

UTOPIAN SINS

Part one: Ezra

By Matt Jones

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I was told that a long time ago there were four demons who walked the earth. Each one carried with it pain and sorrow and each one was a villain. For millions of years these villains reigned, until mankind finally defeated them. But these monsters were so dangerous that even their bones posed a threat. So priests were given the task of guarding these bones. But in taking this task they were themselves cursed. So they were forced to quarantine themselves from the rest of humanity.

If there ever was a heaven I truly believe it is here. Here were the sun shines warm against your skin and the air is fresh and the people are good and a billion other “ands” that I may have forgotten. One and that I could never forget is her; Emily, shiny brown hair concealing big brown eyes and that smile that could warm your soul. If this is heaven then she is my goddess, the object of my affection and idolatry.

We live in a perfect world. We work. We have worries , true, but we also have no fear, we have true brotherly love, we have a world of endless possibilites and endless freedom. We live in a beautihul, shining heaven.

I’d follow her to the ends of the earth. That is why I did it, to save her. Her inquisitive and adventurous nature had carried her through life and permitted her to see things that most never get to see. The Aztec ruins, the depths of the Amazon the tomb of great kings .But it was her nature that lead her to what is believed to be the tomb of the cursed ones, the demon tomb. Seven months without a word, a single sign of life .I needed the truth. I needed to know if she was alive and well. I’d follow her to the ends of the earth.

If these demons did exist, they would have been buried in the cradle of civilization, Iraq. That’s were I went. I followed her footsteps to Iraq, to the ruins of mosques and finally to the place where mythic beasts now lay rest. It was hidden deep beneath the soil of a crumbling temple. The entrance was almost impossible to find their was no door, or any other indication of a why in apart from a crack just big enough for a single person with great effort to squeeze through. This terribly small space, this terribly claustrophobic space, I honestly hated it. Hate, I don’t use that word very often ,(or at all) so when I say that I hate that space ,that tiny claustrophobic space you know that I speak the truth . The deeper and deeper into this crack I waged myself the more I thought that I could hear screaming. Hundreds of voices screaming in fear as though they were being chased or tortured or were in great agony or a mixture of the three.

When I finally resurfaced on the other side I found a dark circular room .The air was thick and stank of sweat and human waste. I could feel it seeping in to lungs and made my eyes water and the Iraqi heat didn't help the matter. It was almost pitch black with one exception .In the very center (about 35meters away) was narrow beam of light shining upon a white marble slab. Upon this slab was a body, a human body .A frail looking man .His skeleton was easily seen, each rib could be count, his eyes were sunken in and his head was almost bald. A more pitiful sight I have never seen.

And to my surprise this poor creature was still live. This man who had gone beyond the limits of tortures that any man could was still breathing.

I approached the slab slowly. The wailing stopped abruptly. The next thing I felt was the crack of the back of my skull. I fell and felt warm blood trickle through my hair and down my neck. It was a struggle to remain awake and even more of a struggle to remain calm when my attacker came to exam me. I stayed very still as he nudged me with his foot to give the illusion of being dead. Apparently it worked because he passed me over. Uncertain how far from me my attacker was or if he was still looking or if he was the only one, I stayed still for hours, unable to sleep for fear of death .I know it was impossible to know for sure ,but I felt I known that I was being watched. Eyes were on me and I was in no way safe. Finally the wailing restarted and I took a chance. I got up and ran straight toward the center. Toward the light .Again the wailing stopped. The next thing I hear is footsteps coming towards me .I run straight into the slab the air fly out of me. The footsteps stopped. They stayed in the shadows, but I could tell there were more than 50. "The guardians?" I asked myself.

A thin bony hand wrapped around my wrist. I turned to see bony skull like face of the man I have named EZRA.

He said two words to me in a barely audible voice. "Kill me."

I stepped back horrorstruck .Then I began to examine him. His tiny bony body shivered and made him look more mechanical then human. He had billions of little cut scattered all of his body ,half of which looked infected .I could tell it hurt him to breathe and I feel guilty to say this but I was afraid to share the same air with him .He disgusted me but I still needed to help him. Then I looked into his eyes.

The suffering in his eye was overwhelming. This man had no hope what so ever in his eyes .The only end of his suffering in his eyes was death .The scary thing is that I agreed with him but I wouldn't release him from his hell. His suffering and my life were intertwined. The guardians only stopped because I was near him. If I killed him I would most definitely die soon after.

I looked him in the eyes again and he looked into mine and I felt ashamed. He knew that the look I gave him meant that I could not help him.

“Could I move him?” I thought. “Would they let me move him?” “Would he be able to survive me moving him?”

He didn’t look like he was well enough to move .He looked like the slightest touch would sting like thorns against his skin. I had to do something though .I made one attempt at lifting him and as I fear he was in no shape to be carried. That was made abundantly clear when a single hollow, bone chilling scream exited his mouth and reverberated through out the empty room .Farther more the action of touching this man seemed to upset the guardians because ten or twelve emerged from the darkness. I looked at those who chose to reveal themselves. Pale, thin tear stained face all of them and they were tired looking, worn out desperate. I looked back at Ezra .He had curled up slightly and shivering even harder. He wept openly and I couldn’t help but shed a few tears myself; partly out of fear, partly out of remorse, but mostly out of pity. It was then that I knew what I had to do.

Part two: Brandon

I feel not guilt .I had to free him and I did .I took the hell out of him and gave it back to the world. I feel no guilt

I felt the life drain out of him as I pressed my hand upon his mouth and nose. He struggled against me but fought himself more so. His mind was prepared for death but his body was another matter. I removed my hand and the guardians had realized what I had done. They didn’t come any closer .They just stood there, unsure what to do next.

They stood still, as did I .My fear threatened to overwhelm me and the silence threatened to drive me insane. ”No.” this single word echoed through the empty room and shot through me worst then any scream that I have every heard. I knew then that I had done something much worst then killed I man.

An older looking man approached the center where I stood. He had an n important way about him as if he were holy or powerful. He looked into my eyes and all I could feel was shame. “You know not what you have done. You know not the horrors you have unleashed. But punished you must be. Ignorance will not save you.”

I hadn’t realized that I had been grabbed until it was too last. I couldn’t struggle free or scream for help or even find a face not filled with hatred or disgust. I was being pulled away from the slab into the shadows. Then the marble slab was pushed (with great effort) aside to reveal a hole. A fierce darkness seemed to billow from this hole and it terrified me. But I couldn’t fight against them.

Before I knew it I was plummeting through open air and smacking hard against the bare soil .With some labor I stood. The air was different here. It was thick and scratched my throat.

“What is it?”

“Does it see?”

These words fell dead after they were spoken.

“Who’s there?” I shouted into the darkness.

“Is it real? It speaks. They can’t speak, they can only do... No, no... It’s lies.”

The voice I heard was hollow and hoarse and died away just as before.

“Who...”

“IT LIES!”

He roared this and the words bounced off the wall, echoing for some time. This confused me as to the size of the chamber I had been through into.

“Who are you?”

“Does it really care? Does it think it could make friends? No. It is afraid .I was afraid a long time ago. Then I was numbexcept... for the burning .I didn’t want it. No .No .But given to me anyway it was.”

“Who are you talking about?”

I was then knocked to the ground and was dealt a series of vicious blows to the face and chest as he screamed at me. “YOU! YOU! YOU!”

He swung at me with all the hatred and force he could muster. I fell unconscious, but I think it he continued to bludgeon me for sometime after that.

He rolled off and began to weep slightly. “It was you all. I didn’t deserve this. It paid its price to be happy and damned us.”

I lay bruised and bloody for sometime, unable to move. Just listening to him weep

He said that a lot .He said it almost automatically when his mind wants idles. “I didn’t deserve this .It paid its price to be happy and damned us.”

My presents enraged him, but he didn’t want to kill me .He kept me live so he could have someone to hate.

He taught me the truth. The world that I grew up in was a heaven built on untold suffering. The world I grew up in had no crime, no hate, just unity .We did not know fear or indifference .The hell that rested in the souls of man was taken out and put in the bodies of four innocents. He taught me the truth.

Brandon had made it a point to learn the stories of all four men. When Ezra was 15 he was told that he had a liver disease that would ultimately kill him. He was offered immortality and he accepted. He was taken to this place and was given his

immortality but was also given suffering .All of humanity 's suffering ,it's pain , it's fear ,it's frailty and I released him from his duty .It was unfair what they did .

Brandon was 24 when he was approached. He lived in a third world country, he was poor and starving .But he had his religion. It is said that you can deprive the body of food and water but starving the mind is truly fatal. His god was his food. But I believe and Brandon is proof that religion makes poor food and if tempted with something more than what you have you can be led away. He was offered freedom and power and he abandoned his religion to pursue it. He was given the hatred of the world and it drove him insane .I laugh at the thought that I, how was born in utopia, a child of love would become a pupil to hatred and insanity.

“It knows the truth now”

“It knows why I hurt and it knows how I can never be human again. There is no forgiveness.”

I spent along time down in the darkness being told dirty little truths.

“How can I save these people?”

I asked

“We are not to be saved .Our savior is death. But we can be avenged. Wrongs righted .The wrongs committed against us can only be paid in blood.

Part Three: Isaiah

It never stops burning, does it? The knowledge that you will never see that special one again .When you know your heart slow and aches. That special ones life and yours are intertwined. Their death kills you a little bit .Your eyes well up with tears and it's all for one reason .You cry and die and hurt just to fight reality. It never stops hurting does it?

Down in the darkness with the cold dirt and thick air, I slept.I dreamed of blood, red and sticky on my tongue. I dreamed of a sharp thing cutting into people, into people I knew; my mother, my brother, Emily. I woke with a jolt. The fear and confusion swirled in my head .They become my keepers and Hatred became my teacher. He whispered the horrors of man in my ears, preached their evils. He wanted to recreate me in his own image, he wanted a disciple and I couldn't help but believe him. What he said had to be true.

“Come, there is someone you must see. I have told you of my past .Now learn of my brother. A romantic he was. He loved his Heather with all his heart and they perverted it. Turned it in to something foul and all he wants was to have her back. She had died slowly .The disease ate away at her. All he wanted is to have her back”

He clutched my hand and led me through the darkness toward a door. He opened the door and backed away. He signaled for me to enter .He then followed behind.

Beyond the door was pool of water that had a sickly kind of glow, but the air was fresher. It seemed cleaner.

**“Brother.” In the center of the pool a man stood .He seemed to be cradling someone.” She’s doing better” the man looked up at us .He had such a tired face, such a skinny face. His face was tearstained and wrinkled.
“Is she?” Brandon asked in a voice almost friendly. Brandon then turned to me and said “Before you their was another .I killed her, as I may you. I brought you here to see.” He walked forward into the pool. He knelt down and pulled up a body.**

It hits you with the force of all heaven and earth .Your one and only desire at that moment is to unsee what you’ve seen; to somehow erase the truth.

**I didn’t remember knocking him into the pool .Couldn’t tell you exactly how he reacted. I just remember me forcing his head under the water .He thrashed violently and clawed at my face but I couldn’t care. I wouldn’t let myself care .Pain, fear the guilt that swelled in heart because I was trying to end another’s life and the horror that I found it easy to ignore, none of it would detour me. I rose from him, still shaking. “Thank you. He was in such pain. It’s better this way.”
Isaiah didn’t look at me or even say anything else .I was thankful that he didn’t say anything else.**

I crouched ever by Emily’s limb lifeless body and held her close to me .I kissed her forehead and closed my eyes to hold back the tears , but they still came . They streamed down my cheek and into her hair.

We both stayed there, cradling our lost lovers, trapped in our own worlds.

She almost looked as though she was sleeping. My eyes could easily be deceived, but not the touch. She was so cold. I brushed the hair from her eyes and stared at her face. Her face seemed pale, no not pale, but empty. She used to say that about some people. That they were empty .That the life or health had been taken out of them. It never made sense to me. But I think it has more to do with an extrasensory perception than with actual sight. It is almost like you sense their fatigue, their worries. Even now I would die for her. I would save her. I would find a way to save her.

Part Four: Conner and Henry

I have seen the black never ending abyss that only dead men see. I have tasted nothingness. I have felt the cold chill of non existence and I would do it a thousand times again for the chance to save her.

Isaiah would hum this tune to his Heather that spoke to me as well .I could tell that the tune was meant to be happy and light, but the way he hummed made it sound

very sorrowful .Isaiah didn't have happy in him, but he hummed the happy, but pitiful tune to her.

He then started to speak to her.”Remember ... Remember, the orange grove. Remember how I brushed your hair from eyes and we stared at each other for with seemed like hours .I wanted to look away to be honest .I didn't feel right .I think it was O .k to witness your beauty. “She began to groan. “ Sssshhhh. “he whispered to her. “Where am I?” a weak and gorgy voice said. I looked up and saw that Heather was awake. Isaiah shushed her again and lowered her into the water. She began thrashing and kicking the few times she could resurface she was screaming and gasping for air.

I raced over to them, water splashing everywhere. I, with all the force, separated Isaiah from her. She got up and ran off into the shadows and Isaiah desperately tried to follow. But I wasn't going to let go of him, no matter how much he kicked and punched and scratched and bit, I wasn't letting go of hum.

Love and obsession are often confused .The difference in the two is what you do when It's over.

When he realized he couldn't slip from my gasp, he started to choke me and force me down into the water. In desperation I grabbed a rock from the bottom of the pool and bashed it across his face. He stopped struggling and fall limp on top of me.

I crawled out from under him and for a long time I slept. When I wake up she was there. “Are you O.K?”

“I'm fine.”

“We have to find away out of this place.”She said

“No .this is a good place to die.” I said this with out realizing it.

That's when it occurred to me. I wanted this to happen. I wanted to save my Emily and to save her I'd have to let her go.

The priests circled around me and began to chant in unison. I couldn't understand the words but I knew it was a plea; a plea for forgiveness, a plea for aid, a desperate and sorrowful plea. I was happy and willing to take the death out of her.

EPILOGUE

Because of Henry 's love for Emily the world had no more death. They had no more fear and pain. They had no more hatred, no more greed and obsession. But in return five men were damned.

The untold tale of Conner

1982

Conner was born into a rich family. His family owned a number of oil refineries which permitted Conner to spend his days drinking and his nights attending parties. He managed to love and abuse himself all at the same time. He wasn't lured as much as he was kidnapped. He was given the world's indifference.