Vengeance
for a
Fallen Angel

Christophe Medler

Dedicated to my children, Faye Louise and David Elliott

Our greatest goal in life
is not never failing
but rising every time we fall.

Confucius

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Immortal Technique ‘Dance with the Devil’

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The sunset's fiery orb was sinking slowly beyond the horizon, the sea glassy and calm reflecting its orange, red and yellow. As the colours started to fade, the foreboding moon started to rise, revealing the dark eyes of the night. That aura of peace, that feel good factor at the end of a summer season, was about to be shattered by one of the most heinous and horrific acts ever committed in such a tranquil North Devon community.

There was a full moon that night, the tide was high, and the waves were crashing against the cliff face of Hillsborough Head, at the top of which was the site of an iron age fort and burial ground. After dark it was a spooky place, damp and salty. As the waves pounded against the rocky shoreline below, the sea spray formed liquid crystals caught by the moonlight and a veil of darkness fell like an enormous blanket over the landscape.

A young girl, who not long before had been dancing in abandon in front of a roaring log fire with LSD coursing through her veins, was now tumbling down that cliff face, her frail body smashing on the rocks below. Atop, a mysterious figure dressed in a hooded black cloak shook his feathered rattle calling unto the sea below, 'Oh, mighty Bondye, accept this sacrifice, the soul of this harlot is now yours.'

Earlier that day on a bright sunny afternoon, Woolacombe Bay with its long sweeping beach had just held its annual International Surfing Competition, attracting surfers from all over Europe and some as far away as the USA and Australia. The winner of the main even, the Woolacombe Wave Cup and a prize of £250

was none other than the Australian, Nat Young, the 1966 World Surfing Champion, who was in the midst of a world tour attending sponsored international surfing events such as that at Woolacombe.

The surf might be miniscule compared to that of the Big Sur in California or Shipstone Bluff in Australia that Nat was used to, but he entertained and wowed the spectators with his flips and cutbacks. He even managed an Ally Oop on his second run. The shore breeze had got up and Nat found an open facing wave enabling him to accelerate toward it, bottom turn at forty-five degrees and kick his tail out as he flipped the lid of the top of the wave. The shore's inward breeze kept his board stuck to his feet. The crowd roared; they could hardly believe it was possible on the Woolacombe surf that rose no higher than eight feet.

Among the crowd on the beach was a local policeman, Detective Inspector Richard (Rick) McCarthy, accompanied by his partner Kay Stone and a group of surfing friends. Rick was competing in the final event of the weekend, The Novices Cup, open to anyone who had not

competed in an international competition. It was regarded as a bit of fun by the locals to see who could embarrass themselves the most. The time flew, and before they knew it the announcer was calling for competitors in The Novices Cup to come down to the shoreline to be briefed by the referee and judge.

Rick looked round at Kay and his friends, giving the thumbs up as if to say, *It's now or never guys.* He proceeded to strip down to his wet suit and picked up his surfboard. Kay watched him get ready then kissed him good luck. *God I love you, Rick McCarthy, you are one in a million, My Adonis,* she thought to herself as he walked away.

In her eyes, Rick was very different from all the others, handsome, not perhaps in the conventional sense, but his appearance made him stand out in the crowd. He had dark hair and naturally lightly tanned skin, with unfathomable dark brown eyes that complemented his toned face. His eyes were deep and expressive, inviting you to get lost in them if you looked into them long enough, but he sometimes had that faraway look, making

him appear disinterested. This was due to his enquiring mind which, almost like a chess player, was five moves ahead of his opponent. At other times you could see a hint of sadness in his eyes, which would disappear as suddenly as it emerged. Above all was his frame and his stature. He was not exactly muscular, but he kept himself in good shape and carried himself with a confidence that was incredibly attractive.

He may not have all the girls swooning over him, thought Kay, watching him striding down the beach, his surfboard under his arm, *he's an enigma to many, but he's mine.*

Rick was unusually tense; it was a big crowd. He was riding his Blaker surfboard, his favorite, and had spent hours polishing the underside to glide over the waves and rough sanded the top for better grip on the soles of his feet. On his first run he tried a back flip and ploughed into the wave. This was greeted with hoots of laughter from Kay and those friends not competing.

His second run was much better, and he managed a double cut back before running out of wave and gliding upright to the shoreline.

Kay rushed towards him and threw herself at him to give him a salty kiss as they both tumbled into the water. That run moved him up on the leader board and he finished third for a bronze medal, the highest he had achieved in the competition in five years of trying. The competition winner and the winner of The Novices Cup and gold medal was none other than one of Rick's colleagues, Ethan James, head of the SOC team at Barnstable Police HQ.

Many of the spectators stayed behind after the surfing event had finished. The fast food vendors were still doing a roaring trade serving hot and cold drinks, burgers, hot dogs, and fish and chips. Families with young children were having picnics enjoying the last of the late afternoon's sunshine. Some children were building sandcastles with moats, trying to stem the incoming tide from breaching the outer wall, while others flew paper kites of multi colours, swooping up and down as if mimicking the gulls searching for any morsels to be found dropped on the beach. An impromptu game of beach cricket struck up with Nat Young captaining the overseas team v

England made up of a sporadic bunch of local and visiting surfers.

Rick and Kay spent the evening with friends around a beach fire, watching the sun go down, with copious amounts of beer from a cooler box. Camping out, up on the hillside overlooking the beach, were a remnant of hippies with their beaten-up VW Surfmobiles. The surfing event had attracted a following of the hippie movement, dressed in their unconventional clothes of vibrant colours, some with psychedelic images, barefoot, and wearing flowers in their hair. Many of them were anti-establishment, suspicious of the government, rejected capitalism and consumerist values, were generally opposed to the Vietnam War and supported the Ban The Bomb movement.

There was a sweet smell of marijuana, a fusion of citrus and rosemary, permeating the air and the magical sound of Procul Harum's *A Whiter Shade of Pale*. The haunting sound of Bach's *Orchestral Suite No 3 in D Major Air on a G String*, featuring as a countermelody to the song, resonated across the campsite and beach. It was a time for peace and love.

‘Can you hear it, Kay? That’s a Hammond Organ, playing Bach on a psychedelic pop record. I love it, it’s so innovative, pure jazz.’

‘It’s beautiful, Rick. I find it kind of perverse, even incredulous that Engelbert Humperdinck is top of the Hit Parade, with his song *The Last Waltz* at the moment. It’s as if the middle classes of England are rebelling against this new phenomenon. They seem to be challenging and dismissing all the great songs such as *If You’re Going to San Francisco* and *Flowers in the Rain*. OK, the songs, including *Itchycoo Park*, have drug connections, but they are great music. They’ll be classics one day.’

As they sat and watched the sun go down, Rick cuddled Kay and murmured rather poetically, ‘The world is changing fast, and the young are the future of our country. Let them have their fun, let them protest peacefully against tyranny and war.’ Little did Rick know that his own values, his belief in humanity, were about to be challenged in the most disturbing way that would make many a person’s blood run cold. It would take all of his detective skills and the skill of his dedicated

team to solve the most abominable crime driven by man, so evil as to be beyond redemption.

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Seven miles up the coastline at Ilfracombe it was nearly midnight. Ilfracombe, a seaside resort with a working harbour, sat snugly in a recess on the shoreline encircled by massive cliffs. The harbour was protected seaward by Lantern Hill which was capped with the oldest functioning lighthouse in the UK. There is a wild majesty to the place, as the terrain rises suddenly at Lantern Hill and again across the water at Hillsborough Head where, at its highest, the cliff face is four hundred feet high above sea level.

Hillsborough Head had long been designated as a nature reserve and was popular with tourists, ramblers walking the

North Devon Coast path, and the local population alike. The Head had been revered over the centuries by various pagan religious factions that practised Wicca, Druidism and more recently, Voodoo. Here, on that balmy late summer's night, the North Devon Voodoo Cauldron had gathered. They practiced their own version of Voodoo worship based on the ancient rituals of Voudun, together with that of Wakan Tanka, the Great Spirit of the Creole nation.

Circled round a makeshift altar, the cauldron celebrants were dressed in white cloaks emblazoned with the golden image of Bondye, the Voodoo God of Creation, on their backs.

The warlock, the elected leader of the cauldron, dressed in a black cloak emblazoned with the same golden Bondye image, shook his rattle adorned with Creole Indian feathers, and pronounced:

'Oh, mighty Bondye and Wakan Tanka, we worship you. Let the evil beast of Wendigo receive our sacrifice tonight.'

With that he threw powders of crushed mugwort, and black powder extracted from

fireworks onto the fire creating a massive flash that lit up the clifftop and sent out shafts of flames and white smoke into the night sky. The cauldron reeled back. The explosion and shafts of flames lit up the faces that were painted with designs reminiscent of ancient Creole Indian warpaint to protect their anonymity.

A young girl no more than eighteen years old was dancing in abandon in front of the group with the drug LSD coursing through her veins. She was singing *'Eight Miles High*' by the American west coast country rock group The Byrds, the recording having the inimitable guitar chords and voice of David Crosby. The LSD had been given to her by one of her past lovers on the climb up to the summit. 'What's this?' she had asked him on the climb up to their secret place where they used to make love under the stars.

'It's LSD, or Acid as it is sometimes called. It blows your mind with all beautiful thoughts and a kaleidoscope of colours. It's way above marijuana, speed or ecstasy. Sometimes you feel an out of body experience. They call it the purple fierce little heart on the streets and in the

clubs in Barnstaple, as the pills are heart shaped and coloured purple.'

'OK. I will if you will,' she said as she swallowed hers. He spat his own out without her noticing. The LSD did not take long to take effect, a matter of minutes as it coursed through her veins. She was used to taking ecstasy in the clubs, but this was a whole new experience. She started to lose all sense of time and space as the drug's mind-bending experience took effect. Sounds around her were being projected as colours, patterns and shapes.

Her lover held her close to prevent her stumbling as they continued to climb up the footpath toward the summit. As they neared the clearing, he took hold of her, kissed her passionately, fondled her and whispered in her ear, 'Here Babe, take another, it's groovy.' She was too far gone, tripping out from the effect of the first pill to care, so she swallowed another.

On reaching the clearing she was seeing bright multi-coloured stars like diamonds spinning around in the sky, and white robed monks dancing. Her lover took her by the hand

and handed her over to one of warlock's two acolytes.

The acolyte paraded her before the cauldron as if she were a prize-winning contestant in a TV games show. After she had twirled and bowed before them, he proceeded to strip her naked, throwing her clothes onto the log fire crying out, 'Faithfull followers of our almighty God the Creator, Bondye, I give you this harlot who has betrayed the cauldron.'

She made no resistance, the silhouette of her lithe body looked almost transparent as she gyrated against the backcloth of the roaring fire that was lighting up the dark sky. Her image reminded some of the cauldron of the opening scene of 'Tales of The Unexpected' a popular TV dramatization, as they salivated with hardening erections at the thought of what was to come.

The acolyte who had stripped her, took her by the hand and handed her over to the warlock who offered her a ceremonial chalice with a secret potion of drugs and herbal medicines. The young girl drank the potion with gusto and in an almost manic trance started to gyrate

again, provocatively running her hands slowly up and down her torso.

She was laid upon the altar and each member of the cauldron took their turn in subjecting her to continuous sexual abuse with no orifice remaining sacred. The cauldron continued to chant in an ever-increasing tempo. Whilst one of them was engaged in rough anal sex and performing sexual asphyxiation on her, the naked girl passed out. She lay motionless spread eagled, face down, like a suckling pig roasting on a spit.

The chanting had reached fever pitch, there was no stopping the cauldron now.

'You've killed her,' cried out the second of the warlock's acolytes, prompting the rest of the chanting of the cauldron to reach an almighty crescendo.

'She's dead, she's dead, the wicked white witch is dead,' they chanted manically in unison as they danced round the altar.

The warlock waved, shook his rattle, danced in circles, and then decreed, 'Toujou' *(still, in the Haitian Creole language).*

The cauldron's chanting subsided to almost silence as they formed a semi-circle around the altar facing the man in black. He cried out:

'Touye' *(Kill).*

Go harlot into the eternal flames of Wendigo.

Steal no more secrets, say no more lies.

Seek no more to break the Cauldon Oath.'

The full moon emerged again from behind the clouds. The still night air was suddenly cut by the swishing sound of the falling of a heavy blade crashing down with a thud on the altar, severing the girl's right hand which fell to the earthen floor. The severing of a hand was an ancient ritual of the Creole as punishment for stealing, breaking an oath or telling a lie. It also had religious connotations as an act of destroying the omnipotence of God by severing 'God's Right Hand.'

A deadly hush fell upon Hillsborough Head. Turning to face the others, the warlock pronounced, 'Let the witch's blood flow into the chasm of Wendigo.' He held up the hand dripping with blood and tossed it onto the fire, a stench of burning flesh permeating the air.

The girl remained motionless on the alter. The warlock shook his rattle again and threw more mugwort onto the fire causing a drift of white smoke to rise as he signalled the close of the ceremony.

‘Go brethren, may the mighty Bondye hold and protect your damned souls until we meet again.’

The moon drifted back behind a cloud and darkness fell. As if by magic, members disappeared into the shadows of the night leaving the warlock and his two acolytes to dispose of the girl’s body. They picked her up from the altar and carried her to the cliff edge, casting her into the sea below. Her body spun, jerked, and tumbled like a rag doll in the jaws of a puppy dog, smashing against the rocky cliff face on the way down. The tide was high against the base of the cliffs and the current immediately began to carry her body away and round into Hele Bay.