

In the modern world, monsters and magic are around every corner. Ancient forces and secret societies plot to rule over humankind. A group of supernatural beings come together to ward off the forces of evil and keep humans free.

Bound In Blood: A Supernatural Pack Adventure Book 1
By Marshall Smith

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BOUND IN BLOOD



Marshall Smith

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Chapter One: Strangers Meet

The gravel crunched as the Uber pulled away after dropping off its fare, speeding off to collect the next soul that would climb into it. A stranger stood in the settling dust, looking down a long driveway underneath a metal arch with “C Ranch” in gothic lettering between two stone columns. The man dusted himself free of the dust and looked at the Victorian-style mansion. A breeze blew through the trees, carrying the aroma of magnolias with a hint of swamp with it. He inhaled and chuckled to himself, “Well, Mr. Harker, you have done pretty well for yourself here,” as he started toward the house.

Clad in a black duster lined with red silk-like material, a gunslinger-style western hat, loose-fitting jeans, and black silver-tipped cowboy boots, the stranger seemed to float as he approached ever nearer to the big house; no dust stirs from his footsteps along the road wide enough for two vehicles to pass on. A wrap-around-covered porch with an assortment of seats from rocking chairs, patio-style chairs, and at the very end, a porch swing rocking with the breeze, greeted him as he arrived at the house, but not a soul is to be seen. The locusts and birds are chattering, a splash in the neighboring swamp, but nothing to be seen. He stepped up onto the porch and surveyed the surrounding area, closed his eyes, and focused on any sounds, listening as if to find something buried within the sounds of nature. He knocked on the door and waited.

A lad of late teens blasted out the door and appeared to be out of breath. The stranger reached under his cloak but quickly

withdrew his hand. The young man noticed the stranger and quickly gathered himself. “Hello, sorry about that, not every day we get visitors out here.”

The stranger took measure of the lad. “Did you have to run all the way across the house?”

“No, sir, I was, umm, down below—still quite a way from the front door.”

“And you heard me knock all the way down there? Wait, I thought you couldn’t have anything below ground in Louisiana?”

“Oh, our sensors caught movement out here, so I was already on the move, and what the state doesn’t know, well, that won’t hurt them, will it?” The young man laughed. “It’s our little big secret we have here.”

“Uh-huh,” the stranger muttered.

“Oh, please come in, he is expecting you.” The young man was about to burst at the seams now with excitement.

They walked through the grand stained-glass door, and the stranger stopped and surveyed the area. He noticed a grand entryway that would give a fancy hotel a run for its money. He then noticed a grandfather clock against the back wall next to a doorway leading further into the house. To the right, there was a staircase, and to its left was a hallway covered in old portraits of people that you could tell were relatives. He could tell a lot of the house was probably not used much; he could smell the dust and lack of people in the house.

“May I take your coat?” the lad asked, breaking his concentration.

“Uhm, no, thank you. So, where is the master of this establishment that requested my presence here?”

“He will join us in the library, so if you would please follow me.”

They entered a library that was filled with books of all kinds, ranging from children’s books to subjects that very few have probably never heard of, including some items of the occult, from floor to ceiling, and two stories tall. In the middle of the room was a very old, ornate table that stretched almost end to end. There were scratches, cuts, and other nicks and gouges that showed the history of the table was a rough one. A bookcase opened on the other side of the room, and an older, well-dressed gentleman walked in. His button-down plaid shirt was pristine, his khaki slacks looked pressed, but his shoes were sandals, the stranger noticed. The new person in the room had a rag and was wiping his hands of what looked like a type of oil or grease. He tossed the rag onto the table, adjusted his glasses, “Welcome, Mr. Nagy, or should I call you Mr. Dracul?”

The stranger tensed up, “Well, you seem to know who I am. And you are?”

“Please relax. I mean no harm. I am Tom Harkens. Our families have known each other for a very, very, very long time,” the man said. “I just want to talk and see what you have been up to all these years, and to ask for your help with some issues.”

“Well, now that I guess we got the formalities over with, just call me Val.”

“Nice to meet you, Val. Oh, and this young man is Chester. His family goes back a long way, too, with ours,” Tom said, motioning toward the young man.

“Please, sit, and Chester will go get us some food and drink,” waving for Val to sit at the table.

Val took his hat and duster off before Chester had left, and now, he was getting a good look at Val. Val was about six feet two, with very smooth facial features, crystal blue eyes that could pierce your soul, along with some scars. Hanging on his hips was an elegant-looking sword and a silver-plated handgun. He pulled out a chair and gracefully sat down. “Will anyone else be joining us? This is a very big table for just the two of us.”

“We are waiting for a couple more to show up; they should be here soon.”

Chapter Two: The Gathering

Val was looking over some of the bookcases when suddenly one fell off the shelf above him and fell to the floor, making a very loud thud that echoed throughout the library. He didn't think much of it until it happened again; now he was on alert. He took a step back and surveyed the wall when he noticed a book vibrating and floating off the shelf down toward him. His hand went to his sword, ready to draw it, when his ears picked up giggling. He straightened up his stance and kept his back to the giggling. "Nice trick. What's next, pulling a rabbit out of a hat or card tricks?"

"Hey! We can do more than that," a young male voice exclaimed. "Want me to launch a fireball at your head?"

"That won't be necessary, I'm sure we are on the same side, since we are here at the same time."

"You are correct there, Mr. Val," said Tom. "Hello there, Adam. And where is your sister? Usually, y'all aren't that far apart from each other.

"I'm right here, sir," a young female voice spoke up from the second floor.

"Val, let me introduce you to Adam and Jessica. It's not every day that you meet a young mage and a witch who are twins." Tom waved toward the young teens to come nearer.

Two teens, about the age of fourteen, bounced up to the table with smiles a mile wide. They had dirty blonde hair, green eyes, and freckles. They both stood just under five feet tall.

“What's that smell?” Adam blurted out. “Smells like wet dog.”

“Someone is approaching,” Jessica said, looking out the window. “It's also raining outside now.”

A large, tall figure wearing a hooded sweater and blue jeans with what looked like a tail hanging out the back was waiting at the door. “Ah, that would be Mr. Lee,” Tom said.

Chester left the library and ran to the front door to let the new visitor in. He returned with a huge figure of a person, or what they thought was a person. The visitor flipped his hood back and revealed a snout and two pointed ears covered in greyish-blue fur and yellow eyes. He gave what looked like a smile, and they could see his fangs. “Hi there. I'm Lee,” it said.

“Holy shit!!! It talks,” yelled Adam.

“Why yes, yes, I can,” Lee replied. “Do I have the pleasure of being the first werewolf you have met? Don't worry, I don't bite.” He let out a chuckle.

“Why are you in wolf form?” asked Jessica. “It's not dark, and the moon is not full.”

“I was not bitten to become a wolf; I was born one. I could turn back and forth when I was younger, but when I hit puberty, a form was chosen, and this is the one my body felt was the most natural for me. I can still change, but it hurts like a bitch, and I choose not to unless I absolutely need to.”

Lee hung up his sweatshirt on a coat rack and then had a seat at the table. “Alright, Tom, why have you requested my presence here?”

Chester reentered the room carrying a tray full of drinks for everyone. Tom stood up at the head of the table and started to address everyone. "Well, some of us are here, but there will need to be more of you, though. As I'm sure you are aware, there are a lot of things going on in the world, and well, I believe you can help with some of it."

"Wait a minute, what kind of things are you talking about? Humankind has been hurting one another for centuries; our kind mostly lives in the shadows, freak shows, or with the use of magic in the open. Most people think we are myths, legends, and make-believe, that we are just creatures under the bed or such. So why us and why now?" asked Lee.

"I'm not talking about that. Things from the dark are getting restless, and followers of the old ones are gaining strength. Humans won't be able to handle everything when it starts. We are going to need help from that side of the coin, so that is why I have called you here. You're going to need some more allies, though, to get through this. Val, your father, even after all this time, seems to still have power. And Lee, werewolves have been on both sides." Tom had a stern look on his face as he was explaining.

"Where do we come in at?" asked Adam.

"Well, you and your sister are extremely powerful when you need to be," said Tom. "Your magic abilities will be vital to the group."

Val gave Tom a look of disgust and spoke: "My father has been in the flames of Hell for centuries. How can he have any power? If he still has what you call followers, they are more like fanatics. What can they possibly do?"

Lee spoke up: “There have been some bad werewolves that follow some of the old ways, but there are some good upstanding citizen ones also. I can’t keep them all in check. We have our loners and some that still live in packs. I haven’t heard of anything through the wolf line, so to speak.”

Tom looked over the room, reading everyone. “There are relics out there that haven’t been seen in hundreds of years, powerful mages and witches, and countless other things out there. Cultists would love to bring their lords or gods back. Some who want the old ways to return; you name it, it’s out there. It’s up to us to keep the balance or truce, so to speak. If we don’t pull together and help each other, then who will? Lee, don’t you usually have a companion with you? I just noticed you are alone.”

Lee smiled, “They stopped off in town to pick up a few things. He will be along shortly.”

Val said, “Hmmm, I’m not sure, werewolves don’t usually work well with others, not of their kind.”

Lee said, “You may have been born with the vamp powers, and had a human mother, but you’re still Dracula’s bastard son. How do you think that is going to make us feel? You have that corrupted blood flowing through your veins. How do we know you won’t turn on us?”

“I’m nothing like my father, you filthy mutt.”

“Oh, did I touch a nerve?”

“Enough,” shouted Tom.

Adam and Jessica were watching the banter like a tennis match, heads going back and forth between the two. “Wow, your

dad was Dracula. I bet you can do all kinds of things. Can you turn into a bat, no, a dog, or mist?”

Val turned his head to look at Adam and couldn't help but smile a little. “No, I cannot turn into any of those things; that is all myth and made up. I am different enough that I can walk in the sunlight, though, and yes, I can hear things normal humans can't. I can see in the dark, and I am very quick and strong. I can also heal very quickly.”

“It would be cooler if you could turn into one of those things,” Jessica piped up.

Val just chuckled and the little girl's remark. “So, what kind of powers do you two have?”

“We are learning more and more every day, but so far we can move things, throw fireballs, and she can talk to animals and other weird stuff,” Adam spoke up.

“If my stuff is weird, then yours is too.” Jessica jabbed back.

“My stuff isn't weird. It's cool.”

“Okay, I think I got it.” Val conceded to the twins.

“On that note, let us go get you all some gear, why don't we?” Tom stood and beckoned everyone to the doorway behind him.

They all exited the library and went down a hallway that was lined with all kinds of ancient weaponry. Spears, knives, swords, and suits of armor from all over the planet were on display. As Lee passed by a suit of samurai armor, he felt a tug on his tail. “Knock it off, kids. Yes, it's real.” But he didn't hear the voice of the kids come from behind him.

“It wasn’t us; we are up here.”

Lee turned around to see who it could be, but no one was there. “Tom? You playing some kind of game here?”

“No, sir, I am not.”

“Well, someone or something tugged on my tail, and I don’t like it being pulled on.” He starts looking at the samurai armor more closely. When he started to turn away, he noticed it waved at him. “What the hell? Tom, either I’m seeing things or your armor is alive.”

“Damn it, Felix! Show yourself now!” Tom had a very stern look as he stared back down the hall behind Lee.

“Calm down, Tom, I was only playing around.” He came out of the suit of armor, but no one was in the armor. “I figured since you didn’t mention or call on me, it was the perfect chance to have some fun with the giant doggy here.”

Lee growled, “I’ll show you a giant doggy. Show yourself, and I will make a chew toy out of you.”

“That will be hard to do, since umm, I’ve been dead for about fifty years, give or take.” This time, the voice came from in front of them, next to Tom.

“Felix, will you please show yourself?” Tom ordered.

“Sure thing, Tom, anything for you.” As Felix was saying this, a man manifested right next to Tom.

Felix stood there with a wide grin on his face. He looked semi-solid, where you could get a good look at him and through him at the same time. He was a man in his early thirties, just under

six feet tall, and wearing what looked like an old band shirt and blue jeans.

“This, everybody, is Felix.” Tom pointed to the ghost, “He is our afterlife expert, you could say. Let us proceed, please, Felix, that includes you too.”

The group continued moving again, going down a set of stairs, and came to another door. Tom opened the door and motioned everyone through. Once the door closed behind them, a series of lights started to come on, and now everyone could get a good look at what was before them.

The room went on for a while. Val and Lee were taking notice of items and various other things throughout the room. They noticed they could smell the swamp, which they figured was above or all around them. Various workstations were scattered throughout the room with what looked like all kinds of contraptions being created or fixed. Off to one side, there was a vault door; they conversed among themselves on what could be behind it. Val took notice of a structure that looked like a water trough but had a tunnel connected to it, as if something could come and go; it reeked of swamp

As they continued to inspect the room, shuffling could be heard moving toward them from somewhere deep within the room. The sound was of something being half drug followed by semi-heavy breathing. A shadow came around from a large piece of machinery that looked like it could double as a torture device. The figure stepped into the light and was a pale figure of a man, with glasses slid to the end of a nose that looked like it was made of plastic. He had patches of hair missing and different colored eyes. He stood slightly slouched around five feet six

inches tall. His left leg slightly slid across the floor with every step forward, with his left arm semi-lifeless, hanging at his side but swinging normally every other step. As the figure came further into the light and nearer the group, he straightened his composure and pushed his glasses back up his odd nose. "Hello there, I'm Gregory."

Everyone was taken aback by the sight of Gregory; the twins' mouths were agape. Val had a disgusted look on his face. Lee stood there speechless, and Tom smiled.

"Hiya, Greg," blurted out Felix from the back of the group.

"Good to see you again, Felix," Gregory acknowledged. "I see we have guests, and were you pleasant when they arrived, or were you your normal self toward them?"

"Aw, Greg, you know me. I welcomed them in my own special way."

"I see," expressed Gregor.

"Yeah, by pulling on my tail," muttered Lee.

Gregory scowled in Felix's direction. "I do apologize about my companion. Sometimes he has no manners, and I would say doesn't use his brain, but as you can tell, he no longer has any active neurons firing."

Tom took this moment to take control of the conversation and introduce everyone. It was also his way of seizing the moment so that everyone could get accustomed to Gregory's appearance.

Val had been standing patiently, listening to the conversation while studying Gregory. "Excuse me, Gregory, but you don't seem to be a full zombie, nor living, so my guess is that you're a

type of ghoul if I am right? No offense is meant, but isn't it rare for a ghoul to be one hundred percent sentient, and not driven by rage and hunger?"

"You are correct, sir. Most ghouls are driven by that, but there are a few of us who have risen above that and attempted to take a place in society, but society has not been too kind toward us. Our appearances differ vastly from one another, just like everyone else, but they can't seem to get over our appearances and usually either run us off or hunt us down." He trailed off here and paused. "Kill us," he finally finished.

"I, myself, was a scientist when I was a man, years ago. I used my mind for the use of good toward mankind, but the company I worked for did not always use my inventions or ideas for those purposes. So, one day, I stood up to them about my creations, they cast me aside, and that was when I was introduced to their resident ghoul that they were studying. When it was done with me, they tossed me into a swamp many miles away and claimed I had been killed in a workplace accident. Mister Tom here found me, nursed me back to, umm, health as you can see, and here we stand now."

Chapter Five: The Big Easy

As they entered the metropolis of the Crescent City, the group wanted to find a hotel before they did anything else. They settled on a hotel not far from downtown, which was within walking distance of the French Quarter. They got checked in and situated in their rooms and met up in the lavish-looking lobby.

“It sure is nice that Tom is footing the bill,” Lee commented. “I would have never stayed in a place like this without saving up first. He told us to be comfortable during our trips, so we are.”

Val nodded in agreement and added, “We need to get to the market that is down by the port and next to the mouth of the Mississippi River.”

“Why that one?” Liz questioned.

“That will be where anything coming from outside the country will be coming into this part of the country,” Val explained. “Good place to get some information and see newcomers to the USA.”

Everyone agreed. Before heading to the market, they walked over to explore Bourbon Street before it got too crowded, and the kids could see it. Val, Lee, and Liz had already agreed to come back that night to see if they could figure anything out and to partake in the nightlife, also. Val would be able to be himself, and no one would bat an eye at his demeanor or appearance if something came up. The people were used to weirdness being around every corner here. After grabbing some lunch at Café du Monde, they decided it was time to head to the market.

Lee navigated their way down toward the port at the mouth of the Mississippi River and found a parking garage that they could park in, which was within walking distance. They walked along the river chatting and surveying their surroundings: people on vacation, the riverboat running up and down the river, birds flying and diving for fish, and shrimp boats coming in to unload their cargo. They got to an area, and Val stopped and pointed to an alley. Everyone looked, and if you saw where he was pointing, above the alley was an old, weathered sign barely hanging from the post it was attached to. A normal person wouldn't have paid this sign any attention, but to Val and the group, it was exactly what they were looking for. In bold black letters, it read "Mystic Market" with an arrow pointing down the alley. They entered the market, and within minutes, they saw stalls filled with all kinds of trinkets and odds and ends for sale. It was set up like this in case anyone else wandered into the alley, but further in was what the party was looking for. After about two blocks in, the *specialty* shops appeared. Voodoo dolls, amulets, magical items, and herbs for potions were everywhere you looked. The smell of magic, static electricity, herbs, and the city filled the air. A bookshop was among the shops. Jessica asked if they could go in and they agreed to.

A bell rang as they opened the door. It was immediately noticeable that this wasn't an ordinary bookstore. The shop smelled of old parchment, leather, and wood. Old leather volumes of ancient books filled the shelves, and rolled parchments that looked like they would crumble at the simplest touch were piled on top of one another. On one shelf, there was a row of jars filled with different colored water. Jessica and Liz noticed them and walked over, interested in what they were. As they got closer, they could see that words were floating in the

liquid, not on paper, put like it had been printed or engraved onto the water itself. They looked at each other quizzically and confused.

“What in the world is this?” Liz asked. “Hey Lee, you ever seen anything like this?”

Lee made his way over from a set of old maps he was looking through, with one in his hands, and he leaned over to get a better look. “Nope, that is a new one to me.”

“Those are water spells,” said a voice. All three of them jumped as the voice came from behind them. “These are spells that were created under the surface of the water. This is whoever’s way of writing them down, so to say.”

The trio turned and saw a curious creature standing there. He had a silverish tone to it, oval-looking dark eyes, with what looked like a fin on top of his head. His chest looked human, while his shoulders and legs gave off an iridescent silver shine. He had on a pair of khaki shorts, and they could see he had scales on his legs and shoulders. He also had a fin-looking thing on his head, on his shoulders, forearms, and on the back of his calves. It appeared that he had one on his back under his shirt, but it looked retractable. His hands looked like a normal person; he was wearing sandals, and they could see his feet were weird and webbed, and he had a tail that was finned at the end of it.

“Are you a...?” Jessica was startled and couldn’t get the word out.

“Merfolk?” The thing asked. “Some people call us that; but no, I am not. They don’t have legs.” He lifted his foot to emphasize. “I am what you would call a merrow.”

“Well, that explains the accent,” Lee choked out. “Aren’t merrows supposed to be temperamental and mean. They are known to drown sailors and such.”

“Not all of us are like that. That would be like me saying all werewolves are just bloodthirsty beasts.”

“Touche,” Lee agreed.

“Excuse me, manners though. I did not mean to startle you. My name is Murphy. It means sea warrior.”

Liz finally composed herself. “Hi, I’m Liz. This is Lee, and this here is Jessica. Nice to meet you.”

“The pleasure is mine. I am sorry I missed you lot at Tom’s place, but it’s quite a way from Ireland to Louisiana.”

“So, you can be out of water for long periods of time?” asked Liz.

“Yes, my kind has been known to. We can exist in both worlds, but our strength is more powerful on land, and we are excellent swimmers.” Murphy smiled at the trio.

“So, you were supposed to be at Tom’s? That would explain that water trough thing in the dungeon. For your kind and similar. We are gonna need a bigger vehicle if we get any more friends to join us. I love that truck,” Lee mumbled the last few words.

“Oh, I swam here, but Tom did say that if we needed another vehicle, he would provide,” Murphy said, smiling.

Liz looked at Lee, “Yeah, that truck is better than that old bug we drove around and you squeezed in and out of.”

Val and Adam wandered over and were introduced to Murphy and caught up on everything. They all continued looking through the shop and getting acquainted with Murphy more. The group, along with their new companion, exited the shop, but not before the twins purchased a few spell books and scrolls.

Back into the alley, a pop-up stall caught Val's attention. He walked over to it and was perusing the many items available. A medallion caught his attention; he picked it up and turned it over several times in his hand. "Excuse me, what is this medallion for?"

"That, sir, we call the Medallion of Mic." The serpent salesman said.

"The Medallion of Mic?"

"Yes, sir. It's short for the Aztec god of the underworld. You know those Aztecs always had long and complicated names for their gods."

"Well, that explains the Aztec coin design. What is it supposed to do?" Val was trying to gather intel about the salesman and his items.

"It gives the bearer the power of death. To cause death in so many delicious and creative ways." He was hissing now strongly on his s's.

Val raised an eyebrow at this remark. "How much for it, and do you know where one could locate some rare old-world items?"

The salesman narrowed his eyes, "Which old world are you speaking of? Mexican, European, Russian, the Orient? You

need to be more specific. For that, though, five grand and it's yours."

Val nodded. "Five grand? Isn't that kind of steep for old Transylvanian items."

"Hmmm," the salesman scratched at his chin. "That is very old-world stuff. Real rare, I might know a guy, but it will take some time."

Val shook his head, "I'm interested in what your guy can get. How can I get in touch with you when you know something? If you hold on to this too, I might get it also, when I see what you can provide."

"Sounds like a deal to me." The serpent smiled. "Meet me in Jefferson Park tomorrow night, and I should either have something for you or a timeline on when I will."

Val acknowledged him and turned and walked away further down into the market. He was deep in thought about the conversation. He believed he had just found one of the black-market peddlers and smuggling rings, but how to infiltrate it and get more information. He looked up further down the way and saw Lee waving to him with a corndog in his hand. He made his way over to him.

"Any luck?" Lee asked as he approached.

"Might be on to something, but gonna have to figure out how we want to play it."

"What ya mean?"

"Serpent being said he had contacts on some old Transylvanian items. Told me to meet him tomorrow night in

Jefferson Park for more info or items. He had an Aztec medallion that supposedly gives the power of death.”

Interesting, Lee was thinking. “Jefferson Park, you say? That is a very public place. Out in the open and in the presence of the St. Louis Cathedral. Hmm, it could be a trap, but it could also be legit. Either way sounds like you got a lead. I found a guy who was peddling knockoffs.”

“How’d you figure that out?”

“The fool was trying to sell me a vampire fang when it clearly was a wolf’s canine. I believe I can tell the difference,” Lee said snidely.

“Idiot,” Val agreed.

Liz ran up, out of breath. “Have either of you seen the twins? Adam was with me and Murphy one minute and the next gone.”

Lee’s muscles tightened. “Where the hell is Murphy now?”

“He is looking for them now. He went back toward the bookstore to see if they had gone back there.”

Val ground his jaws, “Son of a bitch. We need to find them. Alright, spread out, and let’s search. Lee, you howl if you find them or need help. Liz, you fire two shots, and I will signal somehow that you will know it’s me. “

They both agreed, and everyone ran off in different directions asking anyone and everyone if they saw the twins. Lee was running in and out of shops, looking in different stalls, asking everyone about the twins. Finally, one patron took notice and stopped Lee.

“Are you looking for two kids?”

“Yes, have you seen them?”

“Last I saw, they were over at that stall there looking at some herbs.” The stranger pointed at a stall that had a man in a black cloak behind it, chatting with a customer.

Lee sprinted over to it and interrupted the conversation. “Hey, did you see where two teenagers went after they left your shop?”

The cloaked figure looked startled when Lee ran up and was half yelling at him. In fear, the man choked out, “Y-y-y-yes, I did.” With a shaking hand, he pointed down toward a side alley. “They were standing over there talking after I sold them some herbs.”

“Thank you, and I’m sorry if I scared you in any way.” Lee turned and ran toward the area he pointed to. He stopped at the corner and started sniffing the air. He had caught Jessica’s scent. He breathed in a deep breath and threw his head back and let out a long, loud howl. Then another and kept on hoping Val and Liz would find him, but he couldn’t wait too long.

After a few minutes, Val came running up, followed shortly by Liz. Liz took a minute to catch her breath. She looked up at Lee, her face white as a sheet.

“You find them?”

“Not exactly,” Lee replied. “This was the last place anyone saw them, but I caught Jessica’s scent here. It goes down this alley. I wanted to notify you two before I went.”

“Let’s go then,” Val exclaimed. “Let’s not waste a single minute.”

The three friends ran down the alley with Lee leading and sniffing. "Turn up here," he yelled back to them. They took a right and stopped in their tracks. At the end of the narrow way were two men wearing red cloaks. They looked up at the trio and muttered something, then took off running.

"Well, if that isn't suspicious, I don't know what is," Liz cried out. She was the first to respond and took off after the two figures.

"Right," said Lee. He was right behind her. Now he had a new scent to follow.

They saw the two figures dart into a building and followed. The three companions crashed through the door, with Lee taking it off its hinges. His muscles were tight; he was ready for a fight.

The room they had just entered had a few more cloaked men in it. To the right was a bar, and on the far wall was a staircase going up. Someone or something had just gone through the door at the top, then a scream came as the door slammed shut. The cloaked figures squared up, and one yelled something inaudible. A door opened on the other side of the room, and more people entered. Some looked like bikers. They were carrying chains, and others were either in red cloaks or normal street clothes, all with weapons.

"Looks like we are gonna have a fight on our hands. You ready?" Lee said, observing the newcomers.

Val grunted in agreement. "Make sure we leave one awake or alive to question."

Both Lee and Liz looked at him. "Let's try to make a path to get Liz through. Liz, you try to get through as quickly as you can and get through that door up there. See if you can catch up with

whoever went through it and find the kids. We will join you as soon as we can get through this here.”

“I’m gonna miss most of the fun here, but I got you. They won’t get too far,” Liz commented. “I will meet you later.”

Now that everyone has agreed on what to do. It was the waiting game to see who was going to make the first move. Lee knew they couldn’t wait too long. “Okay, ladies, who wants the first dance?” He could smell the sweat and anticipation from the other side of the room. He even smelled urine as if someone had pissed themselves.

One of the cloaks lunged forward with a knife toward Lee. He grabbed the person’s arm and spun him around. Liz was there, ready with a roundhouse kick right into the throat of the red cloak. The man went down hard, trying to breathe with a crushed larynx. Val leaped into the air, a hair-raising growl coming from him as he landed on two more figures near the bar. Blood splattered and sprayed the bar; he had just ripped one’s throat out with his hand. The other screamed in pain as you could hear his arm snap. Val turned his attention toward two more trying to rush him. He smiled and mumbled to himself. “Let’s dance.”

A huge biker guy was coming toward Lee now, twirling a chain through the air, a grin on his face. “Here, doggy, be a good boy and go down easy. You won’t feel a thing, I promise.”

Lee growled, “I’ll show you doggy fatso.”

The man swung the chain; Lee threw up his arm, and it wrapped around it. Lee smiled, “You done went and fucked up now.” Lee yanked on the chain, and the man almost got whiplash from the force he lunged forward with. Lee hit him with a

clothesline, where the chain smashed into the man's face. The biker flew backwards, doing a backflip, and folded in half when he landed. A loud thud echoed through the room. Another man jumped on Lee's back, hollering that he had him. Lee laughed and reached back and grabbed him. Lee brought the man up and into a makeshift vertical suplex and slammed him to the ground. The man hit the floor so hard his spine shattered on impact, screaming in pain, looking up at Lee as he just stepped over him, onto the next one.

Liz sprinted through the men after delivering her kick, dodging men here and there. One burly guy grabbed her from behind by getting a handful of her hair. He pulled her into him, and before he could get a good hold of her, she kicked her foot up and connected the toe of her boot square into his nose over her shoulder. The man let go and grabbed at his face as tears filled his eyes, howling in pain. She darted up the stairs and out the door.

Lee saw the kick that Liz delivered to the guy's nose and smiled. "That's my girl," he thought to himself. He looked to his right and saw Val deliver a haymaker punch to another guy, completely shattering his jaw. Lee grabbed a guy and threw him over the bar and into a giant mirror. Giant shards rained down on the now unconscious fellow. Lee squared up and noticed the remaining few guys were starting to backpedal away from them.

The remaining men had had enough and seen enough of their friends either die or get demolished at the hands of these two. They turned and ran through the back door.

Lee and Val surveyed the room after the rest had fled. Val looked at Lee and told him to go catch up with Liz, while he tried

to find one that could talk. Lee understood and scrambled up the stairs and through the door, only to see Liz take down a red-cloaked guy. He ran over to her, and as he got to her side, the sound of screeching tires filled the air.

They both looked, and a cargo van was speeding toward them. Liz leapt out of the way, and Lee jumped straight up, landing on the roof of the van. Upon landing, Lee drove his hand straight down with his claws digging into the roof, so he wouldn't fall off. The van swerved left, then right, trying to shake him. Holding on, Lee was getting frustrated.

"I've had enough of this." He raised his other hand back, and Superman punched the roof, driving his hand straight through the roof. Grabbing the edge of the newly formed hole, he started ripping it bigger. Once it was big enough, he saw the form of Murphy lying on the floor of the vehicle, unconscious. *They must have jumped him from behind*, he thought to himself, but continued tearing the roof apart so he could drop in.

The van shook with the force of an earthquake when the first burst through the roof. Jessica, who was screaming now, smiled. She knew Lee was there to help. This gave her hope. The men had grabbed her and Adam and immediately gagged them both so that they couldn't cast any spells. They seemed to have known who they were and wanted them for some reason. She did not recognize any of them or the symbols that were either worn by the men or tattooed onto them. Some were even branded. Adam and Murphy were both unconscious on the floor. They had drugged them and were in the process of drugging her when Liz showed up, and now Lee was here. Jessica knew now that the men in the van were in a lot of trouble.

As Lee dropped into the van, a man was ready and waiting. He lunged at him with a knife. Lee dodged him and pushed him, burying the knife into the skull of the driver of the van. The driver gave a blood gurgle and slumped forward; the knife sliding out, covered with blood and brain matter. The man with the knife lunged forward to grab the steering wheel. The van was increasing in speed. Lee looked around and grabbed Adam and Murphy. He freed Jessica's hands and told her to climb on his back and hold on tight. As she climbed on and told him she was ready, Lee kicked the side door of the van, sending it flying. Looking through the windshield, he knew it was just a matter of seconds. He jumped from the van, carrying the two unconscious bodies and Jessica holding on for dear life to his back.

They landed, and Lee stumbled, his ankle breaking on impact. He howled in pain but didn't let it stop him. He turned around in time to see the van crash into an overpass column and demolish itself. The van itself looked like someone had stepped onto an empty soda can and crushed it. He lowered Adam and Murphy gently to the ground and knelt so Jessica could climb off. He removed her gag and gently touched her cheek.

"Are you alright?"

"Yes. Are you though? I heard your ankle and could feel your body tremble." Jessica was worried about her rescuer.

"I will be fine; Liz will mend it."

They both looked down the small drive and saw Liz and Val racing toward them. Val was the first to reach them.

"Everyone okay?"

"We are fine," Lee acknowledged.

Jessica, still calming down, half yelled, “Lee’s ankle is broken, I think. Adam and Murphy are just knocked out. They drugged them, but got interrupted when it was my turn.”

Val shook his head in understanding. Liz finally reached them out of breath.

“Hey, you two need to remember I’m not as fast as you.” She noticed Lee’s ankle. “Lee, sit down and let me look at that.”

“I will be fine,” Lee took a step and stumbled. “Maybe I should rest a bit first.”

He sat down, and Liz started checking his ankle. “It is broken. I don’t have the equipment to give you a cast, but let me see if we can get it in a splint of some kind.”

Jessica’s eyes went wide. She threw her backpack off, opened it hectically, and started digging. She was almost halfway into the bag when she cheered. She pulled out a book and flipped through it quickly, coming to a page and stopping. She walked over to Lee and held her hand two inches away from his ankle and started saying some words he couldn’t understand under her breath.

A glow started shining between her hand and his ankle. As it got brighter, the swelling in Lee’s ankle got less. She just kept repeating herself and then stopped. The light went away. Jessica stepped back and quietly asked Lee to stand up.

Lee hesitantly stood, not knowing what had just happened. He was instructed to put weight on his ankle by Jessica.

“Lee, how does it feel now?”

Lee shuffled his feet, and as he put weight down and moved his foot, he was shocked. The pain was gone; whatever she had done, it mended his foot. He was ecstatic.

“What did you do. It feels fine now.”

“One of the books I bought at the shop had some healing spells in it. Good thing I remember, huh?” Jessica was smiling from ear to ear.

“Yes, it is a little one. Liz is gonna put you out of business as our medic.” He chuckled.

“I will take all the help I can get, if this is how our adventures are going to be.” Liz was still processing what she had just witnessed.

Jessica was blushing now. Lee pulled her in and hugged her. He whispered in her ear, and she blushed more. Adam and Murphy were now starting to stir.

The group called it a day and headed back to the hotel. On the way, they filled Adam and Murphy in on what had happened. Jessica was exhausted from the events. Lee picked her up and carried her most of the trip back to the truck. She fell asleep in his arms.

Back at the hotel, the group dispersed into their rooms. Lee carried Jessica to her room and tucked her in. She barely flinched when he laid her down. Felix was sitting on the bed watching TV and noticed Lee carrying her.

“What the hell happened?”

“We ran into a bit of trouble at the market. Some guys in red cloaks tried to kidnap them.” Lee nudged his head in the direction of the kids. We got them back, but not without a fight.”

“I missed all the fun. Dammit. You all just up and left me here and then got to have a day’s worth of fun out there.”

“Fun? We could have been hurt or killed, and you’re worried about missing that. I broke my ankle rescuing them.”

“It doesn’t look broken now, so either you’re lying, heal fast, or something happened.”

“She healed it.” Lee pointed at Jessica.

“She what? Healed it. Hmm, special, that one is.”

“You’re telling me. She found a spell in one of her books and healed me right there on the spot.”

“I see, well, I might have been able to help if I had been there. No more leaving me behind, okay?”

“Gotcha. Just be ready when we are, and you won’t be. Tomorrow is another day; we might have a tip on some of the black-market stuff. So be ready to go.”

Felix gave Lee a salute. “Ten-four, capitano.”

“Goodnight, Felix.”

“Goodnight, Lee.”

As Lee pulled the door closed behind him, Felix turned towards the beds and looked at the kids. “I’m gonna have to keep an eye on you two.”

Lee entered his room and found Val there with Liz discussing what had taken place earlier. He walked over and took a seat at the table near the window, looked out, then back to the conversation.

“Any Idea on who the red cloaks were?” Liz asked Val.

“No clue. The ones that could talk, wouldn’t. I didn’t recognize any of the symbols either. I’m thinking they are old-world influenced, though,” Val stated.

“Well, they know who we are now, or at least what we can do,” Lee added.

“This is true,” added Liz. “How is your ankle?”

“Feels fine. Whatever she did, it seems to have fully healed it.”

“They were after those two. Didn’t they say their parents were killed over some prophecy or something?” Val inquired.

“Yeah, it was. But they are just kids. Pretty powerful kids when they put their minds to it, but still just kids.” Lee was still trying to put things together.

Liz stood up. “Well, we aren’t gonna get any answers tonight. Let’s get some sleep and see what tomorrow brings.”

Lee and Val agreed. Val left the room and was on his way back to his room when he stopped and looked at the end of the hallway at the window. Something caught his attention. So, he went to it and peered out. He didn’t see anything and shrugged it off, but something in his gut told him to go up to the roof.

Val broke the lock on the door and walked out into the night air. He inhaled deeply, smelling the city, listening to the sounds, and just studying the horizon. The sound of movement came from behind him; he spun around and grabbed the hilt of his sword. Nothing was there. He stared into the darkness.

“Rough day, eh?”

The voice was behind him again. In an instant, he spun around again, this time sword drawn.

“You can put that away. I don’t mean you any harm, not yet, at least. Unless you give me a reason to.”

“Show yourself. What are you? Spirit? Demon?” Val’s throat tightened. Ears perked listening for the slightest sound.

“If you would look right in front of you and not in the distance, you would see me.”

Val looked down, and the only thing he saw was a raven sitting on a raised skylight. He sheathed his sword. “If that is you, then speak raven.”

The raven looked at him directly and spoke: “I must be pretty good if I can sneak up on a vampire.”

“Half-vampire,” Val corrected it.

“That half still has the blood of Dracula running through it. So, I still am impressed with myself.”

“What do you want. Why are you here?”

“Albert sent me to keep an eye on you. I’m attached to you and your group. Albert doesn’t just use his gnome phones or whatever they use. He works with some of us ravens that work

for the good guys. Before you ask, yes, there are good and bad ravens. Some of us have been corrupted by the darkness, and some of us hold out for the light that we hope will return.”

“The darkness?” Val got a concerned look on his face. “What other information do you have?”

“Those red-cloaked guys from earlier are friends of the darkness. They are known as the Order of the Crimson Spire.”

“The Crimson Spire? Why does that sound familiar?” Val was reaching into the depths of his memories to withdraw any he might know.

“It is getting late; I will visit you again tomorrow sometime. Don’t look for me, I will find you.” The raven flexed his wings, readying himself for takeoff.

“Do you have a name, or do I just call you Raven?”

“They call me Bertram.” With that, the raven flew away, leaving Val alone on the rooftop.

Val returned to his room and settled in for the night. As he drifted off to sleep, his mind roamed.

Chapter Seven: A New Threat

Back in the city, they met up with Murphy and Adam at the World War II Museum. Adam was telling everyone about everything he saw, all excitedly. “Val, do you think we could return to the museum once we have saved the world and stuff?”

“Sure thing, bud,” Val smiled at him. “Once this is all over and everyone is safe, I will bring you back. I might even be able to give you some more information on some of the stuff in there than what they give you.”

“REALLY!! Did you fight in the war?” Adam was bouncing in the seat.

“I did.”

The team grabbed a bite to eat and came up with a plan for the evening. Everyone had a position and a job while Val met with the serpent vendor.

Lee would be over on Bourbon Street and would wander over. Murphy would be close to the waterfront, ready to go if needed. Liz would be a tourist walking around seeing the sights. Adam and Jessica will be in the cathedral's upper floors watching from a window.

Liz and the kids had met with the father at the cathedral and explained what was going on. He agreed to let them use a room, anything he could do to help, he offered.

Val was in the park next to the Jefferson Davis statue, looking up at it. "Hello, old friend."

"Hello again to you also."

Val looked up a little higher. "Bertram, that you up there?"

"Correct." Bertram was on top of the statue, looking down at Val. He fluttered down lower, closer to him. "I have come to let you know that we are here to help relay messages and to warn you."

Val surveyed the area, and sure enough, there was a raven close to where every team member was located. "What warning?"

"The one named after a demon and a god; the hunter of all things he calls unnatural; the executioner of the supernatural has entered the fray." Bertram was acting nervously.

"You mean?"

"I do."

"Well, that is going to make things more complicated."

"Correct."

Val looked around, and a fog had started to settle in. "This also makes things a little more complicated."

"Correct again."

Val looked at Bertram. "Spread the word. Everyone is to be on alert. Be ready to go but to wait for the signal from the ravens."

Bertram bounced his head and started to caw. Other ravens started cawing in response. Val took this as the message was sent, received, and everyone was ready.

Val sat down on a nearby bench; the fog thickened. The silhouette of a figure appeared in the fog. Val could hear hissing. His contact had arrived. Bells chimed in the distance, signaling that midnight was here.

“You’re here. I hope you haven’t been waiting long.”

“Long enough. I hope it was worth it.”

“You tell me. I have brought with me some items you might like.”

“As in?”

“Dracula’s very own medallion for starters.”

“Did you bring the Aztec one as well?”

“I did.”

“May I see Dracula’s medallion? Do you have anything else?”

“Sure thing. I also have some of his blood. A small vial right now, but can get more.”

He handed the medallions and the vial to Val. Val inspected the medallions. He placed the Aztec coin in his pocket and turned over the other one, analyzing it. He opened the vial and sniffed.

“Just as I expected.” He let a deep growl out. “These are fakes. What are you trying to pull here?”

“What do you me—”

His words were cut off. Val was waiting for him to finish, but he never did. Instead, his head tilted forward and kept going. It sounded like Velcro strips being pulled apart; his head fell from

his body. A clean cut, blood spurted from the arteries. Val dropped into defense mode.

“What dealings did you have with this one?” The voice was deep and gravelly.

“What business is it of yours?” Val called out.

A mountain of a man stepped into the light. Val estimated him to be at least eight feet tall, muscular, with the equivalent of a beer belly and broad shoulders. He wore what looked like an executioner's style mask, black pants, and had leather straps that formed an X on his chest. He carried a double-bladed axe that had a skull and crossbones with blood dripping from it etched into it.

“I am the one who cleanses this world of the impure. I purge it from the unclean and unnatural. I am DEIMOS,” he roared, and it echoed through the park.

“I've heard of you. You hunt down things that are different, but you yourself are the same as you hunt.” Val was ready for a fight and hoping the others knew what to do.

“You may think that, but all monsters do.” Deimos dropped back, ready to swing his might axe. “Phobos here will help me cleanse this world of your filthy kind.”

Val hissed, “My kind? Not all of us are evil. Some of us want to make the world a better place. Some just want to be left alone and live a life worthy of a gift or curse.”

“LIAR!!! All of you are the same.” Deimos swung the mighty axe and Val.

Val bent over backwards. The axe inches away from his face. He popped back up, and Superman punched the giant. Deimos smiled.

“That tickled.”

In the distance, Val heard ravens cawing.

Lee had lost sight of Val; he didn't like just waiting around, but kept up his persona of a local patron who had had a little too much to drink. He was leaning against a light pole when he heard a voice above him.

“Be alert and ready to go. This is our message; we will let you know when to act.”

Lee looked up at the raven. “Bertram?”

“No. Be ready, werewolf.”

Lee grunted. “You don't have to be so rude.”

On the waterfront, Murphy was chatting with some locals. He saw a raven on a bench, looking at him and bouncing its head. He thanked the people for the chat and went over to the raven. It delivered the same message that was given to Lee.

“Alrighty then,” Murphy acknowledged.

Liz was taking a picture of a mural on the side of a building when she received the message. The twins, along with the father, heard the message and were ready.

Val dodged another axe swing, recovering just in time to see the man's face engulfed with a fireball.

“Get away from him,” a young voice yelled.

Val turned and looked. It was Adam, and he was prepping another fireball. Deimos shook it off and stared at Adam. His teeth grinding, he took a step and doubled over as a fur-covered missile speared him in the midriff section.

Both bodies went flying. Hitting the ground causing a mild tremor. Deimos rolled through it and launched Lee into a wall. Lee let out a yelp; rattled, but was back on his feet in a few seconds.

Deimos was now annoyed but delighted. So many unpure to purge. Liz came out of nowhere and jabbed a knife into his ribs. He looked down at her and chuckled—grabbed her by the throat and squeezed. He could hear someone struggling to breathe. Her pretty face upset him, but she had joined in with the evil lot he was trying to rid this earth of. His hand started shaking, his fingers were loosening on her throat, and he didn't understand it. Liz dropped from his grasp; she gasped for air and felt herself getting picked up and carried to safety.

Jessica was focused; she had gotten him to let Liz go; she saw Murphy grab her. She saw Adam and called for him.

Adam heard his sister and knew what she was thinking. He was running to her when a park bench slammed into him, sending him into a wall. The last thing he heard was Jessica's scream.

"ADAM!!!" Jessica saw her brother go flying, the park bench with him.

A raven flew to her. "Go to him. We will distract him."

She understood and went to her brother. She looked and saw some ravens flocking around his head, drawing his attention.

Deimos swatted at the ravens, annoyed at their interference. "I will kill you all."

Lee and Val were now ready to strike, one on either side of the brute. Val rushed in, sword in hand; Lee was glad he had worn his armor set tonight. His gauntlet's claws were now unleashed and ready for blood.

Liz and Murphy rushed over to where Adam was. The wall had also collapsed onto him; Jessica was trying to unbury him.

"I will help these two; you need to figure out how to help them," Murphy yelled at Liz.

Jessica, hearing this and sobbing, looked at them both. "No, I will get Adam. Just keep him busy till I can get him awake if he survives."

The look in Jessica's eyes was enough to make Murphy not argue with her. He looked at Liz. "Let's go."

Liz and Murphy were running toward the fray when Liz stopped. Murphy noticed.

"What are you doing? But before he could do anything else, he saw Liz lift her arm at an angle toward the big brute. She brought her other hand over, one of her rings glowing; she waved it over her other arm.

"Come to me, my friend." Liz was heard saying as she waved her hand over her tattooed arm.

When she had waved her hand over the tattoo and said the words, a tiger leapt from her arm and charged straight at Deimos. Murphy couldn't believe what he had just seen, but he couldn't ponder on it too long.

Val and Lee had finally drawn blood. It's as if Deimos knew about Val's sword; he parried every thrust and lunge. This annoyed Val; he sheathed his sword and let his vampire instincts take over. His fingernails grew into claws; his fangs became longer, and he dug deep for more speed and strength.

Lee was scratching and kicking the huge man. He staggered him every so often, but it never lasted long. They had only managed to scratch and land punches here and there. An idea hit Lee that might give Val a chance with his sword. He saw where Liz had stabbed him in the ribs. He took his left hand and buried it deep into the cut. Deimos let out a scream. *Finally, he showed pain*, the duo thought. At this moment, a tiger slammed into the large target. He stumbled. Now the air was filled with screams, roars, and blood was starting to fly.

Deimos dropped his axe. He grabbed the mystic tiger and threw it toward Val. It disappeared after it slammed into Val and caused a crater as they slid backwards from the force. Liz was slumped over now; her energy drained. Deimos grabbed Lee's hand, pulling it from his ribs, when out of nowhere, a plush monkey was covering his face.

From above the fight a raven was circling, carrying Felix in its talons, waiting for the right moment. When he saw that his attention was on removing Lee's hand, he knew that was it.

"Now," he called to the bird.

The raven dove like a black missile through the air. Pulled up and released the monkey.

"Bonsai!!!," filled the air, followed by a loud cackling.

Felix hit his mark. Landing on the face of the giant and wasting no time on trying to claw at his eyes.

Deimos was beyond pissed now. He released Lee's hand and felt it bury into his ribs once again. He grabbed the toy that was on his face and flung it across the pitch into the darkness. He once again grabbed Lee, pulling the blood-covered gauntlet free from his body and landed what would have been a knockout punch with the other if it hadn't been for Lee's helmet. Lee went down hard, and feeling like his brains rattled.

In a flash, Deimos had his axe in hand. He put one of his monstrous feet on Lee's chest to hold him down. Lee, still recovering, saw the axe rise and come down.

A piercing pain ran through Lee. His howl filled the night sky, surely to attract even more attention if any hadn't already been. He couldn't feel his hand; he couldn't move it. He saw Deimos raise the axe again, this time for a kill strike. Lee was still struggling to get away through the pain—teeth grinding, growling, but losing blood.

Deimos had severed the wolf's hand at mid-forearm. Now time to kill it. He brought the axe up, ready to strike. It didn't move. "What the hell?"

Murphy had the axe held for the moment with the use of a whip. He was struggling to hold it when he saw Val leap in with his sword drawn to help hold the axe in place. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Jessica with a very battered and bruised Adam. Adam's arm appeared to be broken, but he wasn't letting it stop him.

Jessica was half-carrying her brother. They passed Liz, who was still slumped over and stopped. They faced each other and looked into each other's eyes. They said, together in unison, "Protect each other, protect our friends, rid this place of evil and those who want our end. Cast them out of our sight to where there is no harm; cast out the darkness, let the light shine. Now be gone!"

They each pointed at Deimos, and a rush of air and a force of pressure launched the murderous fiend high into the air and into the distance. He landed with a loud splash somewhere in the Mississippi River.

Murphy and Val surveyed the area to make sure the coast was clear. They agreed that there was no more threat, and they rushed to Lee. Murphy placed his hand on Lee's chest to keep him down.

"My hand, that son of a bitch, he took my hand."

"Your hand is still here; he didn't take it," Murphy told him.

"He still fucking cut it off. Ugh." Lee howled again.

The twins and Liz stumbled toward them. Val took Adam from them. Liz was regaining her strength but was still weak. "His arm is broken; it needs to be set before we do anything," Liz informed Val.

Jessica went over to Lee with tears in her eyes. "I'm sorry. I'm sorry I couldn't protect you and send him away sooner."

Lee looked at her, ignoring the pain in his arm. "It's not your fault. He attacked us, and we fought back. Are you alright?"

“Yes. Now let me seal this wound. It is gonna hurt though.” Jessica was still crying.

“Don’t cry, little one. I will be okay.” Lee tried to reassure her.

Jessica placed her hand on his arm where the cut was. She looked up into the night sky, as if praying. Light and smoke were coming from Lee’s wound. He was grinding his teeth but holding still. When the light faded, Lee’s wound was cauterized.

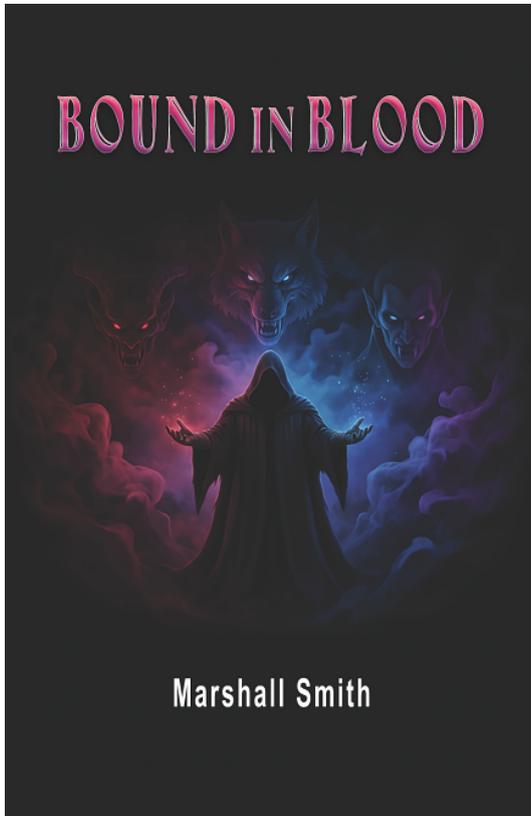
“Can we go home now?” Adam asked, exhausted.

“Yes, let’s get our things and head back to Tom’s. No stopping. Murphy, do you mind swimming ahead and letting him know we are coming?”

“Sure thing, Val.”

The team, now back in the truck and headed back to the mansion, was beaten and battered. Val was driving with Liz sitting in the passenger seat with her head against the window. In the back seat, Lee had his arm in his lap, head leaned back. Jessica was cuddled up next to him under his good arm, his severed hand in hers. Adam was on the other side, trying not to move his arm and holding onto Felix, who had some tears in his fur. They found him in a bush on the edge of the park, hanging there by a thread, unable to free himself.

Felix observed the team and thought to himself, “We sure took a beating tonight, but next time, next time we will be better prepared.”



In the modern world, monsters and magic are around every corner. Ancient forces and secret societies plot to rule over humankind. A group of supernatural beings come together to ward off the forces of evil and keep humans free.

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