

Slaying
Paradise

By:

T.V. Holiday

Open Eyes to Infinity

Clear eyes
Sight beyond sight,
No longer the center
For others is my light.

Tender my soul
A magnificent calling awaits,
A legacy that lasts
Engraved in time and space,

Heavyweight blueprints in my mind
For a vision utterly divine,
For those who are lost
It is you I'm set to find.

See with me
Live with me
Cry with me
Ride with me.

God is forever
Love is the message,
Establish that connection
I'll guide you through the wreckage.

Souls free to witness
Ever present in this journey,
For the pathways we trek
To live a life so heavenly.

Chapter 1

Travis Holiday transported his latest prisoner to the Las Colebras Women's Detention Facility. He arrested Chelsea Turner for punching her girlfriend. While driving, she tossed and turned in the backseat. She rambled incoherent sentences and banged her head against the window. She was visibly irritated. Her forehead swelled after banging her head. The sting from the forming bruise momentarily settled her down.

"I hate going to jail. I'm gonna' have to get my vajayjay looked at all because I hit my stupid girlfriend," Chelsea stated. The more she thought about her impending visit, she became angrier. She frustratingly kicked the backseat divider, which caught Travis' attention again.

"I get you're upset but stop banging and kicking back there. Don't make this worse than it is" Travis firmly told her. He didn't want Chelsea to hurt herself. Any injury would be a trip to the hospital instead of jail. It had already been a busy shift. He was on his second trip to jail and had multiple reports to finish. Nothing was going to prevent her from going. A hospital visit would only be an extension of his night.

She caught a glimpse of him in the rearview mirror. Chelsea could see his firmness. He had an athletic build and was average height. She didn't want to test his patience. She nodded to acknowledge his request and leaned back. She didn't mean to be disrespectful. She had been to jail multiple times and wanted to get it over with.

"I'm sorry you're going through this," Travis sincerely replied. He sensed her frustration and empathized with her. "Do your time and move on. Hopefully you don't go back."

"I wish. Knowing my girlfriend, I'll be back here after the next argument," she sighed.

"If that's the case, why go back to her?" Travis inquired.

Chelsea disappointingly hung her head. He heard her sniffing in the backseat. She wiped her nose with her knee and used her shoulder to wipe her tears. "I don't know," she whimpered.

"Yes you do," Travis kindly insisted. Although she was a prisoner, he wanted to help her understand what she was feeling. He hated domestic violence incidents. They could be the most violent radio calls an officer could go to. Despite the extremely violent occurrences, they usually involved people who were in an emotional situation that took one step too far. Anybody could've been in his backseat for the same reason.

"No, seriously I don't. If you've got the answer then tell 'cause I'm lost?" she desperately asked.

"You love her," he replied.

His answer brought her emotions to the surface and she sobbed. Travis sat quietly. Although she was under arrest, he saw her as a regular person. He didn't see everyone as a criminal. Travis believed bad people who wanted to hurt others existed. But he also remembered that people made mistakes. His perspective helped him treat his prisoners with respect.

"I hope you aren't beating yourself up about it. It's quite normal y'know. When we love someone, sometimes we accept more than we should. Love can be blinding," said Travis.

Chelsea felt foolish. She had been arrested multiple times as a result of her relationship. She couldn't imagine other people making similar decisions. "What about you? You ever been blinded by love," she asked.

Travis hesitated to respond. His mind ventured elsewhere. Her question was one he grappled with occasionally. Memories flooded his mind of incidents where he could've been blinded by love. He knew the answer. He didn't like it either. She noticed his silence, which struck her as odd. It stoked her curiosity. She asked if he heard her. Her question reeled him back to the moment. He looked in the mirror that displayed his suddenly sorrowful eyes.

“...I have,” Travis solemnly answered.

His transparency surprised her. She could tell he was thinking about something. She didn't think he would be honest about it. “Care to share?” she asked.

Travis split his eyes between the road and Chelsea. He contemplated whether to answer her. She seemed desperate to hear what he would say. There were times when he kept parts of his life private. For others, he shared his experiences when he felt it would be beneficial for him and the other person.

He remained silent and Chelsea disappointingly slouched in her seat. She had hoped he would say more. She never met an officer who said more to her than they had to. Travis felt her sadness. She was in a low place. He didn't want to leave her hanging. He could tell this would be one of those times when it would be beneficial to share. If not for him, for Chelsea.

“I'm married,” he told her.

Her eyes perked up. She was surprised to hear his response. “How long?” she asked.

“A long time. Like 17 years long,” he gently smiled.

Chelsea excitedly unbuckled her seatbelt and leaned forward. She could hear despite the noise from the freeway and radios that played in the background. She was anxious to have a conversation with him. “You happily married?”

Travis heard her unbuckle the seatbelt and glanced into the backseat. Her closeness to the window startled him. “Wait did you take your seatbelt off?”

“What? We're talking! I want to hear you,” she nonchalantly pleaded. Chelsea didn't see it as a big deal.

“I appreciate that but it didn't mean take off your seatbelt. Come on Chelsea. How the heck did you do that anyway?” he sighed. He couldn't

believe she was able to unbuckle herself. He had made sure her handcuffs were secured before they left the police station.

“I got talents. So what, you were about to answer my question...” she giggled. She didn’t care about the seatbelt. Their conversation was more important to her.

“Talents huh? I’ll answer that question after you put your seatbelt back on,” he responded. It wasn’t the first time he had a prisoner unbuckle themselves. He didn’t want to pull over forcefully put her seatbelt back on. He knew that he had her full attention. He believed she would cooperate with him if he simply asked.

“Really?”

He sternly looked into the mirror. Chelsea saw his face and exhaled, “Okay okay.”

She slipped her hand out of the handcuffs and put her seatbelt back on. Travis watched unbelievably while she did it. He couldn’t believe she was able to easily slip her handcuffs. She slid her hand back into them and smiled into the mirror. She cleared her throat for him to notice she complied with his request. He couldn’t help but chuckle at the nature of the situation.

“Now can you answer my question already,” she mockingly interrupted.

He was amused by her sarcasm and glad that she wasn’t crying anymore. “I get asked that question a lot. Happiness comes and goes. If we always base things off our happiness, we’d never stick with anything.”

Chelsea couldn’t believe him. She thought her question was straightforward. His answer seemed contrived. “Are you serious? Who in the world told you that?” she jokingly retorted.

“I read it somewhere,” he laughed.

She focused on his eyes through the mirror. She wanted to get a better read of him. Chelsea appreciated his apparent willingness to speak.

She was determined to have a real conversation with him. “It sounds like you’re lying to yourself,” she cynically said.

Her refusal to accept his response confounded him. He thought she might’ve rejected the idea based on the concept alone. He didn’t expect her to turn it around on him. “What? No I’m not.”

“Yeah you are,” she insisted.

“No I’m not!” Travis became defensive. He wondered what impression he gave to make her think he lied. He replayed his response and examined his tone. In his mind, there was no way he didn’t believe what he said.

“You got a girlfriend?” Chelsea asked. His insistence that he was wrong made her confidence grow. Chelsea believed she was right. He had been nice to her. She wanted to return the favor.

Travis confusingly shook his head. He was bewildered about how the conversation flipped on him. “A girlfriend? I told you I’m married.”

“I know. The question still stands. Do you have a girlfriend?”

“No, I got a wife,” he persisted. He hoped his answer would stop her insistence.

Chelsea enjoyed the back and forth they were having. She didn’t want to be disrespectful. She felt he was on the verge of cracking and didn’t want to let up. “A girlfriend’s more fun. Do you want one?”

“Why you offerin’?” he humorously responded.

His question made her laugh. She had never laughed in the backseat of a police car. She hoped the ride wouldn’t end. “Hey your wife can share. Sharing is caring right?” she smirked.

Despite the nature of their conversation, he was entertained by it. “You’re funny Chelsea. Thanks, but I don’t think my wife would be okay with that type of sharing.”

They arrived at Las Colebras. She was processed and cleared for entry. Travis walked Chelsea to the holding cell where the deputies were set

to take custody of her. She tried to read him again. Her time with him was the most positive interaction she had with a police officer considering the circumstances. He wasn't like other officers she met.

“You're pretty cool Officer Holiday. Thanks for being nice. I hope you stop lying to yourself. You're a good guy. Good guys deserve to be happy,” Chelsea told him.

Travis appreciated her tenderness toward him. He took her to jail yet she wished him well. He couldn't help but laugh as well. The deputies came and walked her into the jail. She smiled and waved goodbye before she went out of sight. His interaction with Chelsea was why he enjoyed being a police officer. He met people who made him feel a range of emotions. He felt grateful to be a light for people in their lowest moments. His career gave him fulfillment and allowed him to live a life of service as he always desired. He couldn't imagine doing anything else.

Chapter 2

Travis finished his shift at midnight without making another arrest. A heavy fog filled the air. The fog in San Diego typically set in very thick late in the evening. It made driving extremely difficult. Travis got on the freeway to go home. The traffic was light. Despite the fog, people still drove fast and recklessly. Travis lived north of San Diego and the freeway was under construction.

As he drove home, traffic became busy near the construction. There were more drivers on the road than normal. Travis neared his exit but couldn't merge into the next lane. Cars boxed him out, which frustrated him. He honked his horn at the car next to him. He motioned to an old lady if he could move over. She wore large coke-bottle glasses and could barely see over the steering wheel. She inched forward as they got closer to his exit. Travis honked his horn again and rolled down his passenger window.

The woman looked at him confusingly as he motioned to get into the next lane. She waved her hand in response. He asked if she would let him over but she inched forward and did not respond. Travis motioned to her again but she drove in front of him. More cars passed as his exit was two car lengths away.

Another car passed and left an opening in the lane big enough for him to enter. He tried to merge into it but was cut off by an F-350. Travis swerved out of the lane to prevent a collision. The truck pulled up to Travis and the driver looked at him. The driver was a bald-headed man with an eerie smile on his face. The driver smiled and motioned for Travis to move in front of him. Travis waved for him to keep driving but he didn't move. The man only smiled. Travis gave up and irritably drove in front of him. He missed his exit.

Traffic started to clear up but the fog was still thick. The area surrounding the freeway became mountainous. There weren't any railings along the road, which had a large drop-off on the other side. Travis sped up

to 80 miles an hour. No one else was around. The F-350 was elevated and its lights shined through Travis' rear window. The light reflected off every mirror. The glare made it difficult for him to see.

Travis sped up to 100 miles an hour but the truck stayed behind him. The driver turned on his bright lights and blinded Travis even more. He passed the exit where he planned to turn around. He couldn't see anything in front of him due to the light and fog. Travis squinted his eyes as the truck moved alongside him. The driver had the same eerie smile on his face and pointed forward. Travis looked back at the road and noticed red flares in front of him. He saw faint, flashing yellow lights. It was a broken-down car in his lane. He slowed but the F-350 swerved into his car. Travis turned to the right and dodged the vehicle in front of him. The road didn't have a barrier and he drove off the cliff.

Travis' car flew into the air. The car slammed alongside the mountain and rolled downhill. His head split open after it struck the car ceiling. His ribs cracked when his chest smashed against the steering wheel. His knees fractured as they smacked the bottom of the steering column. The car rolled uncontrollably down the hill until it crashed into a set of trees. The car was turned on its side. The air bags deployed and knocked him unconscious.

After an hour, Travis blinked his eyes as he slowly regained consciousness. He looked around and noticed he was hanging from his seat. He survived the crash and couldn't be more grateful. Pain shot through his body as he woke up. He wanted to undo the seatbelt but couldn't move his arms. They were broken. Travis was stuck. He wondered how he would free himself but unexpectedly heard footsteps approaching the car.

The footsteps stopped and the car moved. It was slowly lowered back to the ground on all four wheels. As Travis sat in the car, a blinding light cut through the fog. It was similar to the F-350 that ran him off the road. A sudden chill trickled down his back. He thought the bald-headed man

returned to kill him. The light revealed itself to be a man. But it wasn't the bald-headed man. It was a man in a white gown. He had a full beard with long, brown curly hair. His skin was fair and eyes were blue. He approached Travis with a smile and offered to help.

He pulled Travis out of the car. He had feeling in his arms and legs but couldn't move. His body was covered in blood and glass. The man gently laid him on the ground and stood over him.

"Stand up Travis," the man gently told him.

"What?" Travis mumbled. He was disoriented but had enough of his wits to realize what was happening. He realized the man said his first name. The pain wrecked his body and made it difficult for him to respond.

"Stand."

The pain in his body withered away. His bones snapped back into place. His ribs were mended. The blood and glass fell off of him. He rapidly felt vigorous. A moment ago, he was overtaken with paralyzing pain. Now he had strength. Travis was astonished at the disappearance of his pain and stood without difficulty. He looked at the man surprised and bewildered while the glow around him dimmed. He wondered where he came from. He knew of no mortal man, aside from Jesus, who had the power to heal someone with only a word. Something was special about him.

"Who are you?" Travis nervously asked.

"Someone who has been watching you. My name is Mark. I was sent here to find you," he answered.

"What are you talking about? Who sent you?" asked Travis. Mark's answer was unsettling. Travis immediately thought about Mark watching him while he was with his family. He wondered if it was true. Nobody could have responded to his crash so quickly. Neither could anybody give him the strength to stand on command. Nothing about the moment made sense.

Mark pointed to the sky and another chill overcame Travis. He couldn't believe his answer. He imagined seeing a heavenly figure but never believed he would see the day. He still wasn't sure if that day had arrived.

Travis looked at the cliff he drove off. He didn't believe there was any way he could have survived the crash. His body was broken before Mark arrived. His life didn't flash before his eyes. That was always supposed to be a sign one's life was about to end. He didn't see a bright light either. Without those signs, there was only one question he had to ask.

"Am Iam Id-d-dead?" Travis stuttered.

"No, you're not. You've been chosen to defend others in God's name."

Travis was greatly relieved to know he survived the crash. He wasn't ready to leave his family behind. There was much more he wanted to do in his life. He wasn't ready to die.

"Why me? What have I been chosen for?" Travis shockingly replied. He felt a heavy weight land on his shoulders. He was fearful to hear Mark's next words. His presence brought a level of significance. Anything he was bound to say would have the potential to change his life. Thoughts raced through Travis's head. He pondered what Mark's statement meant. He felt there were many ways to interpret its meaning.

"For years you always had the feeling that you were preparing for something. I'm here to tell you that you were right. The time you were preparing for is here. It's time for you to fight for others on behalf of God. Your life here is over. Your new life is waiting for you in a place named Carnage Coast. It's a place where only I can show you. You will have to follow me," instructed Mark.

Mark's revelation paralyzed Travis. He felt like he was dreaming. He looked at his car and realized it was not dream. It was real. Very real. "What is my new life supposed to be in Carnage Coast?" he asked.

“You will become someone to fight against evil in its purest form. You will bring back souls who are lost. You will become the light in the darkness. You will become God’s fist in his war against Lucifer. God needs you to embrace the mantle of The Iron Warrior,” said Mark.

Travis was speechless and baffled by his disclosure. If Mark was right, any doubts he had about the Bible would be erased. For God to exist meant evil existed as well. It would mean the parts of the Bible he chose to ignore, the Ten Commandments, God’s words, all of it would be real. He spent his life choosing to believe what was written because he had to choose to believe something. He felt the other religions had fractions of truth in them. All of it would be wiped away with Mark’s revelation.

“What is The Iron Warrior?” he fearfully asked.

“The Iron Warrior is the one who is strong, hardened and dedicated to serving others. Iron signifies hardness and strength. It doesn’t bend or give way to pressure. Warriors, fight for something greater than themselves. They develop themselves so they can be strong enough for others. The highest honor a warrior can have is to serve and show love to others. Isn’t that the way you live your life? How can The Iron Warrior be anyone else but you?” explained Mark.

Travis couldn’t believe what he was hearing. Travis didn’t feel he was strong enough to be The Iron Warrior. He didn’t feel he could be who God wanted him to be. He struggled with it daily. “I’m sure there are others who would be more qualified than me,” Travis responded.

“Others weren’t chosen. Someone who had the approval of the Lord saw something in you,” Mark revealed.

Travis was stunned by Mark’s response. He expected him to say God but he didn’t. He wondered who Mark referred to. Since it wasn’t God, he didn’t feel the same obligation compared to if it were.

“Why are you reluctant to answer God’s call?” asked Mark.

“Who says I’m reluctant? You said someone who had the approval of God chose me. I’m not refusing God. If I say no, I’m refusing the person who chose me.” Travis countered.

“To refuse that person is no different than refusing God. If you tell God no, you will be no different than anyone else he has called upon,” Mark told him.

Travis’ eyes watered. Mark was right. “I’m not telling God no. I’m just trying to go home. I go to church, I pay my tithe, I lead small groups. I try to live a good life. I’m doing everything I can already. I can’t do more,” Travis explained. He wanted to be a man after God’s heart. He divided his time among his responsibilities to be the man whom he felt God wanted him to be. The thought that God wanted more was unbelievable.

“Those things don’t constitute all of God’s work. God has plans for everyone who chooses to do his will. Those things may be everything for someone else ...but not for you. More is required from you. Deep down inside, you know it. That is why you have been able to do everything you mentioned. You can handle those things. You can do that because your true job is much greater,” Mark revealed.

Travis broke down. Mark was right again. Every time he felt he wouldn’t be able to answer God’s calls, he was proven wrong. God gave him strength to continually do more.

“When you run from the battles you must fight, your path will always bring you back to them. There are battles you must fight. Running only delays the inevitable. Don’t run from this,” said Mark.

Sadness filled Travis. He had a family to go home to. A family he loved more than life itself. He believed it was his life’s purpose to raise his son to manhood and grow old with his wife. “What about my family? Will I ever see them again?” asked Travis.

“I am not allowed to answer that. Understand your choice carries a great weight. Many things will happen no matter what you choose. But if you refuse, you may never see them again,” Mark informed him.

“Why can’t you answer that?” Travis begrudgingly asked. He was faced with the biggest decision of his life. He wanted more clarity. He wanted more answers if he had to possibly walk away from his family. He never wanted to be in a position to choose between God and his family. Yet there he was.

Travis leaned back and looked up to the sky. He couldn’t see through the fog. He thought about his faith. He heard his older brother’s voice say, “I walk by faith and not by sight.” He couldn’t see God but had to make his decision based on faith. Faith that it was the right decision. He looked at Mark and wondered. Travis knew Mark was a heavenly person. He didn’t question it. Travis could feel God’s presence through Mark’s words.

“Are you sure you have the right guy? I mean I curse, I fight ...I’m not perfect. I mean, straight up, ...I can be an asshole. Even my wife has called me one. Are you sure those are the qualities for someone who is supposed to be The Iron Warrior?” asked Travis. He couldn’t help but question Mark. To be The Iron Warrior seemed much bigger than him. He wanted Mark to realize who he was talking to. Travis didn’t want Mark to make a mistake for something of such great importance.

Mark laughed at his comments. He could sense his nervousness. “Travis, I believe that is why you were chosen. God does not look for those who are perfect to serve him. He looks for those who are willing and able.”

Travis looked at Mark and felt righteousness in him. The feeling assured him that the moment was not an accident. Travis wanted to see his family badly. They were his world and he didn’t want to live without them. The only light in his choice was the possibility of seeing them again. For him, any choice that involved seeing them again was the right choice.

“Alright ...I’ll do it. I’ll become The Iron Warrior,” said Travis.
“Now what am I supposed to do about my family? How are they going to find out about me? What are they going to be told?”

“There is nothing for you to do. That will be taken care of,” said Mark.

“Why did I have a feeling you were going to say something like that?” asked Travis.

“Don’t worry Travis, God will provide for those you leave behind and the future before you. Now come with me. Trust me Travis. Trust God,” Mark instructed.

Travis followed Mark into the fog. Fear and trepidation crept into his heart as he followed Mark. He wasn’t sure what he was getting himself into. He was leaving everything he knew behind. He was chose to become The Iron Warrior. To put his mind at ease, he tried to focus on the possibility of seeing his family in the future.

Chapter 3

Meanwhile in Carnage Coast, a woman named Lynda Lynch walked down the street. She wore a short, shoulder-less, red leather dress with three-inch red high heel boots. Her lips were bright red. Her long brunette hair stopped at her shoulders. Black eyeliner outlined her hazel eyes. Red blush highlighted her cheeks.

She stopped at the corner of Third and Broadway Avenue. It was a slow night for Lynda. It was cold and no one was out. She desperately needed money. The rent was due for her 500 square foot apartment that wasn't worth the money she paid. Any money she earned wasn't hers to keep. Lynda worked for the biggest pimp and drug pusher in Carnage Coast, Lazarus.

Lazarus controlled 30 women. He pimped them to local political figures and his business associates. He pushed narcotics through his women and created a stranglehold over the streets. He gave his political friends and business associates percentages of his profits and women to buy their cooperation. Lazarus was the most powerful man in the city. He offered the ultimate good time to anyone willing to pay.

Lynda was an alcoholic. She had difficulty keeping a job. One night, she was drunk and smashed a beer bottle across a woman's face that led to a barfight. She was arrested for assault. While in jail, she was noticed by a woman named Kym. Kym and the woman Lynda injured worked for Lazarus. He paid her bail and made Lynda one of his prostitutes as punishment for injuring one of his women. She worked for Lazarus for six years. Lynda was at rock bottom and didn't know of a way out. Her hatred for life and Lazarus grew every night she was on the street. Every date was the worst night of her life.

"YO!" a voice blared from down the street.

Lynda turned and saw two men approaching her. Their arms were covered with tattoos and bandanas covered their bald heads. They were a

Hispanic man named Hector and white man named Slim who paid large amounts of money to do whatever they wanted to Lynda. Lazarus never allowed Lynda to go to the hospital. If she did, Lynda paid with the little bit of money she had. She couldn't afford it. If she spent money that was supposed to go to Lazarus, he called Hector and Slim for punishment.

Lynda did not acknowledge them. She did not look forward to seeing them again. They cornered her against a light pole. Hector glared at her while Slim bit his lip and looked her up and down. She gave them their drugs and hoped they'd leave her alone but she knew better. She knew what was coming. Her silence angered them. They promised to make it quick since they had prior engagements. Their promise didn't bring relief.

Hector grabbed Lynda's hair and pushed her in front of him. Her body went numb as she thought about the hours ahead of her. During her times with them, Lynda never thought she would make it to the morning. Her body was beaten and ravaged. Slim sped up and pushed her down. Hector grabbed her hair and dragged Lynda into a dimly lit alley before she could stand. Her legs scraped along the concrete as they were out of sight from everyone.

An hour passed and Lynda laid motionless on the ground. Hector and Slim were gone. She was in pain. Her eyes swelled from the impact of their fists. Her neck had imprints of Slim's hands around it. Her hair was filled with trash. Her dress was torn across the stomach. The bottom of it was hiked up. She felt where they rammed her head into a dumpster. Her hand was wet from the blood that trickled from the wound. Lynda tried to move her legs but cringed at the slightest movement. She was torn on the inside. Lynda could not feel all of her teeth. Her lips were cut and swollen. Blood flowed from her broken nose onto her mouth. Somehow though, she was still alive.

Lynda laid on the ground until she could move. Footsteps could be heard nearby. She hoped no one would see her. She couldn't defend herself. She hoped it wasn't Hector and Slim. Lynda laid as still as possible. She

breathed slowly as she leaned against the building. The footsteps stopped in front of her. She looked up but could barely see through her swollen eyes. She saw a faint figure of a man standing above her. The light in the alley was too dim to see anything else.

“How could those animals do such a thing?” he asked softly. He knelt in front of Lynda who remained still. She hoped her silence would convince him to leave.

“Lynda, I know you can hear me. I can understand why you’re so quiet. You don’t know who I am. I could be another guy like those two animals who have been doing this to you,” said the man.

Lynda tried to look at him again but her vision was blurry. “H-h-how do you k-know me,” she stuttered.

“Lynda, I’ve watched you walk these streets. No one has been taking care of you. A woman like you should have someone to treat you properly. You should have someone who wants you. Someone who wants you for being you. I’ve been wanting you for a while now Lynda. Your life doesn’t have to be this way,” he explained.

She tried to sit up but was in too much pain to move. She wanted to see who was talking to her. “Who are you?” asked Lynda.

“My name is Luc. There is no need to be embarrassed. I want to help. You don’t deserve what’s happening to you,” said Luc. He gently grabbed Lynda’s arms and leaned her against a building. His hands were warm to the touch as if they had been hanging over a fire. They left a burning, tingling sensation on her body.

“You’re not one of those religious crusaders are you,” she asked. She kept her guard up as much as possible. Lynda met numerous religious men and women while she walked the streets. They cursed and condemned her to hell. People whom she never met called her a sinner. They were hypocrites to Lynda and she didn’t want anything to do with them.

“Not at all.”

“Good ‘cause I don’t believe in that shit anyway. God don’t care about me and I don’t care about him. I hate him,” revealed Lynda.,” she said. Luc smiled. Her anger and hatred toward God was genuine. He could feel it.

She tried to pull herself up but couldn’t. She didn’t have enough strength to stand or pull herself up. Lynda gave up and sat back against the wall. Trying to stand up took a lot out of her. She scanned the ground and reached for her money. She couldn’t afford to lose it.

“You don’t need that money Lynda. If you give me what I want, you’ll never need money again,” said Luc.

Lynda was able to come back to her senses. His response intrigued her. To Lynda, he sounded weird. But there was something about him that moved her in a strange way. His words were alluring.

“Look Luc ...you sound like a pretty nice guy. You really sound like a stalker but no thanks. I really need to go. I need my money. I have to get more or that’s really gonna’ be my ass. So can you please just leave me alone?” Lynda told him.

“Is this really the life you want to go back to? I can give you something different Lynda. All you have to do is give me one thing. Why don’t you let me make your dreams of fame and fortune a reality? Let me give you the life you dreamed of?” Luc asked.

Lynda was shocked. Luc spoke of things that only her family knew. She abandoned those dreams once she became stuck to Lazarus.

“How could you know that?” she asked curiously.

“I know a lot of things Lynda. I can share them with you if you let me,” Luc slyly suggested. “I can free you if you let me.”

Lynda was silent. She didn’t know what to make of Luc. She still couldn’t see him. He asked to show her something and slowly stood her up. She was limp in his arms. She tried to use his arms to balance herself but had difficulty standing. Luc lowered his hand and touched Lynda’s left leg and slowly raised it. She felt the tingling, burning sensation again. It intensified

the longer his hands touched her body. Lynda suddenly felt strength return to her leg. The blood and bruises from her legs healed as Luc's hands passed over them. He healed the tears inside. The sensation felt like the climax of a great sexual experience. He traced his hands over her eyes and allowed her to see again. He traced his fingers along her lips and reduced the swelling. Lynda moved her tongue and felt her teeth again.

She felt alive. Lynda never felt a sensation like that in her life. Her heart beat stronger and faster. The burning and tingling sensation faded when Luc removed his hands. Lynda was mesmerized by Luc's appearance. His complexion was light. His ethnicity couldn't be determined by looking at him. A black, clean-cut goatee surrounded his mouth and was the only hair on his head. He wore an all-red suit with a black shirt and red tie. Luc also wore a pair of sunglasses.

"That's only a taste of what I'm willing to offer. All you have to do is give me one thing. If you give me this one thing, I'll give you everything you want. I won't treat you like you've been treated. I want you to become a woman who burns with a fire that will bring men and women to their knees. One who has the power to bring others to me willingly. All you have to do is give me this one thing," Luc explained.

Lynda's eyes closed as she listened to his proposal. He spoke of everything she ever wanted. All she had to do was give him the one thing he asked for.

"What do you want from me?" she asked softly. She was in a state of ecstasy while in his arms.

"I want you Lynda ...I want your soul," Luc stated.

Lynda opened her eyes after hearing Luc's request. She thought it was strange. Lynda never thought about her soul. She wasn't even really sure she had one to give.

"My soul? Why?"

Luc smiled. He spoke softly into her ear, “It’s who you are. It’s the essence of you. You’re nothing without it. I want you, Lynda. I want everything about you ...everything that makes you who you are. I’ve wanted it ever since I saw you. It’s so rich and beautiful ...I don’t want to go without. No man on this earth wants you like I do. Not even God was willing enough to do for you like I have. I care about you Lynda. Give me your soul. Be mine. Belong to me and I will take care of you forever.”

Lynda closed her eyes again. Luc’s words were sweet and tender. He was a dream come true. He was a man who expressed a desire to have her. No man ever spoke to Lynda with such passion. Lynda lost herself in his words. “Yes,” she said.

Her body was seized with the burning and tingling sensation. She felt a newfound strength surge through her. She hugged him tightly. A man finally stepped into her life and offered her light. She felt there was a chance to finally close a dark chapter in her life.