

Of Life and Unlife

Bringing Light into the Night

Von Crion_dm459

Kapitel 1: A Breath of Life

Now that that is situated, would you like some wine? It may be the best way to prepare for the long tale that I am preparing to tell you. No? If you by chance change your mind, please help yourself.

So, where to continue on...

Ah! That's it! All of you interviewers ask the same question. "Where are you from?" Am I correct?

Yes, I thought I would. I have a lot of experience with these things.

Eh? How much experience? Please my dear, one question at a time.

Where I was born was a small village in what is known today as France, somewhere close to the border of what is now Germany.

What? You say that there is no village near Germany? My dear, you should let me finish. Didn't your mother teach you that it was rude to interrupt a man when he is telling you the story that you asked for?

Oh? Ah, yes, you were taught that you shouldn't interrupt your *grandfather* when he was telling stories. But please, if you may, grant me the same respect that you gave him. You will understand everything in due time.

Now, where was I? Yes, the village.

The name was lost in time, surely. Yes, the village no longer exists, and sadly, I do not remember the name of it. It was so long ago...

No matter. I was born in this small village. Life was normal, all things considering. Our lord kept us poor peasants safe, and our Lord and Father gave us a promise that if we served his servants, we would be saved.

I look back and laugh at such tripe.

But, that is how I was raised. My father worked the fields with my two older brothers, and my mother was trying to find a way to have my sister marry as soon as she was of age. I was, sadly, the problem child.

As a child, my health was poor. The priest stated I would be lucky to survive the first few years of life. Even furthermore, he claimed that if I did survive, it would be a miracle by God if I would ever have enough health to work the fields like my father before me.

But I did survive my first years. Afterwards, my family found me more of a burden than I help. I could not work in the fields with my brothers. They could not find a logical way for me to be married; who would want to marry a man who could not work to support his family. I was trapped inside the house at a young age, and my mother

feared that my life would continue that way until my health finally snapped, and I would die.

A terrible way to begin your life, wouldn't you agree?

But no, do not start crying. Here, have a glass of wine. 1859, a good year, I assure you. There, that is better. My goal is not to make you cry. My romance novels are designed for that purpose. I myself am not.

But life was not nearly as bad as it seemed. That very same priest, who damned me at the start of my life, wanted me to study under him. His argument was simple; if I could not be perfect in body, I should prepare my spirit in the best way possible. He offered me a place in the church; a place to make my life have purpose. A place that my family preferred that I would live instead.

Of course, at that age, I obeyed. I moved into the grounds of the church and devoted my life to a god that would never listen to me.

But, it was not all bad. I was given a roof to live under when it rained. I was given the food and water that I needed to continue preaching. They taught me how to read and write, and eventually, ordered me to work in the "library."

It was fascinating. At such a young age, I was a sponge. I would study any book (a rare thing at that time) that came to me, and I was rather fickle with how things *should* work. I wanted things to be in order, and I wanted them to look beautiful while I did it. So, they ordered me to work in the libraries. The job itself was not very bad. I learned from the elder man who worked there how he ordered the books, and I gave my own suggestions. While this often angered him, he did see some wisdom in my words and would perform what I requested days later, claiming it was his own idea.

A pity...

The library seemed to be a gift from God. He gave me something that I could work in, and a way to enjoy life. Even though I was only seven years of age, this life was something I didn't think I would leave behind.

But, of course, all good things must come to an end. This, of course, was no exception. The man that I worked under was mad. No, not angry, mad. The man was possessed with a demon, a shadow over his mind that altered his perceptions. The man was possessed with lust, but not one that a woman could fix. No, one that only a young boy could slake.

One night, he tried to take me in the back of the library. Even at his age, he was stronger than I would have believed. Even now, I still cannot believe the grip that he held within his hands.

He always said soothing things in a calm voice, claiming that this was all God's will, that this is what was meant to be, and things of the sort.

Even at that time, I knew it was all bullshit, and didn't believe a word of it.

But, what was I to do? I was only seven years old. I couldn't do much more against the man that a toddler against a wolf. I only clamped my mouth shut and braced for the worst.

The next morning, after I had awoken from a night that I had cried myself to sleep, I found that he was dead in his bed. No one knew how or why, but some souls would be willing to point a finger at me all too quickly.

Over the next few years, I grew more and more disenchanted with the library. The books were all the same, speaking of a God that I believed watched the scene from that night with joy. A God that refused to intervene at a time I truly needed him most. Instead, something else caught my eye. Within some of the books were sketches of beings. Some were the drawings of what people believed to be angels. Others were

of Lucifer himself, drawn to strike fear into the hearts of those who witnessed it. Others still were calming images of the virgin mother, and even more damning: the dark portraits of Lillith.

These were the first steps for me. They were lovely, and I could not get them out of my mind. A story can only have so many words, but a picture...there are times that you cannot put an image to words. Dark, dreary, colorful, adorable, damnable...all of these can be used within the same picture, and it would not even scratch the surface. And no matter how hard I tried, they would never leave my mind. Eventually, at the age of thirteen, I succumbed. I used some of the paper that I had been given, and began to draw an image of the virgin mother. I had done my best to keep the task a secret, but eventually someone did discover my growing works. Mary was only the first. Eventually, I began to depict scenes such as the manger, the destruction of the Tower of Babel, and even the casting down of judgment upon Lucifer.

The first reactions were mixed. Some thought that it was just the wandering mind of a child, and that I should be punished for taking such an action freely. Others claimed that I was possessed, allowing Lucifer to appear as a pitiable creature in my work, and should be executed before I claimed another soul for darkness. Others still saw my work as a gift from God. A gift that they could exploit.

They moved me once again. The head of our church saw my work, and began to nurture this "gift from the heavens" in a way that he claimed that God "saw fit." He saw that the things I heard and the things I saw were only possibilities of what I could create. What made things most interesting for him was my talent for creating an image with just a few words, and placing the emotions desired into it.

Yes, a gift indeed. A damnable gift, but a gift nonetheless.

I served in that church for years, watching everything within the walls drawing what I was ordered to draw. No one came close to me any longer. The head of the church was the only person who was willing to speak to me, and that was only to order me to draw another image for another church, or a portrait of himself or other such gluttonous acts. It was not much of a life, but it was a way to live comfortably and not be tried as a heretic.

But that, once again, was soon to change.

Another nearby lord, believing that our lord was weak, decided to take the city for himself. The walls were old, just as our lord was. It was not long when they razed anything they wished to burn.

Regrettably (or thankfully), the church was one of the things that caught fire that night.

After a night of fear, blood, and tears, there was a new lord residing over us. He was a proud warrior, claiming that he was saving us from our former pagan lord or some such nonsense. After a while, I learned that every errant knight carried this belief.

Fools...

But again, I digress. I was forced to work the same as the other peasants; out in the fields. I was only eighteen years of age, and already my body was showing signs that it would give up. I had no family to turn to for aid or a church to protect me. Instead, I had a damnable monstrosity of a "God" watching over me.

But still, I continued to draw. I used whatever I could as a canvas and drew whatever came to mind. The night when the fires claimed the church was an image that I placed upon my door. My table, or what was left of it, was a collection of charcoal markings, depicting the poor souls that tilled the fields day in and day out. Any flat surface that could hold the charcoal sketch in place was where I drew.

Of course, in time, this life was not going to stay in place.

I eventually began to fall further and further behind in the fields. My health was failing, and my body was showing signs that it would be unable to deal with the stresses of my job. Shortly after my twentieth birthday, I fell ill and was unable to work the fields.

That time...was difficult. The pain would wrack my body, and I would have uncontrollable spasms. I could hardly leave my bed, much less the house. But still, I drew. The walls surrounding my bed were covered in anything I could sketch. Many of these images were of women and angels, two things that I was seeing in my mind and unable to choose which to follow.

The lord began to round up the "unfaithful" at that time. One night, someone barged into my home with two others in the employ of our lord. Upon seeing me, the leader smiled to me. He claimed that the job was not needed, that I would be dead soon enough. Why go through the effort to bring me to the lord to be executed when the Lord had already claimed my life.

He began to walk out, but the other two stayed behind for a moment.

They were sympathetic souls; a man and a woman. The man looked through the rooms, and saw my work. He found it odd, that a "low" peasant would have such a talent, and claimed that it was a pity that it would soon go to waste.

The woman, upon seeing me in my room, wasting away and still struggling to create my next image, took pity upon me.

I do not remember most of the night. But from what I do remember, I was taken by force to from my home, just as the other groups of "unfaithful" were taken that night. But, my destination was different. I was not taken to the gallows or any location filled with cruelty or black hearts. Instead, the two carefully took me to the lord's chambers, passing by every guard that would have tried to stop them.

The meeting with the lord was brief. I collapsed as I kneeled to him, and the women held me in place.

When ordered to answer for this, the man took him to my home. I stayed at the same location on the floor, struggling to breathe. I do not know how much time had passed, but the lord did return, and hefted me to my feet with strength I could not believe.

He was an attractive man. His bone structure was nearly perfect, with well chiseled facial features and a prominent nose. He had blonde hair and green eyes that I felt would burn me if I stared too long.

At that time...I was nothing like I am now. I was thin and frail, my features comely and smudged with grime. To that man, I was the old gray mare compared to a prize winning horse.

His voice spoke with power, yet a certain degree of honesty and compassion. He made me an offer: he would find a doctor to assist me in my illness, and then allow me to live in the keep. In return, I would serve him faithfully using whatever ability that I had.

I did not have much of a choice. My entire life was slowly slipping away. I took the offer, like a man on his death bed would make a deal with the devil for just a few more years of life.

Some months passed, and he kept true to his word. The "doctor" was there the next night, and the rest is a blur to me. I was forced to drink strange concoctions, and at times, I had my blood removed by cuts in different locations of my body as the man stated that I had too much "humour" in my body.

But, by the time the man left, I was healthy again. And the price?

Well, that was only beginning.