

Delirium of Darkness

By

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I ignore the vulgar taunts of the disembodied voice that haunts me day and night, and drop to my knees before the meager altar of my small church. I prayer my trembling hands and gaze up at the crucifix that adorns the unpainted pine wall. "Lord, please hear my pleas."

"We tell you again, He will not listen to the sniveling of a sinner as insufferable as yourself. You are unworthy of His attention, worm."

"Lord," I beg, "please give me strength to see through these machinations of the devil."

The deep raspy voice of evil bellows with haughty laughter. *"We say again, you are unworthy. He listens not to your cries for aid. The only one listening is us."*

"Lord," I plead, "please shine your holy light upon me so that I may be cleansed of these demonic declarations."

"He cares not for you. We are all you have."

Hot tears trickle down my stubbled cheeks as the stink of sulfur stifles my senses. The golden late afternoon sunshine streaming through the windows is devoured by an inky black. The oil lamps hanging from the ceiling burst into flame. Blood, thick and dark as molasses, oozes from the walls and dribbles like bleeding sap.

"Lord," I cry, "please deliver me from this torment of my soul!"

"Pray to us! Only we will liberate you!"

The floorboards curl and crack as searing steam hisses from their seams. Blazing eyes like burning embers appear in the windows and multiply until the flaming lamps are candlelight by comparison. Screeching of claws scoring glass is accompanied by the squealing of swine being slaughtered, assaulting my ears and mind.

"Lord," I shout, "please shield me from these satanic forces!"

The invisible hands of the Angel of Death close around my throat.

"Pray to us while you can still speak!"

The bony fingers squeeze tight.

"Pray to us before you are taken and dragged down into the pits of hell!"

My windpipe begins to compress.

"Pray to us! Invoke our mercy! Do it now, worm!"

With the final breath in my lungs, I wheeze, "Mercy!"

"We are your god now. You pray to us, henceforth."

The pressure crippling my airway releases and I fall onto my hands, panting for air. The burning eyes in the windows wink out into oblivion. The screeching and squealing fade. The inky black recedes, allowing the sunlight to shine through. I blink and the floorboards are unwilted, the oil lamps unlit, and the walls unsoiled. I need a damn drink.

"You drank the last bottle of the sacramental wine days ago and polished off the whiskey yesterday with your breakfast. Get your hat and coat. We're going to the saloon."

I don't argue. I had the same thought. I pick myself up, dust myself off, and head into my single-room living quarters that I converted from a storage space. I slip on my black frock, cover my disheveled brown hair with my black derby, and exit through the back door.

The church sits atop a hill at the end of Main Street. The town cemetery lies stretched behind it, and beyond the tombstones lurk the untamed wilderness of the West, where unbaptized savages live among the coyote, wolves, and bears. I really should replace my rifle that was burned up.

"No amount of black powder and lead bullets will stop what is coming for you."

Overlooking the town on the northern ridge of the valley is a stamp mill and a dam to power it. Rows of cabins for the miners and their families reach from the mill all the way down

to Main Street. A bubbling brook flows from the dam, bisecting the town, to feed the lake at the base of the valley.

As I trek down the hill, I keep my gaze cast forward so as not to look upon the charred remains of the modest house beside the church. Although I refrain from looking, I still hear the echoes of terrible screams. They wake me with cold sweats every night if I don't drink myself stupid.

I march along the wooden plank sidewalk down Main Street passed the prescription drugstore, meat market, tin shop, sheriff's office, general store, and undertaker's office without a single howdy or nod from any of the townsfolk bustling to and fro, and finally reach my destination at the center of town. The Regal Hotel and Liquor House stands pretentious and proud. It's the largest, and also the oldest, building in town.

I stomp my leather boots on the porch and push through the swinging wooden doors. The interior walls of the saloon are painted scarlet and the banisters are painted charcoal. Oil lamps hang from the high ceiling and candles are set on each round table. The workday isn't complete, so it's fairly quiet inside. A few older gentlemen are gambling with cards in the far corner. The dancing girls are chatting amongst themselves on the second floor. Nobody is manning the piano or playing at the billiard tables or dartboards.

The barman is squabbling with his juvenile assistant at the far end of the bar, so I reach over the counter and grab a bottle of bourbon from the shelf. I whistle at the barman and slap payment down. It isn't the first time I've served myself. I grab a glass and retreat to a distant table to be alone.

"You're never alone with us here watching over you, worm."

I pull out the cork and pour until my glass is full to the brim.

"Go ahead and try to drink us away. It's always fun watching you stumble around, making a fool of yourself. We enjoy it most when you squawk like a madman about the end of days."

I drain my glass in one quaff and pour another.

"There you go, you'll be blabbering on about raining fire and brimstone in no time."

I lift the glass to my lips, but then a fallen angel catches my eye.

"Sweet Jezebel, look at the flesh on that soiled dove!"

I set my glass down again and wipe the bourbon from my mustache as I gawk at the gorgeous young lady sauntering down the stairs. Her enthralling beauty is accentuated by her emanation of innocence, and her sensual curves are emphasized by her revealing corset dress, a tantalizing triumph of cerulean satin and black lace. Her milky skin appears to have never been touched by the harsh sun and seems to glow like the moon. Her lustrous hair is as red as a hot poker from the flames, and cascades over her slim shoulders to flow in waves to the crest of her shapely fanny.

"We'd love to strap her on the rack and give her rump a good lashing!"

From the foot of the stairs, the fair belle strolls toward my table, her piercing gaze fixated on me. I can't look away. Her dazzling eyes, as blue and vibrant as sapphires, have entranced me.

"You're wearing your clergy collar. She must be looking for redemption. Make her get on her knees and repent with her face in your lap!"

The mesmerizing nymph offers a curtsy for a hello, and I leap up and offer an awkward bow. She affords me her hand. "I'm Ella." The sound of her voice is smooth, with a teasing tone and a cheerful cadence that is seductive. "It's a delightful pleasure to meet you."

“The pleasure is certainly mine.” I take her hand with my own, which still has a slight tremble, and kiss her knuckles. “I’m Father Adams. But we’re not in church. Please address me as Wyatt.”

“I would never dream of it, Father.” She giggles and my cock twitches. “A man of God should always be shown the proper respect. To disrespect one of His servants is to disrespect the Lord.”

I nod in agreement, and resist the urge to quote Matthew 25:40. The voice has forbidden me from reciting scripture.

“Quote her the verse about sowing your good seed in her gullet!”

I pull out a chair and she sits. Her scent is intoxicating, like the fragrant aroma of blooming angel trumpets. “Would you like a drink? I’ll retrieve a second glass.”

“Good thinking! Get her drunk! Then you make her repent!”

She smiles and my heart skips a beat. “Thank you, but I don’t have a taste for liquor.”

“Look at that mouth! We bet she could suck the pit from a peach! Make her get on her knees!”

I suggest, “Coffee or lemonade?”

Ella purrs, “You’re too kind, Father. But I’m not thirsty at the moment. Please sit.”

I do and take a nervous sip of my bourbon. “Are you new to town?”

“Screw the niceties! Ask her if she’s ever been fucked! We wager she’s a virgin!”

“Fresh off the wagon this morning.” She leans forward, palms and elbows on the table, and it’s a strenuous struggle to keep my attention from plunging headlong into the deep swell of her boastful bosoms.

I force my eyes to rise to meet hers. “You don’t look like a miner’s bride to me.”

“No,” she grins, “I’m not here for the silver miners.”

“So why here?” I ask.

“I traveled as far from home as my purse could afford, not fleeing from trouble but seeking my purpose. I let God direct my path.” She narrows her eyes. “He led me to you, Father.”

“She has the vision! Her eye is open! She is a seer!”

I swallow the swelling lump in my throat. “What are you suggesting?”

“You have a gift from God that you’ve been dismissing as hallucinations from withdrawals, except for when you’re loaded. The Lord has given me the same blessing of divine sight.” She bites her lower lip. “If we were to *unite*, we may be able to determine what it is God wishes for us to do.”

“She wants your candystick, worm!”

I clutch my glass and guzzle it down. “I’m not sure I understand your proposal.”

She leans forward further, nearly spilling her buoyant breasts onto the table. “Take me to your church and I’ll help you to understand more fully.”

“She wants you to take her virginity before the altar!”

I pour another glass of bourbon. “That wouldn’t be appropriate.”

Ella rests a palm atop my hand. “Father, I know what happened to your wife and young daughter.”

My jaw quivers and the fine hairs on my neck stand up. “How do you…”

She consoles, “It wasn’t your fault, Father, even if everyone in town believes it was.”

“Their deaths are your fault and the bitch knows it!”

I blink away my forming tears and take a gulp from my glass. “My little darling had hair and eyes similar to yours. And got most of her physical features from her mother, meaning she was quite pretty. If she were to have grown to your age, I imagine she could pass for your sister.”

“You had to take it there, didn’t you, you incest loving deviant.”

Ella strokes my hand. “I’m sorry for your loss, Father. I’m sure they are awaiting you in heaven. If you follow your set path, you’ll be reunited with them when the Lord sees it fit.”

“And you believe our path may be joined?”

“The path leads down her throat and up her ass!”

“Yes, Father, I truly do.”

I finish my glass and cork the bottle. “Won’t you be reprimanded for leaving the saloon before the night’s over?”

She shakes her head. “I was given the night to settle in. I start tomorrow.”

I smile. “Then you’ll need a coat to cover up. If you walk down the street like that, men will be stumbling over each other.”

“You’re good with compliments, aren’t you, Father?” She giggles. “I’ll be back in a jiffy.”

And she does just that, returning with a black duster to conceal her corset dress and a matching felt bonnet to subdue her red mane.

I hold Ella’s hand as we walk up Main Street while the sun sinks below the mountaintops behind us and miners flood into the valley.

“Ella,” I inquire, “do you have any experience as a dancing girl?”

“Screw the formal inquiries and demand to know if she fucks like a French whore!”

“No, my daddy is a pastor. He would not approve of me dancing for the pleasure of men.”

“This hot tamale has daddy issues and you’re the fix!”

“If I may be so bold,” I glance down at her as she looks up at me with an encouraging smile, “why then have you chosen to be a dancer?”

“Well,” she titters, “I didn’t. I simply followed the path. And now that I’ve met you, depending on what we discover together, I may never entertain any man besides you.”

“She wants to be your personal suck and fuck servant!”

My cheeks flush with heat. “No matter what this night brings, let us strive to seek out a better option than working at the saloon.”

She squeezes my hand with affection. “Yes, Father, I agree. The saloon just won’t do. I’m sure we can find something more appropriate for me.”

“Gobbling dick and riding cock!”

“I assume you have experience helping out around a church.”

Ella caresses my thumb with her own. “I do, indeed.”

“Then I suppose, if we can restore the town’s faith in me, I could afford to pay you a wage.”

“That would be delightful, Father.”

We trek up the hill as the indigo sky darkens with the fall of night, and walk around to the rear entrance of the church.

I hand the bottle of bourbon to Ella. “If you would be so kind, I need to use the privy before we go inside. Have you a need for it?”

She accepts the bottle. “I’m fine, Father. I’ll be right here waiting when you’re finished.”

“Thank you, Ella.” I nod. “I’ll only be a minute.”

“You going to pop one off so you’re not going at her with one in the chamber? You want to make her work for it?”

As I trot over to the outhouse, I whisper, “No, I’m merely draining my bladder.”

“You don’t have to speak out loud, stupid. We’re in your head.”

Well, I wish you weren’t, dammit! I step inside the privy and fish my johnson from my trousers.

“Be quick about it, worm. We sense something unfriendly about.”

Unfriendly?! Speak what you mean!

“We’re not talking about wildlife.”

Then what are you referring to?! It’s been years since a savage has been spotted in these parts!

“Whatever they are, they aren’t human. At least not completely human anymore.”

Are you fooling for fun?! What does that mean, *anymore*?!

“We surmise you’re about to find out. They’re headed this way and they’re moving fast.”

I’ve had quite enough of your blasted taunts and deceptions!

“That’s the bourbon taking. Don’t forget we are your god now. You pray to us and only us. We are your only hope of salvation.”

An ear-splitting scream rings out and I spray piss all across the toilet in surprise.

This is the end of the free preview.

The full story is available for purchase at most major eBook retailers.

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