



A REAPER TALE

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An EXtreme Horror apocalyptic Novella

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WARNING

Before You Proceed

I'm not one to declare warnings or "triggers", but I did want to catch a line here to state that yes, this book contains scenes of extreme horror, both mentally and bodily. There are scenes of some seriously intense violence, body horror and unusual events that should be considered before you proceed. This book is NOT intended for those that are easily offended or appalled by extreme acts of horror, triggers and sickening scenarios. Please take caution before you proceed. Please enjoy at your own discretion.

CHAPTER ONE

The intense gold color swirled in my tumbler as I stared down at the fiery liquid housed in the glass container. It's nutty tang and hint of spice aroma wafted up my nose as I inhaled the sultry fragrance of the single malt Scotch. Glenlivet Twenty year to be exact. I didn't typically drink, but when the mark took his sweet ass time fiddling with a porterhouse oozing myoglobin against the milk white plate, there was definitely time to kill.

I watched in rapt attention as he cut a cube of dead cow before dipping it delicately in a muddled liquid of juice and seasoning before stuffing the cubic inch of dead animal into his mouth. His jaw flexed, relaxed, flexed again as he chewed the hunk of meat. Part of me envied the simple fact that he felt as if he had all the time in the world to enjoy his meal. His last meal that will be shoveled down that gullet of his.

Taking ahold of the big beer stein in front of him, I watched as he gulped the brown liquid in rushed anticipation as the beverage caused his brain to cloud with a drunken daze. Satisfied his thirst was quenched, he set the big glass stein on the table before he resumed the process of cutting the last bit of meat before stabbing it with his fork to insert into his mouth. Licking his lips freeing them from the shiny liquid that dribbled out, he

fetches his wallet out of his back pocket throwing down two one-hundred-dollar bills on the table.

Shoving the chair back that he was seated upon, he looked down in accomplishment at either the finished steak, beer or generous tip before he set about leisurely walking to the front door. His saunter made his gate look as if he had a bad hip, but to him it must have made him feel like the king of the world. I laughed to myself as I downed the last of my tumbler before standing up myself. The three twenties I laid down gave me an ear to ear grin from the shaggy headed bartender who had been doing his best to get my number all night. Poor guy didn't realize his number would be coming up in just a matter of days.

Reaching my pristine bone white Cadillac CTSV, I hopped behind the wheel of my steed, pulling out of the parking lot behind Mr. Beefy. His alcohol induced haze caused his driving to be rather erratic as he ping-ponged off the yellow striped centerline and the white solid line defining the shoulder. Looking down at the speedometer, I watched as the needle topped one hundred before his taillights started fish tailing on the damp asphalt of the two-lane blacktop. His green Camaro pushed even harder fighting for traction while he pressed his foot into the accelerator sending the car to a buck twenty.

Peering down at the little silver pocket watch, I read the remaining time as five minutes till zero. The poor mark must be absolutely inconsolable knowing that his time was nearly up. As if on queue, I watched the only monstrous red oak on this strip of road approach at an alarming rate. The speed the cars were travelling would crinkle the car like a soda can. I eased off the accelerator knowing all too well what was about to happen.

Instead of brake lights, I watched as the car suddenly veered right, off the road, through the little strip of grass before slamming front first into the

old oak. The taillights of the Camaro jumped up before settling back down on the ground where the hazards now flashed an amber beacon of an emergency. If I was lucky, I wouldn't have to talk this one through.

CHAPTER TWO

The green car no longer resembled anything similar to the beautiful Camaro it once was. Instead, the crumbled hunk of steel, plastic and rubber lay mangled in a mess of crunched metal and misshapen body panels. Wrenching the door open, I let out an exhaustive breath as I saw my mark laying against the steering wheel. His face a crimson flood of blood as his body reacted to the impact. His teeth lay embedded into the steering wheel where his mouth had made contact. The hairline of his scalp lay folded back from hitting the windshield leaving his white skull exposed to the air. The worst part was the bone that protruded from his nose. The cartilage that held the appendage on, dangled leaving the bone to his nasal cavity completely exposed.

Glancing down at the pocket watch once more, I read the numbers as one minute.

“You have one minute. Make it quick,” I said sternly.

“Who are you,” the man said through shattered teeth and a mouth full of blood.

“One minute and you chose to ask about me? Typical,” I muttered. “It doesn’t matter who I am. What matters is that you are at peace with knowing what happened.”

“I think I am at peace,” the mark said through tears that started to mix with his blood streamed face. “Will I see my wife now?”

“Unfortunately, no! She is on a lesser level than you shall go. Be at peace with your choice,” I said as I leaned in through the mangled wreck and gently kissed the lips of the soon to be deceased. The copper tang of his blood washed over my tastebuds replacing the buttery notes of the Scotch with that of death. Opening my eyes, I broke the kiss while I peered into his eyes watching the white tuft of smoke like plume leave his body. As if you blew a dandelion into the spring air, I watched his soul leave the confines of his gore infused mouth before slowing traveling to my lips. Inhaling sharply, I felt the hot essence of life enter my body as I became his vessel for the final moments of his fleshbagless life.

Walking back to my Caddy, I felt the weight of his soul inside of me churning in a ball of despair. Sitting behind the wheel of the powerful supercharged eight cylinder, I gunned the engine making quick work of the miles between reality and the breaker. Breaking the iridescent veil, I stopped the car at the tolling booth where I stepped out into the chilly realm of the shadow world. Slipping my I.D. card into the machine that looked eerily similar to an ATM, I grabbed a vile off the tolling station wall. Extracting his soul from my body as if I was trying to hack up a glob of snot lodged in my throat, the ectoplasm of life retched out of my mouth as I spit his soul into the vile.

The whitish clear liquid splashed against the walls of the container before I replaced the cork top. Slipping the tiny tube into the chute, I pressed the button hearing the vacuum inhale the new vessel through a series of pipes which would ultimately be deposited into the receiving bin for none other than Death himself. I coveted that role for as long as I could

remember, but in due time I would have that position. Not today, not tomorrow or even in a millennia, but eventually.

“Thank you for your deposit today,” the voice box sing-songed. “Would you like to deposit another soul?”

I pressed the ‘*NO*’ prompt before I removed my I.D. card from the reader. Spinning around, I came face to face with him. The one who sent shivers down my spine in such a way that even the dead shivered.

“Hello Suicide,” his dark husky voice announced.

“Hello Murder,” I replied in a soft voice.

I watched as he shimmied by me in his dark red cloak stained darker in several areas where the blood had stained the fabric. Bits and pieces of bone, skin and muscle still clung to the bottom of his perfectly tailored cloak as he nearly brushed past me to the machine.

Walking briskly to my Caddy, I felt his icy freezing gaze on my back, staring holes of lust throughout me. It wasn’t until I was pushing past the breaker that I finally felt his eyes dissipate enough for me to breathe.

CHAPTER THREE

The broken log that laid flat against the ground felt cool under my touch. It's damp bark covered in tufts of green moss settled beautifully against the back drop that was the dark of night. The shining stars danced high above while the crescent Moon sat there staring to the point even I felt it's cold judging eyes peering into the soulless fleshbag I inhabited.

Raising my hands to allow the moonlight to shine against my pale white skin, I turned them over to see the remnants of the large vertical scar that ran up my forearm. The same forearm where I dragged the sharp razor blade like dagger from my wrist to my elbow. Flaying my skin open as if I was dressing a fish, I watched as the artery flowed the vibrant red elixir of life from my open wound. Death consumed me in minutes as I laid on the tiled floor of my one-bedroom apartment. I shook the memory from my mind as I peered up at the Moon blazing white against the black canvas with holes punched in it.

Reflecting back on the days that I were alive, I couldn't help but to shed a tear at days that were long distant memories. What I didn't miss was being raised in the Catholic Church with a widow who took punishments to the extreme. The thought of kneeling on frozen peas, arms upstretched into the air while saying my Hail Mary until the peas became squished globs

under my utterly destroyed knees caused the shiver to quake through my body so intense I had to stand up. Brushing the back of my robe with my hand, I swiped away any remnants of moss, lichen or dead bark off my garment.

The sudden chime of the bell tolling on the tall oak post in the middle of the square caused me to snap my head around to stare upon the illuminated panel that hung precariously close to falling off. None of the others were back, which meant this one was for me. Gracefully as a dandelion seed on a light breeze, I stepped closer to the read out to see what was displayed.

'Suicide'

'Mark: Kenny Flowers'

'Time: 9:58 pm CST'

Glancing down at my wristwatch, I set the timer for 9:58 before spinning around clutching the fob of my Caddy that sat nestled in my pocket.

CHAPTER FOUR

It never ceased to amaze me at how delicate the human life really is. I have, on the other hand, always been hyper aware at how tragic human death can be. I pulled the Caddy up to the gated residential mansion where I placed my finger on the call button. Immediately, a small zap of electricity flowed through my finger before the gate creaked as the chain drive kicked in. The wrought Iron gate swung open leaving the expanse of the drive in front of me.

Easing on the accelerator, I steered the beast to the side of the front entrance before shifting the car to park. The big drivers door swung open allowing me to step out into the cold brisk air. Glancing down at my watch, I read 9:30 pm on the display. Immediately, I smelled death already in the air which was weird considering I never smelled death this strong around a suicide. Murder was no where to be found which gave me an even bigger pause. Slowly creeping my way to the front door, I depressed the brass latch before pulling the Mahogany old door open. No sooner did the door open, the rush of death hit me like my mother use to do with a belt across my ass till I bled. The smell, in this life, wasn't pungent like you'd remember when you were alive. Instead, it gave off almost a sickly-sweet aroma that wasn't pleasant, but wasn't grotesque either.

Stepping into the kitchen, I marveled at the black granite countertops with the inlaid stovetop. The island housed the sink with plenty of counter space to hold a buffet for an army. As a child, I dreamed of such riches, but in death, all I cared about was the way the Moon, Sun and stars shined.

Seated at the bar, his back towards me, on the other side of the kitchen that stared out into the living room sat a man stark naked with his head in his hands. My Mark. I watched as he lifted his head from his hands where he reached for the pack of cigarettes, pulling out a cancer stick that he placed between his lips. With a flick of the zippo, the yellow and orange flame ignited the end of the cigarette. With a sharp intake of breath, I watched as my mark took a massive drag before exhaling a gust of smoke as if he were a fire breathing dragon.

Looking at the watch attached to my wrist, I read the time as 9:50pm. When a Mark contemplates what he is going to do rather than set about actually doing it, time in my realm slows. That's exactly what was occurring now. What was holding the Mark back was the curious part. A curious part that was answered when I heard the thump of something hard hitting the floor. The Mark never moved, rather took another huge inhale of putrid smoke before exhausting it out of his mouth like a chimney.

Curiosity got the best of me and before I realized it, I had ascended the stairs to the master bedroom where the sound had emanated from. Slowly, I pushed the door ajar to peer into the room curious of what may have made that sound.

Before my brain could register what I was staring at, the hulk sized black cape glided through the air if a breeze had gently blown a sheet hanging from a clothesline. Death himself stood over the decayed corpse of someone way to long decomposed to discern if it was a man or woman.

“Death,” I asked.

“Yes, my child,” he responded.

“Why are you here,” I questioned.

“It seems we have a slight situation that has required my attention,” he answered.

Looking down once again at the bones of the person who lay on the bed, I couldn't help but notice the dried remnants of the bodily fluids that had soaked into the mattress before the flies had their chance to let nature run its course. That's when I noticed the tiny black specs all over the bedroom. Even the opened window was covered in black specs. Nature is a funny thing when it comes to decomp. First, the flies get the smell of death drawing them in like a moth to a flame. Hundreds of them will set course to deposit thousands of eggs upon the rotting remains of the dead where they also feast upon the decaying flesh. When the eggs hatch into little larvae, they set about the task of devouring all they can consume. When the maggots get their fill, they cocoon up in little black looking grains of rice where they lay for ten days. On that tenth day, they emerge from the cocoon as a full-blown fly.

Those black specs around the room were nothing more than fly shit and decomp spread by the flies circling the room.

“What do you mean it called your attention,” I asked.

“Mr. Kenny Flowers here has been dead for months. For some reason or other, I was never alerted to his passing,” Death spoke.

“Wait, so how is my mark here and down there,” I asked, pointing to the floor.

“That's why I'm here. Mr. Kenny here it seems, has alluded Death for way to long,” he replied.

Shaking my head, I spun around making my way back to the door to the bedroom. How Kenny ran from Death was none of my concern. Freeing

him from the shadow realm he now belonged to was all I cared about.

Downstairs, I found Kenny hunched over the bar still puffing on a cigarette. Looking down at my watch, the display read 9:55. Pulling up a stool next to him, I took a seat before I spoke.

“Kenny, what have you done,” I asked.

“I’m not entirely sure,” he said finally facing me.

His face, or where it used to be, was nothing more than a splatter of gore.

“Shotgun or handgun,” I asked.

I watched as he thought about answering before putting the cigarette up to his lips that were nearly detached from his face.

“Neither,” he answered through a puff of smoke.

“Then how did your face get mangled,” I asked.

“Truth be told, I don’t remember,” he said.

“What do you remember,” I questioned.

“I remember that it was Halloween night when I ran out to the store to buy a pack of cigs. I was laying in the bed watching tv, but I don’t remember anything past that,” he said.

“Were you smoking in bed,” I asked.

“I always smoke. A bad habit I picked up college,” he said.

“Were you ever thinking of killing yourself,” I asked.

“Why, yes,” he said. “I was actually thinking about it tonight. I don’t know what’s wrong, but I can’t leave the house, I have a never ending pack of cigs, I’m never hungry and worst of all, I can’t use the bathroom even though I feel like I need to pee.”

“How long has this been going on,” I asked.

“For months,” he retorted.

“You do realize I can help you leave right,” I asked.

“Can you,” he asked.

“I sure can,” I said standing up from the stool. “Come here.”

I watched as he slowly stubbed the cig out into the ashtray that sat next to him. Standing up, his slender naked body writhed to and fro as he tried to gain his balance. Looking into the void where his eyes should have been, I leaned in close as the scent of blood, visceral fear and the stench of bile assaulted my nose. His lips were soft, wet and sticky as mine met his.

“Stop,” Death yelled from the top of the steps.

It was too late. I felt the cold rush of air leave my chest as if I had been kicked by a horse.

“What the fuck,” I screamed out as I watched the man in front of me convulsed before spewing out black tar from this mouth. The sludge gathered at his feet where his body collapsed in a heap. The figure that rose up from the goop was feminine in shape, but covered in moss with various grass adorning her most intimate parts.

“Hello Dear. My name is Mother Nature, but you can call me M,” the older lady soothed.

“The fuck are you doing here,” Death spoke with a heavy growl.

“Why, I am putting an end to all this. To you! To you’re gatherers and most of all to your idea of peace within the realm. These souls are now mine,” she stuttered as she collapsed to the ground in a rush of soil with green leaves still floating in the air.

“I don’t feel so good,” I murmured to Death as he glided down the stairway to me.

“Dear child. You’re time in this realm is done I’m afraid. It is time to move on,” he said, lowering his pale white skull face close to mine, his bone white teeth brushed against my lips.

Astonished, I watched with rapt attention as he lifted a small vile from within his robe. Pressing the vile to his open mouth, I heard the faint rush of air as he inhaled sharply. The white viscous fluid left the vile in a flash before disappearing down his mouth where his throat should be.

“Goodbye my child,” he said in a shaky voice.

DEAR READER

Writing to me is an outlet that I view as fun and treat it as such. I love sitting down at the computer spilling my thoughts onto the keyboard. Sometimes those regurgitated ideas can be emotionally taxing or downright hilarious. I hope you found enjoyment in my little imagination.

If you enjoyed yourself and would like to keep updated on what I have planned or even to see what my messed up brain conjures, please like and follow me here: linktr.ee/authordavidhardy

Hope You Enjoyed 'A Reaper Tale'

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

At the tender age of twelve, I was introduced to the world of horror by none other than Jason Vorhees. That's right. The 80's slasher icon from Friday the 13th. Needless to say, I became an instant fan and have been delving into the realm of all things macabre ever since. I'm an avid reader, writer and horror movie aficionado. In addition to horror, I'm a complete nerd when it comes to all things space. Hell, my day job involves working with space companies. Besides my interests in horror and my fascination of the great beyond, I am a dog dad to my amazing and handsome Dobermans.