

Jacob is the child of an abusive domestic circumstance. Mental, physical, and emotional.

Segregated, isolated, and shunned by a judgemental society - a loner, alone, in every sense. His shadow, Lucy, is his only friend. He trusts her with his sanity and soul, but nothing in life is ever free.

In the Shadow of Lust

by Gary Stark

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the Shadow
of Lust



GARY STARK

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One becomes two, two becomes three, and out of the third
comes the One as the fourth.

Axiom of Maria Prophetessa.

The Mother, as God and I stood witness, chose to escape life.

When He took her, I was alone without memory.

They never came back, and I can never leave.

Redemption is a False Prophet, cos Death don't give a fuck.

Extract from Diary.

Alright, alright, I confess I was wrong - you were right

Where you stayed true, I bowed to might

Now before fate, renewed you fight

And I must confess - you were right

M.V.K.

Prologue.

Spread-eagled in chains of incarceration against the wall of this monolithic cathedral, my spine tight against a statue of the Holy Father, I observe my unbreakable shadow.

My shadow has a name, and her name is Lucille. Suspended by her ankles above the luminescent Lake of Fire looking like filthy, hot-battered sex, she commands centre-stage and though bound and gagged, her defiance remains steadfast: bleeding mascara, slathered lipstick, bruised dank hair, she exhales sensuality with every breath, and I feel a rousing in my loins - a subtle shift of blood - so promote my attention elsewhere.

Four brutal Clydesdales stand in attendance, paired left and to her right, reluctant guardians that snort restlessly at her immediate proximity. Their freight of riders remains masked, though identifiable nonetheless. The ancient stench of Politics, Religion, Greed and Bigotry saturates the fetid air and stains the saddles of human leather upon which they reside. They come to offer Judgement, not something they afford themselves. Our peers come to pass sentence, or so they'd have us believe. I wish the cunts dead and will occasion all manner of pain upon breaking these bonds. They know it well, and despite the anonymity of their facial coverings, I watch their eyes slide away when they engage my line of sight. They know my capabilities and are justifiably scared shitless. In their shoes, as would I be: it takes balls to witness the author of your own violent demise.

The surrounding gallery is thick with those of eternal damnation, drafted to observe these proceedings for the record of history; we shan't be forgotten too soon. The rotted and putrefied sit shoulder to bone, flesh and rags of adornment clouding a miasmic stink that paints foul upon teeth. They are nervous, even in death. There are worse states of being, a fact they have learned, and ache to be back under ground.

From behind the vestibule comes the scream of rusted iron, a gateway before the realm of antiquity is thrown wide and the horses stamp echoes upon the mildewed cobblestone floor. Chilled wind flickers candles, belying the blast of scorched air it precedes, and the darkness above shuffles with unseen creatures. There's a restlessness in all: Death has arrived on dark wings and is manifest. Its delusions of grandeur make me smile, one Lucy is

happy to reciprocate, if only with her eyes. We've feasted at its table, strolled through its gardens and fucked at its feet: Death long ago lost its prescription for fear. As it approaches my place of internment, I discover in the landscape of its face no nuance of emotion: It merely exists and possesses nothing of the personal. It strokes a clawed finger down my cheek, draws and tastes blood, offers a vulpine grin. Once we were soulmates - perhaps of an ilk - though ours be an artifice of forgotten lore: the time has come to see what the voluntary forfeiture of our tarnished spirit will demand of malignant flesh.

The carnival of Judgement Day is upon us, and the clowns are in ecstasy. No barrister nor counsel, just a confluence of unmitigated circumstance and irrevocable evidence; nought to ameliorate the facts scattered thick on the indignant ground. Corpses and carcasses, plasma and bone, embers and blades. Mounds upon lumps. No strategy of arrangement, they are cast as the rays of the sun, streaming into every corner and nook of the church's stone floor. Hard to deny such blatant fingerprints, as our signature cannot be imitated any more than waxen paper can be forged from coal. Witnessed once, our craft shall be dreamed of forevermore and nightscapes of slumber permanently interrupted by fossilised screams.

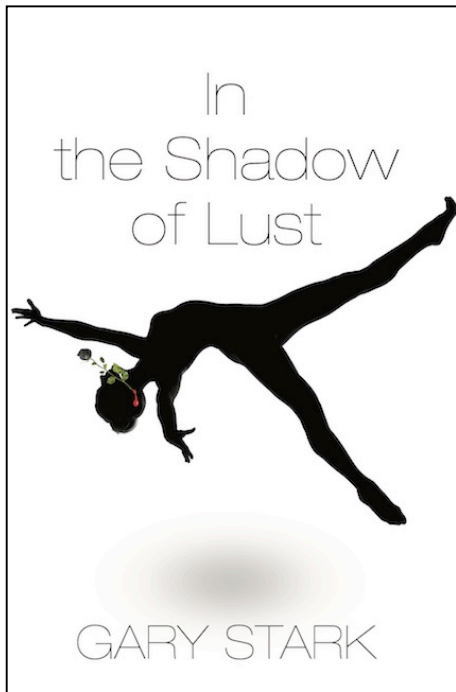
Death employs the pulpit, its sheer presence commanding utter attention in a swollen silence. Lucille may hold my soul, but Death's verdict may hold the end to my immortal animation, the cessation of infinite possibilities and a very bleak future indeed: a prostrated subservience to all things holy in exchange for my charter of bloodlust and carnage. Fear may be absent, but anticipation is an admirable substitute; the Unknown has announced itself as a squirming parasite beneath my skin, breeding and feasting as the host is devoured. I gaze past where my Shadow rotates slowly above the fire, through the broken stained-glass windows at the lightning beyond, trying and failing to conjure a battalion of reinforcements. Seems like we're on our own, a worst-case scenario but not unexpected, given we've killed all that trespassed our boundaries. And many more that didn't.

Death gesticulates at the gore beneath our feet, and its servants shuffle forth, dropping to the ground. They scrape at the putrefaction to reveal a recessed oaken cellar door, its timber tattooed with unfathomable hieroglyphs and indecipherable scripture. From my vantage as they heft, I

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witness blackened marble steps descending beyond my sight, presumably into Hell, perhaps nothing so dramatic; simply a cavernous dungeon, where the disfavoured die of starvation or go insane at the prospect of eternal solitude. Rising footsteps slap sodden from below, rhythmic and reluctant, a percussion of inevitability and the parasite under my skin spasms and thrashes with delight. This can't be good. The stench is an invisible, palatable fog, one that thickens in my throat and waters my eyes; even my half-hearted erection has lost interest, the blood pulsing back into my skull. The absolute silence has been replaced by a chaos of murmurs, interrupted by astonished ejaculations of laughter: the audience, no longer cowed, become actors in the theatre of the demented. The tenants of Perdition are awake, disturbed into seeking vindication for their unrepentant follies. They turn in the singular as does a school of startled fishes, though I see no indicators of fear nor any trace of empathy: only the hunger of long-denied vengeance.

To say that we're completely fucked seems unnecessary, but one's final words are rarely profound.



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