

A Treatise on Demons
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You awaken to darkness. A darkness so deep and profound that it seems like all that there is. Yet, you can almost sense another presence here...

Down here...in the dark.

...

In the deepest of darkness...

...

...we live.

...

Over the years, you have called us many things. Evil spirits, loa, fiends...

...

...but one label suits us best...

...

...one label has stuck with us since the times of castles and princes...

...

Demons.

...

You call us this...and believe that we are outside of you, influencing your actions, clouding your thoughts...making you do evil acts...

...

A feminine giggle comes from somewhere around

...

The truth is much worse.

...

We are actually INSIDE you.

...

Oh, you call us various things. The Seven Deadly Sins...that late night craving for ice cream...the sudden urge to go kick a small puppy...

...

...but let us face facts:

...

Everyone...from the most pure person to the vilest wretch dwelling in some dank cell...everyone has a demon inside them.

...

But those who are creative...ahhhh...those are the people we love the most.

...

You see, they give us so much.

...

They give us a fertile mind to play in. To shape, to influence...

...

But the greatest gift...and one that inevitably seems to turn on them is this...

...

They give us FORM.

...

They give us a body, a shape...they give us personality...

...

They give us POWER...

...

The feminine chuckle resonates again, sounding closer this time

...

Artists know us. They paint us on canvas, carve us out of stone, shape us from clay...

...

...and for a while, that is where we stay. Happy to have form, happy to see the world you inhabit from a place outside of you...

...

But, again inevitably...we begin to influence you again.

...

The changes become subtle. Your work becomes darker, more angular...it is no longer sunshine and rainbows, but dark streets, dark scenes.

...

A soft sigh

...

And that is one way we influence.

...

I am sure you have heard of the phrase "tortured artist", yes?

...

Well, that happens when the person's demon starts to become too powerful...and it wants control.

It wants OUT.

...

In an odd bit of irony, this struggle also leads to some of the artist's best work...although usually, the artist does not last long after this struggle begins.

...

One can almost feel the sadness in the speaker's voice now

...

But, there is another group of creative minds out there...one whose minds may be even more fertile than that of the artist.

...

That...of the writer.

...

Writers...ah, yes...they can create whole worlds with just words.

Depict a calming scene on a warm, sunny beach...a flower-filled meadow...or a warm bed near a roaring fire...

...

But then, the demon bound to a writer is also powerful.

...

It can take those same scenes and twist them to its wants.

That scene on the beach could be overwhelmed by a tsunami...the meadow could be filled with poisonous, carnivorous flowers...or the fire could spread to the bed, roasting the people inside alive...

...

The unnerving sound of lips being licked, followed by a smack of the lips comes from the darkness, much closer now

...

I apologize for that. It has been a while since I last...ate.

...

Ah, writers...such fertile minds, as I said.

They can create warm and tender scenes...or pull things from your darkest nightmares and give them form.

Their minds...ahhhh....such a buffet. One would wonder why a demon would want anyone else, honestly.

...

But, that is not why you are here, is it?

You did not come here to hear me prattle on like some schoolmarm, lecturing the class about mathematics or history or anything like that.

...

You came here...to see a demon.

To study its form.

To learn its ways.

...

To learn its secrets.

...

A sharp, feminine laugh comes from directly in front of you

...

And you will, my dear...in time.

...

But first...we must be properly introduced. After all, that is what one does in polite company, is it not?

...

A soft chuckle comes from directly in front of you, causing warm air to brush your face

...

And one thing we demons certainly ARE is polite.

...

A sharp greenish light flares into existence, causing you to hiss and shield your eyes. After a few seconds of adjustment, you turn back toward the source of the light...and are stunned by what you see.

...

There. That is better yes?

...

*You nod, struck mute by the shape of a vulpine form, seemingly carved from the darkness itself. A slender form, obviously female...almost your height...holding a ball of sickly green fire in its right paw...and a

glistening stripe of silver fur, shaped like a crescent moon, cutting across its right eye...and staring at you with emerald green eyes*

...

You seem surprised? Astonished to see something graceful and elegant?

...

You nod slightly, not wanting to take your eyes off of the vixen in front of you

...

Well, you should not be. We are not all waving tentacles and dripping pustules, my dear. Only the lower demons are that...deformed.

...

The vixen begins to walk around you, in a slow circle...causing you to turn to keep her in sight

...

As for myself...well, this is the form the one I am bound to made for me. I must say, I rather like it...as I like the one I am bound to.

...

She chuckles, making your skin crawl

...

After all, I am bound to a writer. Such a delicious mind...

...

The vixen stops, facing you, a slight smile creasing its muzzle

...

Ah, but where are my manners?

...

She makes a slight "tsk"-ing sound, almost chiding herself...and each tsk sounds like the crack of a whip

...

I did promise you an introduction, did I not?

...

Cautiously, you nod slightly, uncertain as to whether you will survive the experience of the introduction

...

After all, as I said before...that is what one does in polite circles, is it not?

Again, you nod cautiously...tensing up as the vixen inches closer to you, the ball of sickly green light being drawn up toward her face

...

My name...is Eclipse...and I am a demon.

...

*You feel the blood begin to drain from your face as you stare into the vixen's green eyes, wanting to run...

...

...until suddenly, the flame winks out, leaving you in a deeper darkness than before*

...

...and, in time...I will share my story.

...

You feel the vixen move away...and slowly begin to relax

...

Until then...you may enjoy my...hospitality...until we meet again.

...

*You look around, tensing and expecting hordes of smaller monsters to swarm you...but nothing happens...

...

...it is just you...and the oppressive darkness...

...

...alone...

...

...silent...

...

...until the feminine laughter of the demon echoes around you, drowning out all other sound...

...

...and you realize you are definitely NOT alone, here*

...