

THE ARCHANGEL'S 1ST PROCTOR

THE WELL OF SOULS

books 2

by Joshua Darcey

Sample Chapter

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ANOINTING THE DISCIPLES Ψ



The morning air brought with it a tide of recrimination and blame. The gathering in the penthouse disbanded, and many of the Council members went out into the field looking for leads on locations. The fact that one of the Fallen had taken Wiligis Fran meant the places where their colleague could be imprisoned were almost infinite. Pluto said that the fact that the businessman, Simon Yaeger, was in league with the minion, Balam, could possibly even the playing field since, having informed Bridie Brogan and Count D'Carabonari of the collusion, the department heads immediately turned their surveillance attentions to all of Yaeger's known assets; believing that if they could track the businessman, they would get a beat on the whereabouts of the demon, and their colleague, Wiligis Fran. Many of the Council members who had been in the penthouse returned to the Malibu estate. If the minion demon had been so bold as to make a strike against one of the Watchers, then it was most prudent they fortify the defenses at the estate. Balam and Yaeger were the only two outside of the Vekel Augustine Council in possession of knowledge as to the whereabouts of the Bonaventure Trove of Holy Treasure, which was neatly tucked away in the Malibu estate's underground. The Council needed to be prepared for any and all ill-conceived attacks the minion, Balam, may try to launch.

Balam was less stupid than he was greedy. He would be satisfied with the items of treasure Simon Yaeger had managed to steal from the Malibu estate. Each item was capable of unleashing untold mystical and supernatural power. Balam would make do. He had surmised there would be more than enough Holy Treasure to raise his standing among the minion masses.

Ordinarily the angels and the Watchers did not get along well together, but differences aside, Kutiel, Zotiel, Manakel and Rampel accompanied the Watcher Gadriel, Pluto, Vlad, Comas Sens, Ursala and Marina Tanco to the Watcher, Seru's, premises. Seru's warehouse was as big as an old meat packing factory, but without the meat. There were four walk-in freezers still in operation and rack after

rack of shelving. None of the meat hooks had been removed. And here and there, on the ground, lay soiled remnants of bloodied clothing. Seru was an unsavory character. He was also out of shape, very fat and very lazy. Looking around the place, he was tantamount to a racketeer. Having a choice of living anywhere he pleased, it appeared the Watcher pleased to live in his warehouse premises. Seru had both great respect and a great fear of the Watcher Gadriel. With Gadriel present, he was exceedingly co-operative, answering all the questions the Holy Angels fired at him. No light could be shed on Balam's whereabouts or motives. Pluto and his people found it interesting that the minion demon would so mislead Seru, intimating that it was necessary for the soul of Portus L' Fane to be extracted from the Well of Souls. It left everyone of the Council members with no shadow of a doubt that Balam's intention was to extract a soul from the *Fontum Animarum*.

It was clear to all that Seru, greatly angered, though not out of concern for the uncertain fate awaiting Wiligis Fran, but pure and simply due to injured pride, was, as soon as practicable, going to make all efforts to hunt down the demon, Balam, and exact his revenge for the humiliation the demon had caused by using him as a complete and utter dupe. Seru was on the warpath. Pluto and his people could pick up no leads regarding Wiligis' location. Leaving Gadriel at the Watcher's premises, he headed for the Council's Malibu estate to personally brief the Sensors and place them on high alert for a possible inbound attack by one minion demon, Balam, and a corrupt businessman, Simon Yaeger.

Having successfully duped one of the Watchers, and successfully obtained the *Fontum Animarum* along with its keeper, Wiligis Fran, the demon Balam was feeling near invincible. Leaving Wiligis bound and gagged, Balam and Yaeger returned to the western coastline for an abruptly scheduled meeting with their Vatican mole. Nothing seemed to surprise the minion, Balam, however, the catholic businessman, Yaeger, as dark and corrupted and disturbingly deranged as he had become, could not contain his shock and disgust at the discovery that their devious Vatican mole was indeed a fully frocked Cardinal, and a special envoy, no less. There in all his red and ribbons stood Marlon A. Cardinal Stonabeti with his undignified manner and endless orders.

Stonabeti had done his homework; he knew all about the businessman, Simon Yaeger; knew how he had converted to Catholicism within a year after his wife and son's death. He knew all about the generous donations Yaeger had paid to Tiberius Cardinal Alti's senior aide, Portus L' Fane. He also knew about Yaeger's personal funding of L' Fane's quest to find the Holy Treasure. What he did not know was Yaeger's reason for wanting to possess the Bonaventure Trove, though given the power that lay within each holy item, the Cardinal correctly assumed that the businessman's interest had initially been the revival of his long since dead wife and son. The Cardinal, seemingly oblivious to the perversion of his own actions against the cloth, against common decency, against the natural order of things, hypocritically stood in judgement of the businessman and proceeded to resent Yaeger's presence and the fact that Yaeger had used the Cardinal's religion only as a means to an end; a way to get his greedy little black arts mitts and the trove of Holy Treasure.

In possession of a small incantation to stay a minion demon's hand, the special envoy, Stonabeti, was feeling all important amongst his audience of two. Wasting no time, they returned to Yaeger's isolated, east coast hideout. The first thing the special envoy did was to snatch up the Well of Souls and proceed to lavishly fondle it. Simon Yaeger thought the Cardinal was not quite right in the head. The demon, Balam, recognized Stonabeti to be mildly mentally deranged, but seeing the darkness and devilment ooze from the special envoy, the demon embraced the Vatican mole. Wiligis Fran was conscious and witness to the unholy spectacle. The Council member, centuries and centuries and centuries old, was well aware that despite his immortal status, his number was soon to be up. Yaeger felt sickened by the sight of the full frocked Cardinal pouring and drooling over the soul-filled sphere. More than that, though, he saw someone, however sick and twisted, capable of extracting the necessary soul and getting on with the relevant rituals to make him all and powerful. He continued to watch, in disgust, as Marlon A. Cardinal Stonabeti lavished the container of Souls. Balam was not so

patient, he did not know or like the Cardinal, he merely wanted to get on with being made a powerful demon. It was all within his grasp, and as far as he was concerned, drooling over the *Fontum Animarum* was simply wasting time and preventing him from becoming a mighty powerful demon. Balam stormed over to where the Cardinal knelt and made a grab for the Well of Souls. The Cardinal was too quick, hunching and turning, as if protecting the *Fontum*. He screamed at the demon.

“Stay your hand, ye demon! Beast, I shalt cast it out!! *In nomine Patris, in sanguine Christi, vi officii, et ejicite daemon! Prius archangelus....*

Balam looked on in horror, he also resented being called a beast, which was deemed to be in much lower standing than a demon, even a minion demon at that. The Cardinal was really prepared to cast Balam off; send him packing back to Hell. The demon quickly retracted his steps and thought better of attacking the Cardinal. Perhaps for the time being he would play it by ear. Balam marched and stomped to the far side of the trailer and dwelled on how very much the Cardinal had just made himself a new, and soon to be extremely powerful, enemy.

Wiligis Fran, no longer dazed and fully aware of the situation, knew that Gadriel would not be able to track the Fallen, Balam. He knew that help was not at hand, and he knew it was absolutely crucial that the dark and diseased rabble before him not be allowed to employ the stolen items from the Bonaventure Trove. Having a view of the whole trailer, Wiligis had seen fourteen visible pieces of treasure, included among which were several codices. The codex of Ayurved and the codex of Gurveva, in particular, holy volumes that contained incantations and spells, spells to wake the dead, spells to kill the living, spells for power, spells for peace, spells for pestilence. Some of the other volumes were the most powerful codices in the world. Additionally, there was a Brudishan dagger, a weapon that need only be pointed to do its damage. There were also sabers and pendants. The Holy Treasure was just that, holy, and immensely all encompassing, powerful, and about to be wielded for evil purpose in the wrong and devilish hands. Wiligis knew that it was he and he alone who, right then and there, had the power to put a stop to the trio's proceedings.

Having been unceremoniously prompted by the minion demon, the special envoy thought it an appropriate time to reveal himself.

“I have waited a lifetime to embrace my true purpose. To release my ancestor, so that his work may continue. I now called forth the venerable Cardinal, Anis De Botte, in whose name I shall gain control of the Bonaventure Trove of Holy Treasure!”

That announcement did not go down well in the room. Simon Yaeger swallowed his shock and shot a long look at his companion demon, the , Balam. Balam was obviously equally surprised. It had come as news, shocking news at that, to both the demon and the businessman, that someone should walk in and take their treasure. They had waited for months to find a way to activate the treasure items. They saw no wisdom in putting an end to the Cardinal's antics, not before the release of the soul, a soul that had apparently belonged to an ancestor of the special envoy, Stonabeti. Regardless, the Cardinal's ancestral connection would lay him no special claim to a share in their Holy Treasure.

The Cardinal, shuffling on his knees close to where Wiligis Fran sat bound and gagged, placed the Well of Souls on the ground. Rummaging in one of the pockets in his inner garments, Stonabeti produced a wax chock. Ignoring Balam, and ordering Yaeger, he had the center of the industrial trailer cleared. Back on his knees again, the Cardinal began to draw a large circle, from memory, inserting many symbols and signs. Simon Yaeger, who had made an extreme hobby of practicing Satanism, became particularly interested when the Cardinal sketched out a large pentagram, center circle, stretching tip to tip of the circumference. He was not sure, though, why it was that the Cardinal was inverting quite a lot of the lettering he drew inside the wax confines of the pentagram. Wiligis Fran, however, knew exactly what the Cardinal was doing. The Council member could see from the diagram and the lettering that Stonabeti fully intended to release all the dark, evil souls from the *Fontum Animarum*. He knew the warped Cardinal had to be stopped, and just then he was devising a way to

do exactly that.

Demanding silence, and woe betide anyone who stepped inside the circle, Cardinal Stonabeti, now standing dead center of the pentagram, began to mutter and chant. The *Fontum Animarum* began to vibrate and inch side to side on the spot. Wiligis Fran, possessing the only good soul in the trailer, seemed in pain and became terribly anxious once the sphere began to move, albeit ever so slightly; knowing his time was soon up, and acutely aware that the wicked Cardinal was about to release upon the world a host of damned and evil souls. The sphere lifted from the ground; launching five feet high into the air. To Balam and Yaeger's great delight the *Fontum Animarum* began to circle the pentagram, and the Cardinal, as quick as you like.

The ritualistic show was too enticing; nobody had been watching Wiligis Fran. Nobody had seen him work his way out of his bindings. As Stonabeti's voice rose to fever pitch the *Fontum Animarum* faltered from its orbit, descending slowly back down to the ground, still within the huge wax circle. It had been enough, the devilish deed was done. Marlon A. Cardinal Stonabeti had initiated the soul extraction. He had opened the ethereal gateway to let the imprisoned souls escape their confinement. Barely visible, a fine ghostly plume began to emanate from the Well of Souls. The Cardinal fell to his knees once more, threw open his arms and literally breathed in the essence of soul; the ethereal essence of his evil ancestor, the disgraced Cardinal, Anis De Botte. Wiligis Fran, carefully calculating the progress of the ritual, made his move; sudden and super fast. It was a simple but extremely effective strategy; as soon as the *Fontum Animarum* was mystically opened, and the souls therein began to leak out, Wiligis Fran raced across the trailer, dove over the wax circumference, barged into the Cardinal, pushing him out of the way, and threw himself on top of the delicate Well of Souls. It was as if time in the trailer was greatly slowed to a shocking, barely able to function mode. Balam, who had jumped to attention, was prevented from moving by the sheer shock of the Council member's tactic. Simon Yaeger, seeing the Cardinal flung half out of the sacred circle, was too shocked to move; deeply concerned, he wondered only if he was to be prevented from gaining access to the power of the stolen Holy Treasure items. The loud cracking sound of the *Fontum Animarum* shattering beneath Wiligis Fran put paid to the demon, the businessman, and the Cardinal's aspirations. Leaving them to hope that Stonabeti had ingested enough of his ancestor so as to contain the knowledge of how to active the Holy Treasure items.

Wiligis Fran lay sprawled across the pentagram. Beneath him the Well of Souls, completely shattered, was slowly being absorbed into his body, fragments and all. Those souls that had not yet begun to bleed from the *Fontum Animarum* were being re-housed in an altogether new vessel; an immortal host. Cardinal Stonabeti scrambled up onto his feet and pouncing like a demon, began to attack Wiligis Fran. He was stopped in his tracks, though, when the Council member's body twisted and contorted in a spasmodic fit; twitching and jumping and pumping as the fine plumes of dark yellow ether found various ways to enter the prostrate Fran's body.

It was a most unfortuitous, unforeseen turn of events. The escaping souls, instead of pouring out from the *Fontum* to be carried on the wind to those poor unfortunates who would be overcome and possessed, were instead, in urgent need of a new vessel, cramming themselves into a singular person.

The Vekel Augustine Council member was in the process of containing the worst of the worst as the Cardinal fell onto the trailer floor and began to roll around in severe agony. His new occupant, though not fully extracted from the Well, was fighting for room and dominance in the unsuspecting Stonabeti. Simon Yaeger saw his opportunity. It was true, he was a dab hand at the ritual dark arts, he had been practicing for years. And right then and there in his trailer hideout, he knew the exact ritual to perform. He needed to anoint the disciples, the hosts to those worse than the damned. Directed by greed, Simon Yaeger raided his hocus pocus cabinet, and from what he could remember, concocted a ritual which would effectively create an indentured zombie, that is, if his performance of the ritual was

correct. However, being a dab hand rather than an ordained person of the cloth, not that such a person would engage in depraved activity, Yaeger made a total hash of the ritual. Regardless, the effects were startling.

Cardinal Stonabeti was still being involuntarily, supernaturally tossed around the trailer floor. In a great deal of pain, and he had taken to punching his head with his fists. The conversation he was having with the deceased, diseased Cardinal, Anis De Botte, was exceedingly aggressive, and it was sounding more and more as though Anis De Botte had the upper hand. Suddenly, special envoy Stonabeti became silent, stood up and staggered over to the far corner of the trailer, placed his face in the crease of the wall and remained, tight jammed into the corner, silent as a mannequin. Wiligis Fran had also become quieted as he lay face down on the floor, seemingly attentive to the words of Yaeger's botched ritual. The businessman walked over to Cardinal Stonabeti, checking to see if the devious, devilish man of the cloth was responsive to his orders. Pure and simply, Simon Yaeger had attempted to anoint his two new disciples, to take control of them and the soul and souls they had both ingested. Not being able to shake the demon, Balam, from his side, and knowing that if it came down to a physical contest, Balam would win outright, it was important to Yaeger that he, and he alone, take a working possession of the stolen items of Holy Treasure. In Stonabeti and the prostrate Wiligis Fran, he saw his advantage.

Minutes after becoming still, and moments after Yaeger had finished his ritual, the Council member shot up into the air, levitating a full four feet off the ground; feet together, arms wide apart, as if a candidate for a bad and tragic crucifying. Balam, never having seen anything like it before, was puzzled, but unafraid. Simon Yaeger, on the other hand, backed away from Stonabeti and worked his way around, closer to the trailer door. What had he done? This was not part of his ritual. This was not supposed to be happening. As slow as the long brace sail arm of an old, rickety, creaking windmill, like a holy man on a spit roast, Wiligis Fran turned over, arms still apart, almost touching the floor as he rotated; his back to the trailer floor, he was eerily floating, face up. His beautifully tailored Patagonia raw silk, lilac designer shirt, open at the collar, was shredded around the torso and soaked with blood. But there was no blood on the floor, and there was no longer any blood on Wiligis Fran's torso, everything had been absorbed back into his body, including the souls of those worse than the damned. Simon Yaeger crapped himself when Fran, still in mid-air, still in a crucified position, began to shudder and chuckle, a deep, bellowing chuckle, as if brought forth from the bowels of Hell. Balam was undeterred, easily recognizing the demonic sounds the Council member was issuing; hellish, devilish tones.

With all his dabbling over the years, with all his black masses and dark art practices, Balam, Astroroth and Gapp and Crone were the only actual demons from Hell the businessman had ever come into contact with, and they had been enough to put him off his perverted past-time forever more. More demons, he neither needed nor wanted. realizing that Stonabeti may very well be under his spell, Yaeger inched back around to where the Cardinal stood stationary, grabbed him by the arm, and began to quietly maneuver him to the trailer entrance. Balam, curious in regard to the events unfolding in the trailer, cared only to rid himself of his minion status. The minion demon would insure that whatever, or whomever, came forth from the Council member, understood that it was he, and he alone, who was the master. While Balam was busy waiting to exert his mastery, Simon Yaeger quietly eased open the trailer door and was about exit with the zombified Stonabeti when the door, rocking the cabin by the force of it, slammed shut and the lock snapped on! Wiligis Fran floated down to the floor, landing in an upright position, looking overly menacing with his arms still opened in the sign of a cross.

"You care not to know if it is that you have enslaved us to your influence? Stay! Sit down, answer your inquiry."

As the Council member spat out his repeated words over and over, in different pitch and tones,

without being touched, the businessman was lifted and flung, spun forcefully all the way across the trailer, landing in the swivel chair, which then rolled back and bashed into the filing cabinets. The zombified Stonabeti remained next to the locked trailer door. Yaeger knew he was receiving no help for the minion demon, Balam. He was exceptionally scared as Wiligis Fran began to descend upon him, as, trying to get out of the way, he was only able to slide backwards and push his swivel chair further up against the metal draws.

Wiligis Fran looked to be between thirty-seven to forty-three years of age. He was six feet tall, slim, with light brown, just below the ears, thick, flick-back hair and long sideburns. He had a long, oval, attractive, slender, clean shaven face, and was always immaculately dressed in expensive, well cut clothes. He sauntered, menacingly, toward the cowering, overweight businessman, and with his right arm extended, caught hold of Simon Yaeger by the chin, and proceeded to heave him out of the chair and up off his feet. The Council member, having had a great many centuries to refine his strength and speed, was, due to a heavy possession, exceptionally strong and extraordinarily evil. The more Wiligis Fran exerted himself, the worse he looked. His hair had turned straw-like, oily, and almost matted. His eyebrows had become substantially bushy, near enough joining together, and his nostrils had thickened and flared. His lips, uncontrollably quivering, appearing pasty and thin, had turned a dark red and blackish color, and his straight white teeth looked brittle and grey. His eyes, sunken in his cheekbones, were as dark as kohl; cold, beady and mean looking. Wiligis's face had an ashen and withered pallor, with large dark patches around his dark eyes. His hands, elongated, had thin misshapen fingers that were tipped with black and grey, rotten, long striated nails. Wiligis Fran looked altogether ghoulish. The saintly immortal had become ugly and evil, and all of a sudden defenseless and weak. He fell on one knee and, unmoving, stared at the floor, compliant and zombified.

“Yes! Excellent! Excellent! Now he’s at my mercy!”

Balam pivoted around on the spot, he could not contain his excitement. As far as he was concerned he had two birds in his hand, there to do his bidding. That was not, however, what Simon Yaeger believed. As far as Yaeger was concerned, he had successfully delivered two birds into his own hand, both there to do his bidding and his bidding alone. At first not trusting Wiligis Fran to be in a truly zombified state, Simon Yaeger rushed out of his corner, back over to the trailer door and, grabbing Cardinal Stonabeti, began to open the door, to go where, he was uncertain, he just knew he needed to make a run for it.

“He’s gone! He’s gone! There is nothing left in him. They’ve taken him over. And you have prepared him to follow my instruction.”

Yaeger stopped short of exiting the trailer, turning first to inspect Wiligis Fran and then to weigh up Balam, who, too distracted by thoughts of his impending greatness, paid no heed to Yaeger's attempted escape. The businessman had to find a way to throw the demon off, get rid of him; knowing that activating the Holy Treasure in Balam's presence would not, in any way, shape or form be to his own advantage because sure as anything it would be the demon and not he who laid claim to the treasure. Yaeger was in a quandary, but also knew he could not hide out much longer, despite the dreaded, much feared Vekel Augustine Council searching for him. Added to which, he believed that one or more demons who had been in the Malibu estate labyrinth during the attack would also be looking for him. He was uncertain as to which direction he should take. Of course, 'what about the words Stonabeti had begun to recite, the words that had quite terrified Balam, making him stand down from the assault he had been about to level at the Cardinal?' Some of the words Yaeger remembered, but then the Cardinal had not gone so far as to finish the rite.... Yaeger had no idea which rite it had been, anyway, but felt that if he could learn the words of the rite it would arm him against the demon, giving him a necessary edge. The zombified Cardinal was the answer to activating his stolen Holy Treasure, and the answer to ridding himself of the scourge minion demon, Balam. Not daring to show his hand, Simon Yaeger would, at the first opportunity, arm himself with the 'getting rid of Balam' rite.

Until that time, though, Yaeger thought, it would be prudent to hinder all efforts to activate the treasure items; he was not about to allow anyone to deprive him of what he had worked so hard to acquire.

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