

# Chapter One, Zosimos

**Story told in the present moment by King Zosimos.**

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“When his warm, wet, red blood seeps into the sheets and makes its way to Vallena, it stirred her into an awake consciousness. At first, she looked confused at seeing me standing there. From her slumber state, she put the pieces together. She looked at the blood-soaked dagger in each of my hands. Then she looks at the bloody sheets. But when she looks over at Mahá lying next to her with his nearly severed head, she screamed.

“Her scream was so loud I thought the entire population, even those living on top of the mountain, would hear it. The pain she felt down to her core was projected from those screams. She expressed sorrow with such sincerity that it nearly brought tears to my eyes. I had to focus and use my determination to push the emotion away. Then I used the anger and the rage I felt for her and Mahá, the anger they put inside me. That anger made it possible to watch her without further remorse or care.

“Several minutes passed as she knelt beside him on the bed and screamed for him not to leave. She begged for the Universal Source to mend him. After a while, she stood out of the bed and confronted me. Begging for me to end her pain and take her life. With both hands, she raised the dagger held in my left hand to her throat. But all she got from me was my icy stare.

“Spinning the daggers in my hands like an old west gunslinger spinning his pistols, I made my way around the witch and stood behind her. There I pressed myself against her trembling and naked body. With my left arm around the top of her shoulder, I placed the dagger’s blade against her throat. She surrendered herself to my hold. With my right hand, I moved the other blade slowly down the front of her body, starting at the cleft of her throat, then over her breasts and lower still, past her abdomen. I whispered in her ear when I reached the top of her pubic bone.

“It won’t be you I kill next, Vallena. Perhaps your brother or his handsome young son would be more pleasing and suit me. No. I think I will kill your mother next time, or even your father.

“It was with the mention of her father that I feel her shoulder slump and see her head twitch ever so slightly. These signals told me what I want to know. The father was her weakness. With this knowledge, I continued to tame the witch of Ziran.

“Yes, your father will be my next target for blood. What is it he does? I remember. He’s the manager of a large peach tree orchard, isn’t he?” She didn’t say a word. Only sobs and her body shook uncontrollably.

“How well do you think he can manage the orchard with just one hand? Or with just one arm? I don’t want to kill your relatives all at once. I’m going to torture everyone in your family by slowly removing parts of their body.”

“Please,” she cried. “Don’t hurt anyone else. Just me. Please kill me and be done with it.”

“I’m not going to kill you, Vallena. I need you to do something very, very important for me. If you do it, I will spare your family.”

“You fucking sadistic, Aphophis. What would you have me do to serve you?” Her voice was shrill. The bubbles from her tears and snot covered her mouth and formed with her words.

In my right hand, I turned the dagger so the blade was in my palm and then pressed the handle up between her legs, where no woman should have a dagger handle pushed in. She squirmed and tried to pull away, but using my superior strength, I held her firmly in place.

There was an odd growing sensation of lust that I was enjoying. The distraction of arousal was caused by holding her firm, smooth, nude body against me. After several minutes, I caught myself and pushed the lust away. Then I give her my instructions for her life’s tasks ahead.

“Do you know the Earth legend of Adam and Eve being cast out of the garden of Eden by God because of their sins?”

“Yes. Everyone knows that ancient biblical story.”

“Did you know it wasn’t a snake dangling from a tree branch that tempted Eve to act on her lust-filled passions? It wasn’t her apple that Eve wanted Adam to eat underneath that apple tree? It was something she enjoyed teasing him with. Now it’s time for you to be like Eve and put your dirty lust-filled desire for his cock and use your pussy to torment him.

“I want the seed from the Bodhisattva. Get his seed and impregnate yourself with his child.” I spit the words through my clenched teeth directly into her ear.

“What bodhisattva? I don’t know what you’re talking about,” she spoke now without tears.

“Don’t be diffident, you home-wrecking whore. The one you love, the man who left you for his faith. Say his name.” I pushed the blade handle all the way inside her. Twisting and turning it, adding to her physical discomfort.

“Kelv,” she barely whispered it.

“Louder!”

“Kelv. You want me to fuck Kelv. But I can’t get pregnant. I have no ovaries, no fallopian tubes.”

“Get me his seed and bring it to me.”

“How will I do that? He left here more than ten years ago. Nobody knows where he is.”

“Look out that window there.” I turned her slightly to the left so she could see outside. The two of you were loading materials, plants, food, and water into a set of carts.

“Those carts that Terrence and Habin are loading will take you to a small house far from the Orchards and further still from the Mountain. Once you arrive, you will have two weeks to get everything in place and make it your new coven. Install all your magic and spells and devise a plan to bring me his sperm. If you fail, those two boys you see out the window there. They will visit your family and begin taking their body parts. You will know which parts because I will have them delivered to you. So stop pretending you don’t know where to find Kelv. You have been taking care of him and leaving him supplies since he left. You see, Vallena, I know everything.

“Now get dressed. Get in the cart and go get me his seed.”