering. Finally her prayers were answered as her heart melted in her chest from the extreme heat. Her body continued to float downward, straight to the fiery depths of hell.

Lacy fought bravely to get through the forest. Her arms, legs and face were sliced open from the vines tearing at her flesh. Finally, she came to a clearing. She took a look around her and saw that it was just a small oval area encased by jungle. She collapsed to the ground from exhaustion. She lied on her back looking up at the sky with her arms and legs spread out like she was making a snow angel.

She closed her eyes and breathed deeply. Her situation was not vastly improved but she felt blissful and she dozed off. At least she thought she did. She opened her eyes and the skies were red with black clouds. Ashes rained down on her. She sat up and looked around her. The jungle was gone. She was on a small rocky spike protruding out of the ground. Off to all sides were steep drops. At the bottom a river of lava ran rapidly.

“This is just a dream.” She told herself. She pinched her arm and it hurt. She closed her eyes and repeatedly said, “This is not happening.”

When she opened her eyes again, it was still happening. The plateau she was on began to lower into the lava river. She looked around in a panic and saw another plateau just a few feet away. She leaped and landed on it shakily. As soon as she got solid footing it too began to lower. She leaped to another plateau and the same thing occurred. She jumped from one plateau to another getting increasingly closer to the lava.

She saw that if she could successfully maneuver three more plateaus solid ground awaited her. She rushed her next jump and slid off the plateau. She grabbed the rocky tower and dug her fingernails in. Her arms shook from exhaustion and she tried hard to pull herself up. The lava touched her feet and she screamed. She lifted her feet and tried to get a foothold in the rock. When her feet went against the rock it shifted her weight and pushed her upper body outward. It was too much for her tired arms to handle and she fell back into the lava. Her skin melted off with contact and flames arose from the area where she sunk. Her head plunged into the lava last and a small bubble arose, then it sank and she was gone.

Sudit and Paragod scraped and clawed their way through the brush, their hands were raw and bloody by the time they reached a clearing. Paragod pushed his way through first and landed face down on the hardened soil. Sudit walked through his path and helped him up. They looked around them stunned. They’d gone from the jungle to an area that looks like rain hasn’t fallen in years.

*****CLICK*****

Paragod looked behind him, the jungle was now gone. It was an arid wasteland as far as the eye could see. “I must’ve swallowed some magic berry in the jungle by accident, because I’m hallucinating badly.”

“If you did, then I did as well.” Sudit responded. “Because I’m no longer sure we’re even on the same island.”

“We don’t appear to be” Paragod said. “But how can we not be? You don’t just walk off an island!”

“To be honest, this looks like the outback to me. It resembles eastern Queensland or the southern part of the Northern Territory.”

“Oh that’s even better. Not only did we walk off an island, we also walked 10,000 miles.”

Suddenly a snake appeared out of a hole. It was light brown with dark brown markings, closely resembling a rattle snake but with a different shaped head. Paragod saw it first and he just stood there watching it slither across the dry ground.

When Sudit saw it, she didn’t stand still. “Oh my God! That’s an Inland Taipan!” She screamed and ran away leaving Paragod behind.

“What’s an Inland Taipan?” He asked and then saw Sudit a hundred yards away and fading rapidly. “I guess it’s not a snake I want to play with.” He muttered and backed away from it slowly.

Sudit ran as fast as her feet could carry her. When she felt she was safe she stopped and turned back. She could barely see Paragod now, he was five hundred yards away and he wasn’t running. “Silly bloke” She whispered to herself. “He should be running flat out like a lizard drinkin”

That last sentence courtesy of the departed but never forgotten Steve Irwin! Anyone who watched his top ten deadliest snakes saw him lie on the ground as an inland Taipan a.k.a. fierce snake came out of its hole. The snake flicked its tongue out and touched his cheek and then left him alone. In his wonderful sense of humor he remarked: “I guess I don’t taste very nice.” If you don’t know about this creature, it has enough venom to kill 100 humans in one bite!!! God bless you Steve, thank you for your entertainment and the education you provided so many regarding wildlife!! Back to the story...

Sudit stood there amazed that Paragod wasn’t running. She wasn’t going to go back over there no matter what, she was just going to stand here and wait for him to catch up. What she didn’t know was she was standing inches away from a rodent burrow where an inland Taipan had just finished its dinner. It came out of the burrow and moved up behind her. It was about to go around her when she stepped backward and stepped directly on its tail. She looked down just in time to see it strike her leg.

She shrieked but could not move away in time. When she was off the snake’s body it slithered away paying no further attention to her at all. Everything was blurred and when she tried to yell for Paragod to help her, her speech was barely audible. She could feel a burning sensation as the venom coursed through her veins. After taking one step in Paragod’s direction she fell, face first, onto the hard soil. Minutes later, she died, ironically killed by a creature from her homeland thousands of miles away.

Paragod did not see Sudit fall, he was busy trying to figure out what direction would be the best way out. When he finally looked in Sudit's direction, he could no longer see her. He stared in her direction trying to focus his eyes but where she'd fallen was slightly downhill and it was impossible for him to see her. When he turned away from her, he shook his head in disbelief. The jungle had returned.

He turned back in her direction. It too was now jungle. She was gone for sure now he'd never be able to find her in the thickness between them. "I need to start drinking apparently. I haven't had a drink since that strange house in Texas five years ago." His mind drifted back and remembered that also was a Halloween Party.

He shook his head again. "Focus damn it."

He tore at the vines in front of him and moved slowly forward. He yelled out when a long thorn stuck into the palm of his hand. He reached down and pulled it out quickly. His hand burned. Then his wrist began to burn and then his arm. A strange sensation filled his body. He had been injected with a hallucinogenic compound via a rare tropical plant.

The jungle seemed to thin as he moved forward. His progress was much easier now and then he heard a sound. He stopped and listened closer. "Meow" he heard again.

"Here kitty kitty kitty." He called out. Again he heard the sound of the cat meowing, this time closer to him. He repeated the call and then saw a yellowish-brown cat moving in his direction. His mind pictured it as nothing more than a common house cat. He knelt down and beckoned for it to come to him.

"That's it, come here kitty I won't hurt you." The cat moved toward him slowly, it turn its head to the side curiously looking at him.

"That's a good kitty. Come here, together we'll find our way out of here I promise. Come on." He held out his hand as the cat approached.

He saw the cat open its mouth and felt a sharp pain but in his dazed state, he didn't realize his hand was gone. "Now now, you be a good kitty or I may have to scold you."

The cat swiped at his arm ripping it open. Blood poured out after the loss of a limb and the tears in his arm, but to him it was nothing more than a simple cat scratch. "Bad kitty!" He yelled. "Quit that!"

The cat jumped in his direction and struck him in the chest. He was amazed when he fell backward and felt a tremendous weight in his chest from a simple cat. For just a brief second, the hallucination faded and he saw reality. It was a lion and he realized it just in time to see its head moving downward. The lion ripped his throat out and roared loudly.

Paragod's eyes glossed over, the look on his dead face was one of complete and utter astonishment.

Pecoswilly and Trachelle both ripped their way through the jungle away from the waterfall. Willy was the first to reach the lake shore. Trachelle came from the jungle less than a minute later. They both stood on the sandy beach beside an incredibly large lake.

"How big is this island?" Trachelle asked looking out over the water.

"Apparently a lot larger than I thought it was." Willy said dazedly. Off to their right was a small fishing boat with a troller motor. On the opposite side of the lake they could see the motel.

"Looks like we can either walk around this lake or take the boat" Trachelle spoke of their situation mentioning a choice when there was only one clear choice for her.

"Boat it is." Willy spoke up. They climbed in the small boat and shoved off the shore. Willy started the motor and they were off toward the motel.

Halfway across the lake, Trachelle saw something very large swim past their boat. She jumped away from the side and watched as it sunk down deeper into the water.

"What's wrong?" Willy asked.

"You didn't see that?" She was startled that he missed it.

"I didn't see anything."

She moved slowly to the bow of the boat and looked down at the water. After several minutes, she turned and shrugged. Whatever it was it obviously had sank into the depths of the lake. Then she saw Willy's face. His eyes were bugged out and he was white as a ghost. "Muh muh muh muh muh" he babbled incoherently.

"What's wrong?" She asked with genuine concern.

Willy lifted his arm and pointed behind her. She turned around and saw a long scaly neck protruding from the water. She followed the neck upward and saw an enormous dragon-shaped head looking down at her.

Trachelle didn't hesitate. She dove out of the boat and swam as hard as she could for the shore. Hoping that the creature would eat Willy and she could make it out safely. Unfortunately for her, it decided she would be a nice main course. The creature went back under the water and moved rapidly in her direction. Willy watched as the beast surfaced behind her and then dove back under with Trachelle in its mouth.

Willy closed his eyes and prayed frantically. Then he felt strange. It didn't feel like he was in a boat any longer. He couldn't feel the water's current bobbing the boat up and down gently anymore. He opened his eyes

and found that he was right. He was no longer in a boat. He was sitting on a bunk. He looked around him and saw cold black stone walls in three directions and a wall of steel bars in the other.

“What the hell?” He muttered and then stood up. He walked over to the steel bars and looked out. He could see that he was in some sort of cave because torches lined the cave walls illuminating the dismal interior.

He was cold and damp from where he’d pissed himself after seeing the sea creature. “It figures I would hallucinate about being in a dungeon but can’t get rid of these wet pants.”

He saw two men coming his way. “Hey, get me out of here.” He yelled out.

They stopped in front of his cell. One of the men was six feet six inches tall. He was relatively lean in build but had a freakishly large head with warts all over his face. The other was merely five feet two inches tall and looked as if his stomach was the same in circumference as he was in height.

The shorter man unlocked his cell and when he tried to step out the tall man hit him under the chin. He flew backward and hit the stone wall. When he woke up his arms were stretched out above his head and his feet were spread far apart. He was bound at his wrists and ankles and he was naked.

The part that disturbed him the most about this nightmare was that there were hundreds of people standing below him and nearly half were females. The women were screaming at him and throwing rocks at him. They pelted his body and occasionally his face.

Two men appeared off to his right and walked in front of him. One was dressed neatly the other was wearing black pants and a black hood over his face. “Thank God he’s not carrying an axe.” Willy thought to himself looking at the man who resembled an executioner.

The well dressed man turned away from the crowd and looked at him. “For the crime of rape, you are hereby sentenced to public castration and self sodomy.” The man paused and looked down at his genital region. “In your case, the latter shouldn’t hurt very much.”

The crowd laughed and yelled out in a mixture of happiness and anger. “What the hell are you talking about?” Willy asked. “I didn’t rape anyone!”

“You deny the charges against you?” The man asked.

“Yes I do.” Willy responded.

The man motioned to someone in the crowd and Willy could see a relatively tall woman walk off to the left and come up the stairs onto the

platform. She looked identical to Cher. Willy couldn't hide his emotions from anyone as the woman approached and the man yelled, "GUILTY!"

"What?" Willy said exasperated. "That's not fair!"

The man with the hood approached him with sheers in his hands. Before Willy could yell for him not to do this he felt the dull sheers rip into his flesh. They didn't cut very well and the executioner had to rip as well as cut. Willy screamed loudly his voice changing pitch as his sentence was carried out.

Then he felt tightness in his ass as the executioner shoved his own body part up inside him. For a brief second he was relieved that he wasn't well endowed, but that faded as the pain was foremost in his mind.

The pain and humiliation lasted for almost an hour. He was taunted and jeered by everyone, rocks continued to pelt his body as he screamed and professed his innocence. He closed his eyes and wished for the nightmare to end, but it didn't. He hung there for everyone to see until he bled to death from his wound fifty four minutes later. As soon as the life faded from his body, he fell to the ground. The platform was gone, the people were gone and he was back in the boat. The dragon-like creature reappeared and ate his castrated body for dessert.

CHAPTER TEN

Wabbitt and Candysosweet were lost. They were the only two of the thirteen people who went for volcano exploration remaining at the volcano. They'd found a cave and went in to explore, but somehow they couldn't find the exit even though it seemed they'd only traveled a straight path in just a hundred feet or so.

They'd been yelling for help for an hour hoping someone would hear their call and come to their aid. But no one did. Wabbitt sat down on a blackened rock to get some rest. Candysosweet venture just ahead to explore one of the six tunnels that lead out from where they were.

"Stay within earshot please." Wabbitt yelled out.

"Nothing like having a companion when you are hopelessly lost huh?" Candy replied.

They both laughed half-heartedly. Candy didn't go far, she came across an area where a thin stream of lava flowed and turned back. She wanted nothing to do with that kind of heat. Melted Candy wasn't something she wanted to become. On her way back she came across a wide stream of lava. Steam poured upward and the heat was intense. She froze and looked around confused as to how she'd taken yet another wrong turn.

"Hey, talk so I can hear you and find my way back." Candy yelled. She waited for several seconds and got heard no response.

"Wabbitt, can you hear me?" She yelled as loud as she could. The sound reverberated off the cave walls. Certainly she'd hear that.

Again there was no response. Candy breathed a deep sigh of frustration. She backtracked once again and came to where the original thin stream of lava flowed. Only now the thin stream had expanded to six feet across. "HELLO" She yelled. "PLEASE ANSWER ME!"

The lava started flowing over the side of the stream toward her and she moved back quickly. She walked through the tunnel carefully looking for an exit that had to be there somewhere. Then she came to the other stream. It was flowing over in her direction as well. She ran back until she came to the lava once again. The heat was getting to be too much for her. Before long she had only six feet of solid ground left. Lava was closing in on her from both sides.

"Wabbitt please answer me!" She screamed again, this time in a tearful voice.

The lava closed on her quickly, she felt her skin burning from the heat it was emitting. She tried to climb up on the wall of the cave, but lost her

footing and fell back down. She touched the lava with her pinky and shrieked in agony.

Her skin melted off instantly from the lava's heat. "God no, anything but this please!" She yelled.

Suddenly the cave wall in front of her opened up slightly. There was a hole big enough for her to climb through and she did not hesitate. She crawled through the small opening quickly and continued crawling to the other side. When she reached the next opening, she carefully climbed down. She was in an enclosed cave room. There was no other exits. On the bright side there was no lava either.

She felt a cold wind blow through her hair and shivered. The artic-like air was coming from the very hole she'd just crawled out of. The air blew in more forcefully now she moved away from the hole and looked for another exit. The room grew colder by the second. The temperature dropped from 61 degrees continually.

She moved around the room rapidly at first but as the temperature dropped, her movement grew slower. She circled the room completely and was back at the origin of the cold air. It was thirty four below zero Fahrenheit by the time she completed the cave room exploration. She decided the only way to survive was crawl back into the hole and hope that either the lava had subsided or the heat from it would warm her inside the hole.

She climbed in against the force of the cold wind. She only managed to move a few inches before she started freezing solid. The air in the small tunnel was two hundred below zero and she was wearing shorts and a short sleeved shirt. She felt her body harden from the cold, she tried to life her hand to move but it was frozen to the rock. She pulled hard and her arm ripped off of her body.

Second before she was about to die from hypothermia, a large section of the tunnel ceiling broke loose and came down on her. She shattered into millions of tiny Candy pieces.

Wabbitt was frustrated and even angered that Candy wasn't answering her calls. She went down the tunnel in search of her. She walked and walked down a narrow black passageway. The cave was illuminated by some unseen source and it made it easier to travail the pathways. She walked until she came to an enlarged open area. Down below her was a deep river of molten lava raging. Up above she could see the dusk sky through a small opening.

"HELLO" She screamed out. "Can anyone hear me? Candy, where are you?"

She looked around the large rounded area. It was obviously the mouth of the volcano, but for the lava to be flowing suggested that this volcano was very active and could erupt at any minute. She expected it to be inactive and what she'd seen to this point had solidified that thought. Just off to her left was a series of metal bars hammered into the rock. The bars led all the way up and out of the volcano. She cautiously stepped on the first one to test its strength. It supported her weight perfectly with no sign of collapsing or pulling free from the rock.

She decided that obviously since Candy never returned nor answered her that she climbed out safely. Without regard for her safety, she began to ascend out of the volcano. Her thoughts were solely on getting the hell out of this place and this was obviously the shortest route.

She climbed swiftly with no worries at all. She reached the top and placed her left hand out of the volcano and onto the earth above. She went to take another step up and the metal bar fell out. Fortunately, her weight was balanced by both hands and her other foot. She decided not to take anymore chances.

She put her second hand on the earth above and placed both her feet on the same metal bar. She looked down to get an idea of where she need to step for safety and brought her left leg up to the next bar. When she was bringing her right leg up she felt the bar dislodge from the wall and she thrust her weight upward quickly.

She flipped out of the volcano's mouth and over the side. Unfortunately for her, the side she flipped out of was a steep cliff. She tried grabbing at the side of the cliff for something to save her. Her right hand snagged a rock ledge, but her velocity had already increased by then and her wrist snapped. She continued to plunge to the earth below. She closed her eyes and braced for the impact that would most certainly be fatal. After nearly a minute and no collision, she opened her eyes and all she could see was darkness. She looked down just in time to see what appeared to be the lava river just before she plunged into the fires of hell.

Jannelly was loving life. The water was a beautiful clear blue. Abalone pulled right off the side of the rocks in her hands instead of requiring a special tool to pry them off. These weren't the seven or eight inch red variety that she was accustomed to, these were twelve to fourteen inch pink abalone. She was told of them before diving and brought along a pouch to carry them. After just six, her pouch was completely full. She glided through the water looking down at the beautiful coral and exotic fish just beneath her. The water in this area was relatively shallow to the rest of

the island. It was explained that eighty percent of the island went straight down under the water, while the part they were in sloped out twenty feet.

She swam to the deepest part of the slope. It was about sixty feet below the surface. She looked up and saw four small blue and black sea snakes swimming directly above her. Her heart began to pound and she decided it was time to get out of the water. She turned to go back and saw a longer one swimming just a few yards from her.

She swam toward the shore and surfaced. She'd gone down too far. There was a steep rock face that went up hundreds of feet where she currently was. She needed to go back down about twenty yards to reach the beach area once again. She dove down just below the surface hoping to swim above the vile slimy creatures. But several swam in front of her blocking her path to the beach.

She stopped and held her position praying they would swim away, but they didn't. They started coming toward her. She dove deeper and saw a small cave with some form of incandescent light emitting from it. She looked around her and there were hundreds of sea kraits in the water now, none near the cave. She opted for the cave.

She swam into the cave and followed it back about twenty feet. The water got shallower as she went until she was able to stand up. She stood up and realized she was in a cavern that had a water entryway. A truly rare find. Quickly she moved away from the water onto the rocky surface of the cave before the snakes could follow her. She removed her scuba mask and tanks and took a deep breath of fresh air.

She looked around her astounded by how lighted the cavern was and figuring that somewhere there had to be an opening that led out other than the watery entrance. Small reflections of the light glistened from the rock walls. She examined the walls closely and her eyes lit up. There were precious gems as far as the eye could see, millions of diamonds, rubies, emeralds and sapphires. She pulled at one of the diamonds and it freely came out into her hand. She dumped the abalone out of her pouch and filled it to the brim with diamonds.

She picked up three of the abalones and carried them in her hands as she ventured farther back into the cavern. Stalagmites came up from the cavern floor where drips from stalactites formed over thousands of years. It was an awe-inspiring site and enabled her to completely forget about the snake experience she'd had not long before.

As she walked further and further into the cavern it began to get darker. She moved quicker and deeper into the cave. Suddenly she heard a

low growl coming from up ahead of her. It wasn't like anything she'd heard before. She froze in her tracks and listened.

The growl came again. It was a low guttural sound, unlike that of a cat or dog. She progressed slowly after several minutes of not hearing anything further. The cave grew more narrow but she could tell the dimming light source was ahead of her. She took each step cautiously, looking around for any sign of danger.

She passed an area where the rock protruded from the wall and something lunged out at her and bit her in the leg. It was enormous and though she didn't stick around to find out what it was, she knew she didn't want to play with it. She limped forward quickly, and out of the cave into a thinly vegetated jungle area.

She looked down at the bite on her leg. It wasn't bleeding badly so she didn't panic too much. She looked behind her and there was no sign of anything following her. After twenty minutes she came to a clearing and could see the enormous hotel about a half a mile ahead.

The problem was she was weakening rapidly and could not understand why. She decided to sit down on a rock to rest and examine the bite on her leg. The area where she was bitten had turned black. The teeth marks were small and didn't seem to have gone in too deeply. Her balance became an issue and she fell forward. A feeling of being drunk swept over her and no matter how many times she tried to stand up, she fell over.

Then she heard that same growl she'd heard in the cave. It was coming up from the area she'd run from. She started crawling toward the hotel in desperation. She looked behind her and screamed. Prodding toward her at a leisurely pace was a komodo dragon, twice the size of a normal male. He was twenty feet long and 380 pounds. She crawled as fast as she could and tried once again to stand up, but her balance was shot. She'd watched enough Animal Planet Television to realize that the reason she was feely woozy was because of the bacteria injected into her from the dragon's bite.

She took a quick glance behind her and screamed again, now there were three of the monsters coming in her direction and they were gaining on her. Her heart rate increased sending the deadly bacteria coursing through her veins at an accelerated rate. She slowed down considerably and then blacked out just as she felt one of the beasts bite her foot. The dragons feasted on her long after her heart stopped beating.

Night fell over the island quickly. Inside the motel twenty four guests were entering the grand ballroom for a Halloween Party. Henry and his

assistant Mono greeted the guests as they entered and directed them to their tables. There was six tables set up with four seats at each.

Henry stepped up on the stage after everyone was seated. "Welcome to the Halloween Ball." He began. "First let me announce that a ship is en route to provide your safe passage back to San Diego, California. It will arrive at nine o'clock tomorrow morning."

He smiled at everyone and continued. "Your dinner is going to be served buffet style. Starting at table one, please go to the tables at the left and serve yourself as you go down the line. If we run out of anything inform my assistant Mono and she will be happy to refill the item for you. At the conclusion of dinner there will be a DJ playing music for your entertainment and the bar will be open all evening with free drinks. We here at the Sultan's Dream Resort on beautiful Fantasy Island hope that you enjoy your stay."

He stepped off the stage and walked toward the exit. Rdavids cut him off before he could leave. "Why is there seating for twenty-four when we had forty-five people five hours ago?" He asked suspiciously.

"Several of your fellow Cinatas Pacific passengers elected not to join the festivities this evening. It seems the traumatic events of the day were too trying for them. They are being served dinner via room service and are, of course, welcome to join you at any time." Henry said confidently.

Rdavids was still a little suspicious, but at the same time he could understand that the tragic loss of life they'd endured could be trying for most people. He nodded at Henry and walked over to the dinner line. Henry watched him walk away with a smile on his face. With every step the man took from him, the smile faded and became a scowl, his eyes turned from green to black. He hated being questioned by anyone, especially a human. He turned and left the party before his temper exposed him for whom he really was.

Everyone was finished eating and the party had begun in the grand ballroom when the moon arose full in the night sky outside. The water where the Cinatas Pacific had sunk began to bubble and shadow emerged onto the beach. The moved slowly and steadily up the path toward the motel. Around the island other figure rose from various areas and also headed toward the motel as if drawn by a magnet.

The DJ began by playing Halloween songs. Monster Mash, Living Dead Girl, Ghouls on Parade, Zombie Jamboree then he started party music off with Great Balls of Fire. Several people hit the dance floor. Rex2 jitterbugged with Wiccan Lydia, David and Fireangel02 also jitterbugged or tried to. David danced more along the lines of Steve Erkle than Benji

Schwimmer. But Fireangel02 indulged him anyway and fought back laughter.

Rdavids danced with not one but two women, Diva420 and Bumsie9 joined him. AJW and Pammie danced as well and their dancing technique drew more laughter from onlookers than David's did. In fact, David was glad to see them dance because he didn't feel as badly. The only other man at the party abstained from joining the dance floor fiasco. Boris opted to instead indulge in some exotic cocktails.

As the party raged on, the clumsily moving figures entered the hotel's front doors. They broached the grand ballroom initially without drawing any attention. By the time one of them grabbed Danigirl from behind causing her to scream, they had completely blocked the ballroom exit. Danigirl was in the clutches of what once was McGowan007. Her face was still recognizable, which was more than could be said for most others.

McGowan007 ripped the top of Danigirl's head off with amazing ease and feasted on the grey matter contained within. She was joined by several others for the feast as well.

Boris looked down at his drink and then over at Danigirl's head being picked at hungrily like a smorgasbord for sumo wrestlers. He decided to toss his drink away. This couldn't possibly be happening.

He turned around and saw a skeleton standing behind him. Some muscle and tendons remained and it was obvious the person hadn't been dead for long.

"Who or WHAT are you supposed to be?" Boris asked in an inebriated voice.

"I'm Jannelly" the skeleton responded.

"I hate to tell you this, but you have definitely looked much better." Boris said. "What do you want?"

******CLICK******

Boris looked at her strangely as she sang "I wanna be bad". When she was finished he muttered. "Well, you definitely look the part now."

Suddenly two eastern brown snakes shot out of her eye sockets and bit him in the neck, one on each side. He backed away from her but the snakes held their bite. Their venom continued to course out of their fangs. He grabbed the snakes and pulled them off his neck, but it was way too late. He looked at the snakes and recognized the breed instantly. "Well shit" He said and fell to the floor. Quickly a swarm of flesh eating undead ripped open his head and snacked hungrily on his brains.

Cabbie had her head opened like a ripe melon by IndianaRose and IndianaWoodie. Jonilee was attacked from behind by Paragod and Sampire suffered the same fate as Katsue attacked her.

The scene in the grand ballroom was chaotic to say the least. Zombies, skeletons and even partial skeletons moved throughout in search of a fresh victim. Bumsie9 screamed in the corner, she was trapped by what once was Fallon and Kcinick. They ripped at her head pulling out clumps of hair. She screamed and fought them, but they continued to pull her hair out until there was none left to remove. Then Fallon ripped open her skull and had a delicacy he'd once seen someone else prepare even though he preferred the taste of testicles, this wasn't bad either. When he had his fill of brains he went in search of his favorite meal. He saw Rex2 inching closer to the exit door and smiled. He moved in that direction drooling hungrily while staring down at Rex2's crotch.

Fireangel02 and Botridingbabe were cornered with nowhere to go. Smokinnn, Irish Eyes and Sudit approached them staring at the top of their heads. Fireangel02 grabbed one of the kerosene candles off a table as they backed past and threw it at the zombies. Botridingbabe acted quickly and set fire to them with her lighter. It didn't even phase the undead creatures they closed in on them and ripped at their heads.

Fireangel02 managed to crawl away from the fiery trio and climbed to her feet. She took just one second to look back and realize that it was too late to save Botridingbabe. That one second cost her dearly. Two more of the undead swarmed her and ripped open her skull. Maresy and Morsky became an open delicatessen for six zombies that were formerly Paineternal, Fibber, Fishnfool, Softie, Ladyace and Seco.

Outside the volcano erupted on the island spewing lava everywhere, from the lava sprung fiery demons. The demons moved in the direction of the Sultan's Dream Resort, actually titled Satan's Nightmare Resort. The entire island shook from the explosion, as bad as things were inside, no one could possibly realize they were worse outside.

Rdavid's was the first to run freely out of the grand ballroom exit. Just as he cleared the doorway Henry greeted him. "I was hoping you'd make it out of there. I want you personally."

"What are you talking ab..." Rdavid's did not get a chance to finish this sentence before he felt a hand close around his throat. He grabbed at his neck but there were no hands there. Henry lifted his clutched hand into the air. With it Rdavid's lifted off the ground.

AJW ran out of the grand ballroom. "Help me." Rdavid's squeaked out from eight feet in the air.

“Sorry pal, you’re on your own!” AJW ran past them and out the front door.

Henry spun his index finger around in a circular motion slowly at first and then rapidly. Rdavids spun in the air like an elevated top. Flea ran out into the lobby and saw what was transpiring. She looked at Henry angrily and said, “What are you doing to him?”

Henry’s face changed in front of her. Horns jutted from his skull, his eyes turned black as onyx. His mouth and nose protruded outward in a wolf-like snout. “What business if this of yours” He roared.

“None whatsoever” She said timidly and ran out the exit doors.

Henry moved his hand up swiftly and then let it fall to his side. Rdavids rose rapidly into the air, slammed against the ceiling and then fell hard to the stone floor. He crawled slowly toward the exit. Henry stopped him by placing his foot on his back. Rdavids felt a sharp pain in the middle of his back as Henry’s foot changed into an enormous paw, a six-inch claw jammed into his victim. He bent down and picked Rdavids up by the back of his head.

He turned him around and held him inches from his face. The beast’s breath was putrid and Rdavids wretched from the stench. Flames shot out from the beast’s eyes and burned into Rdavids’. His body flopped around like a trout freshly pulled from a stream. His mind burned with one final image, that of his longtime companion Patches. His wonderful blowup doll. His head burst into flames and Henry laughed as his skull blackened.

Pammie, Barb and Bobbi all escaped the resort and ran into the ash filled night air. Rex2 was about to join them when Fallon grabbed his balls and tried to rip them off. “What the hell are you doing?” He yelled and hit Fallon hard in the face. The force of the blow caused Fallon to loosen his grip and fall backward, that was all Rex2 needed to run out of the grand ballroom, through the lobby and out the exit doors.

Fallon’s frustration was obvious in his face. He stood up and perused the room with his eyes. A smile crossed his face when he saw Boris’s body lying close by. His body was in tact from the neck down and that was all Fallon needed to enjoy his new favorite delicacy.

Diva420 fought valiantly, she had been able to shove away would be attackers with a chair and work her way to the ballroom exit. She had just turned to run out when something grabbed her from behind. She was pulled backward into the ballroom and slammed down hard on the floor. The smell coming off the zombie was one of feces and it was a potent one.

“Jesus, what happened to you?” Diva420 asked.

“It was not me, it was Reddeb!” Deb’s decayed and feces filled body yelled. “Besides that, it was chocolate!”

Deb ripped open Diva420’s skull angrily and ate hungrily. After just a few bites, she felt a rumble in her stomach.

****Yep, you know what happened next. ☺****

Amanda Panda was initially hiding under a table, this seemed successful until Skully’s undead body overturned the table and exposed her. She looked around in a panic and saw that only Skully stood between her and the exit. He grabbed at her skull, she moved quickly and he snagged her hair. She pulled free, yelling as a handful of her hair was pulled out at the roots. She sprung toward the ballroom doors, dashed through the lobby and fled into the night.

Stardust was pissed off, she hadn’t had a chance to eat and she was hungry! She sniffed the air and smelt a familiar scent. A smile crossed her lips and she moved in the direction of the stage. She moved slowly to the curtain behind it and stopped. She sniffed carefully and when she was right where she wanted to be she grabbed at the curtain. She pulled it and the person behind it out onto the stage.

Lolita jumped up and tried to run, but she didn’t make it. Stardust grabbed her by the neck with one hand and ripped open her skull with the other. She bit down into the grey matter and rose back up chewing hungrily. Her face covered in blood and her eyes beaming with happiness. “Not a lot there, but it sure taste good.” She said and dove back in for another bite.

David crept slowly past Fallon eating. He took one look at what Fallon was eating and decided the hell with creeping slowly. He ran as fast as he could toward the exit door. The beast formerly known as Henry stepped in front of him. He slammed into the beast and bounced backwards into the ballroom. The beast held out his index finger and pointed it at David’s crotch.

“Oh please, just kill me! Don’t do that!” He felt a ripping sensation in his sac and then his legs spread apart against his will. Then his arms flailed out, being pulled by an unseen force. The pressure increased drastically and Davis was ripped into four separate pieces. Fallon was the first to explore the fresh meat with a hungry smile on his face.

Mono stood watching the melee. She felt safe, after all she’d been dead for over two hundred years what could they possibly do to her? She found out the answer to that question the hard way as a group of ten zombies attacked her. They tore at her skull severing her head from her body and bit hungrily at it. The look of utter surprise was embedded on her face.

Wiccan Lydia used natural spells and she cast them rapidly. She knew the zombies were attacking a certain scent. She merely had to cast a spell on them that removed that scent from her. She smiled confidently as she walked toward the ballroom doors. That smile faded when she saw the beast standing there wagging his finger back and forth saying, “uh uh uh” while shaking his head.

Suddenly an onslaught of undead swarmed on her from all directions ripping at her ferociously. She tried to fight, but it was futile, she fell to the floor headless.

Bedrmiiz floated high above the ballroom looking down at the chaos. She had transformed into her nightly form just in time to survive the undead feast. Her dark grey cloak flapped lightly with the air from a nearby ceiling fan. Her darkened face masked her disgust at what was happening before her. The beast looked up at her and she felt his gaze. He could easily cause her to fall amongst the gruesome crowd below.

She looked at him nervously. He gazed up at her with a pondering look. Finally he made his decision. He smiled evilly, turned and walked away into the lobby. She breathed a deep sigh of relief. She would hover here for as long as it took for these atrocious beasts below her to finish their disgusting meal.

End Chapter Ten

The finale of the story will be tomorrow night. To hear it first and LIVE, go to www.radioinsanity.net and tune in at 6:30 p.m. c.s.t. If you are wondering what that is, it's my new Internet Radio station. If you don't have Winamp, I'd suggest you get a copy beforehand, people have had problems with Windows Media Player and as you can imagine I haven't had time to work on it!!!

FINALE!!!

The scene outside wasn't a whole lot better than inside. Amanda Panda was the last one to flee the building and she ran smack into an army of fire demons. She ran back toward the resort and past it down the other side, but they had that area covered as well.

She thought quickly and ran back to the resort once again and jumped into the swimming pool thinking that the fire could not get to her there. The water was ice cold initially and she found it hard to catch her breath. She positioned herself in the area that was six feet deep so she could periodically jump for air.

By the time she made her second resurface the pool was completely surrounded by the fire engulfed creatures. She quickly went back under as one launched a ball of flame at her. It touched the surface of the water and fizzled out. The water began getting warmer rapidly. She surfaced again and saw that all of the demons had placed one of their arms into the pool. The outer edges were bubbling and she knew it was only a matter of time before she was cooked.

She swam to the shallow end and stopped about four feet from the edge. The water was extremely hot and her skin was burning. She jumped to her feet and tried to run out of the pool past the demons. They grabbed her and the heat burnt through her skin down into her body. She died as her organs melted inside her chest and her blood came to a boil.

Barb had her own close encounter with the fire demons only they encircled her quickly leaving her no possible escape route. She took the only viable option available to her and climbed the nearest tree as far up as she possibly could. When she looked around she saw a cliff to the right and her thoughts were, "If this tree comes down, please don't let it be that way!"

The demons set fire to the base of the tree. The flames climbed slowly toward her and she inched higher as they did. The trunk of the tree burned through equally as fast from the intense heat emanated from the demons. She heard the sound of the tree cracking at its base and felt it shift to the right. She knew before it happened that she would not survive this.

The tree fell slowly at first then more rapidly. She went off the edge of the cliff and tried to free herself from the tree in the remote hope of a potential safe landing. She hit the rocky surface below before she knew it was going to happen. Her head smashed open like a pumpkin spilling her brains onto the sand where crablike creatures anxiously dug in for a feast.

Pammie was running blindly down the path they'd all come up initially. She and the others had gotten past the line of fire demons and now had to contend with everything else the island had to offer. In the darkness she tripped over a tree root and tumbled down the hillside. When she came to a stop, she rubbed her head and looked up at the sky. Once she'd regained her bearing she stood up and surveyed the area for potential danger.

Her eyes locked on a figure standing approximately fifteen feet away. In the moonlight she could identify the person, but considering they were not one of the forty-five people who were thought to have survived she erred on the side of caution and backed away slowly.

"Where are you going?" Ellie said with a smile. "It's me."

"How did you get here?" Pammie asked suspiciously.

"I don't know. One minute I was under water, the next I was floating safely on the surface. I saw the island and swam over."

Pammie considered this answer. Ellie didn't resemble those insatiable monsters in the ball room but something just didn't seem right. She stopped moving backward and stood her ground about thirty feet away from her long time friend.

"Are you injured?" She asked Ellie.

"No, I never felt better actually." Ellie responded still smiling sweetly.

"I don't know what to do here." Pammie said. "How do I know I can trust you?"

Ellie laughed now, her laughter was not that of her friend but of something sinister. Ellie pulled her head off and held it in her hand. Then her eyes took on a deep reddish glow. "It's not me that you should be worrying about." Ellie disconnected head said laughingly.

"What does that mean?" Pammie was freaked out by what she was seeing but trying hard to maintain calmness.

"Look behind you, silly." Ellie said.

Pammie turned slowly, terrified at what she was about to encounter. She looked behind her and saw nothing but darkness and the trees. "There's nothing back here." She said and turned back to the nightmare that was formerly her friend.

"Exactly!" Ellie shrieked from inches away from her. Marie Laveaux's soul shot out of Ellie and into Pammie through her eyes. "I will live again!" She screamed into the night.

"Oh no you won't" A male voice spoke out.

The transformation into Pammie was complete and Ellie's body dropped to the ground. "You!" Marie yelled out from her new body.

“I believe I owe you a debt, I always repay my debts.” Hannibal Lector’s ghoulish body said smiling. He lashed out and before Marie could react, a blade sliced through her neck and beheaded yet another encapsulated soul.

Pammie’s body fell to the ground next to Ellie’s. They were positioned in just the exact manor so that Pammie’s body now had Ellie’s head lying on it and Ellie’s body appeared to have Pammie’s head. Hannibal chuckled at the sight and though he wanted to carve out a midnight snack, he knew that wasn’t going to happen. The life left his body and he too fell to the sand.

Bobbi and Flea ran to the edge of the island, down the beach and found a small cave. They ran inside and cowered. Both were breathing heavily from the run and both were shaken beyond belief.

“What do we do now?” Bobbi asked.

“I don’t know” Flea responded.

“Die” a voice said from inside the cave behind them.

They jumped forward ready to run, but firm hands grabbed the top of their heads. They couldn’t move. They started trembling uncontrollably. Bobbi’s mouth flew open and flames shot out. Simultaneously, flames shot out of Flea’s eyes. The smell of burning flesh filled the air as they burned from the inside out under the hands of King Handasu. When they were nothing more than blackened skeletons he dropped them and disappeared into the darkness.

The island began shaking violently. The force was the equivalent of a ten point oh earthquake. Rex2 was off the path and the shaking earth cost him his footing and he tumbled down the hillside slamming into trees and small rocks as he went. By the time he landed at the base of the hill he was badly bruised with a broken rib and a broken left arm. Adrenalin enabled him to pull himself up and walk to the water’s edge. The island started to sink and the water climbed up the bank quickly.

Rex looked around and saw a piece of driftwood floating away as the island went down. He dove into the water and swam to the wood. He clung to it and watched as the island sank into the deep. “Return to hell damn you.” He muttered.

AJW found the same safety net on an opposite side of the island. He shoved a large log into the water and clung to it tightly. He knew that if the island sank completely under water, there would be a down current that would take him down with it so he kicked fervently away from the island.

Bedrmiiz felt the island sinking from inside the ballroom but she was trapped. The entryway and lobby were packed with the undead and they

were all looking at her, the only fresh meat remaining. She knew she had one chance and one chance only. She swooped down at the entryway in a last ditch effort to escape. She made it past the initial group of flesh eaters but was grabbed and pulled down before she could make it out of the lobby area.

Before they had the chance to feast on her flesh, the lobby filled with water. She tried as hard as she could to escape the quickly sinking island once they released their grasp. The island sank quickly into the dark blue water and by the time she made it to where she could swim upward, it was too far. She died knowing that she would return yet again to perform her banshee duties in the future.

Rex2 started paddling late. The current grabbed him and pulled him toward the area where the island sank. He fought hard to not go down into the ocean depths and was at the outer fringe of the whirlpool when something grabbed him from under the water.

He looked down to see Fallon's smiling face looking up at him. He kicked feverishly, but the extra weight latched on to him made escape impossible. When he realized that it was hopeless, he let go of the log and drifted under the water.

He grabbed Fallon by the shirt and pulled him up to the surface with all the strength he had left in him. As they drifted toward the center where the island sank he pounded on Fallon's mouth. His knuckles grew more bloody and bruised with every blow but Fallon's teeth shattered as well. "I may be going to die, but by the time I'm done you won't be able to chew so my jewels are going with me!" He shouted just before he was sucked down beneath the water for the final time.

AJW watched the island sink. He saw Rex2 fight his losing battle and succumb to the suction of the island's descent into the ocean. He wished he could help, well sort of. "Better you than me my friend." He thought to himself and said a small prayer for everyone who had lost their lives over the past 48 hours.

Off in the distance he saw another island. It was hidden by the island from hell previously, but it stood clear above the ocean surface now. He decided that was probably the real Island X and kicked in the direction. He saw his watch reflecting in the moonlight as he moved slowly toward safety. It was 11:59 p.m. He smiled at the thought of surviving the Halloween from hell. Suddenly, the enormous creature that had eaten Trachelle and Pecoswilly arose behind him. He didn't know what hit him when the monster swallowed him at exactly 11:59 and 59 seconds.

THE END

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