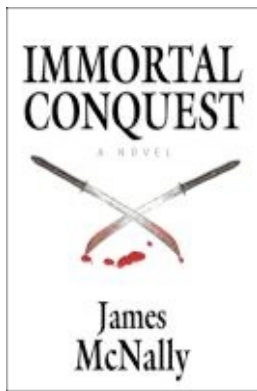


# IMMORTAL CONQUEST

A N O V E L



James  
McNally



*The Dark Father was defeated by Antony and his immortal friends. Next came Minerva, a.k.a. Mother, and she was defeated as well. Now an enemy has resurfaced from Antony's past who is stronger, more ruthless and more violent than anyone he has faced before. Antony and his friends have never been in such peril. The battle lines have been drawn. Brace yourself for the fight to end all fights. Prepare for the immortal conquest...*

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# **Immortal Conquest**

**James McNally**

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ISBN: 978-1-63490-289-2

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Published by BookLocker.com, Inc., Bradenton, Florida.

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Printed on acid-free paper.

BookLocker.com, Inc.  
2015

First Edition

A very special thank you goes out to Lisa Streeter for taking the time to scrutinize this book and point out all the mistakes. She was thorough and brutal, as usual, and I'm very grateful for that. Still, any mistakes herein belong to me and not to anyone who helped me.

This book is dedicated to Debbie Allinger and her husband Ralph. Ralph is no longer with us in body but will always be with us in spirit; and you will always be in our memories. We will truly miss you, Ralph. You have taken the journey to boldly go where no man has gone before...



## Part One: The Pilgrimage

### 1.

The tall man with the slicked back hair adjusted his black leather jacket and pushed the gun shop door open, causing a bell to jingle somewhere. He stepped through the threshold and moved slowly through the store glancing at displays lined up on both sides of the main aisle. He made a mental note of the different types of guns presented in many different positions throughout the displays. The man was not interested in buying any of them. The tall stranger turned his attention to the last two customers the man behind the counter was assisting. The gun shop was nearing its closing time, and the tall man was excited to get his business here out of the way.

Finally the two young men who had been talking to the proprietor stepped away from the counter and headed for the exit. The proprietor followed them.

"I'll be right with you, sir," the proprietor said to the tall man with the leather jacket. "Let me see these fine young men out and I'll be right back."

"Take your time," the man in the leather jacket said.

Abruptly, the tall man with the slicked back hair and leather jacket grabbed the taller of the two customers by the shoulder and pulled him back. The strange tall man spun the younger man until they were face to face. The tall man held him in place and peered into his eyes.

"Hey, man. Leave me alone. What's your problem?" The young man scowled.

The tall man stared deeply – intensely – into the other man's eyes before letting him go with a look of satisfaction on his face, as if he had seen in that man's eyes what he had wanted to see. The young man muttered unintelligibly. "Fag," he said after giving the tall man a look of disgust mingled with a slight touch of fear, and then continued on his way to the exit.

The proprietor glanced at the tall stranger warily. *Is this one going to be trouble?* He thought this, but said nothing. He had been robbed too many times, and that had made him more jumpy than cautious.

When the two customers were on their way down the street, the proprietor locked the door and turned back to the man with the leather jacket. "Is there something I can help you with?" the proprietor asked. "I'm closing and you're the last customer of the day."

The proprietor walked back to the counter and stood on the other side, not liking the idea of being so close to this stranger without something like the counter (or even better would be some bulletproof glass) between them.

The stranger stepped up to the counter, stared at the store owner with a look of mild interest, and then reached into his leather jacket. The stranger pulled his hand out of the jacket and held up the gun that had been in the lining. He studied the gun for a moment, turning it at different angles, and then set it down on the counter.

The proprietor stared down at the gun as though he had no idea what it was. He was afraid to touch it, or look away from it.

In fact, this was a Glock 17c third generation semi-automatic pistol. It was actually very familiar to the proprietor, because only a month ago it had been displayed in his store.

"I...I d...don't b...buy guns here," he said with a nervous stutter. "I only sell."

The stranger pulled out another gun and laid it next to the Glock. He pulled out another, and then a fourth. The proprietor looked down at all four guns in front of him, knowing beyond a shadow of a doubt that they were all once his guns.

"Do you know what these guns have in common?" the stranger in the leather jacket asked calmly. The proprietor's vision swam, and he had to grip the counter to keep from falling over.

"They were all sold by me?" he asked, as if he didn't know if that was the right answer. Tears streamed down his face.

"That is correct, but that's not the answer I was looking for." The stranger smiled, but instead of feeling comforted, the proprietor's



knees buckled. He caught himself before he hit the floor. The stranger gave the store owner a moment to compose himself.

When the proprietor had locked his legs securely underneath him, the stranger continued. The stranger pointed to the Glock.

"This one was used in a drive-by shooting that killed a little girl walking home from the park with her brother," he said.

Then he pointed to the next gun.

"This one was used in a liquor store hold-up. The owner of that store never returned home to his family.

"This one was used by two in a bank robbery in which people lost their lives; and this one on the end...this one I saved for last. This last gun you sold to a man who had just lost custody of his kids in a messy divorce. He used it to kill his ex-wife and two children."

The proprietor was leaning over the counter, using it for support. His hands were clasped together as if praying and he was crying openly now. "They were legal sales," he said defensively. "They were all legal sales. I have no control over what the guns are used for once they leave here. I am clean of these murders." He said this as if he were attempting to convince himself of the fact. The stranger did not seem in the least convinced of his innocence, however.

The store owner collected himself, stopped crying and straightened out.

"You should be going after the men who committed these crimes, not me," he said sternly.

The stranger smiled at him. This was when the store owner noticed the gleaming fangs. The momentary resolve the store owner had managed to build up collapsed like a house of cards when he saw the man's eyes turn from bright blue to fiery red.

"I have already dealt with them. Last night I took the drive-by shooter and his driver. Then I killed the liquor store killer. Earlier tonight I killed the bank robber—who unfortunately had already killed his partner. As for the distraught husband..." The stranger trailed off. He looked around the store, and then back at the store owner. "I took him so recently that I'm still feeling the flush from his blood still washing over me.

“But the dead bank robber left me one victim short. I needed one more infusion in order to complete my nightly feeding. That was when I got the idea of going after the man who sold all these guns to those killers. As far as I’m concerned, you might as well have pulled those triggers yourself.”

“No.” The proprietor shook his head violently.

But the vampire was through talking. In an instant he held the proprietor by the collar, pulling the man toward his open mouth, toward those gleaming fangs. The proprietor went limp, waiting for his imminent death to come.

The vampire had not yet broken the skin when the sound of shattering glass drew his attention away from the food source. There was a moment of confusion when the food was falling away from him rather than toward him. As the vampire’s mind cleared, he saw that there was now a third person in the store. It was another vampire.

“This is not right,” the second vampire said. “This man was only running a business and had no knowledge before, during or after the deaths that you have described. You have the right idea, and I commend you on your previous selections, but this one does not fit the code.”

The vampire in the leather jacket was furious. Who was this blood sucker to interfere with his third transfusion?

“He is guilty of—”

“He is guilty of bad judgment; that is all.” The second vampire pulled the taller man away from the counter by the shoulder of the jacket.

“But...” The vampire in the leather jacket hesitated, and was interrupted by a deafening blast. When he looked down, he saw that his leather jacket was in tatters and a nine inch red hole had appeared in the center of his chest.

The second vampire rushed to the store owner, yanked the shotgun from his grasp and threw it across the room.

“This was my favorite jacket,” the leather-clad vampire said. “Can I kill him now?”

The store owner turned pale.

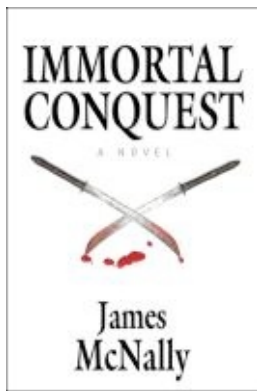
“No.” The second vampire removed his hand from the other’s jacket. Then he turned to the store owner and said: “You must scrutinize your customers more carefully, be more selective. If you do not improve your customer base, my new friend here will return and I will not stop him the next time.” The vampire placed his index finger on the store owner’s forehead and pushed. The store owner fell and landed with a loud thump flat on his back. He was out cold.

The second vampire turned back to the other, who continued to examine the damage to the leather jacket. The hole in his chest had already begun to heal. He shoved his fingers through the holes, wiggled them for effect. “I loved this jacket,” he said.

“We will find you a new one. And I have prey for you. What is your name?”

“I’m Jarod,” said the vampire. “And I’m hungry.” This last was said with a childlike innocence but the words carried an ominous warning.

“My name is Antony Grayson, and I am happy to meet you. Come with me Jarod and never again worry where you will get your next meal.”



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