

Red Abbey

By

Linda Himes Guyan

What if you aren't who you think you are?

Prologue

Abbey Glen, California, Sunday, February 6, 1938
Council Compound, Devlin Ranch, Red Abbey

***D**eer, bear, quail, rabbit—people. Murdering humans is a sport
like any other.*

Cora Devlin's thought was one she lived by—it was also a thought that kept her mind occupied as she made her way

through the claustrophobic catacombs under Red Abbey. Shivering from the cold, her body clothed in a long-sleeved matching brown knit sweater and skirt belted at her waist, she pulled her black wool coat tighter around her to stave off the frigid cold in the narrow tunnel. She had pulled her long hair into a bun at the back of her head and draped a red silk scarf over her head, tying it under her chin. Though no one could see, Cora's hazel eyes twinkled and her lips smiled as she thought about the clothing she was wearing for tonight's ritual.

Not exactly the appropriate fashion ensemble for murder. Nevertheless, it will look nice for the meeting later when I have to stand in front of the entire congregation.

Her boyfriend, Sydney, would be there, too. Technically he was her fiancé, although it wasn't official yet. *Soon, though.* Eighteen-year-old Cora Devlin flooded her head with thoughts to keep from feeling the claustrophobia that threatened to overtake her in the tight space far below the old monastery. This was always how it was for her in the catacombs. She was fine once she got to where she was going. The problem was getting there.

Get a grip, Cora. You can murder anyone without flinching, yet you can't walk in this stupid tunnel.

Cora pursed her lips and took a deep breath. One ahead of her, two behind, the four women walked single file as the brick walls with their burial niches and the low ceilings closed in on her. She knew she didn't have far to go until the narrow walkway opened up for the short walk to the Ceremonial Room. She forced herself to keep moving, thinking about anything but the small space.

We don't kill for the celebrity or limelight. We remain in the shadows where it is safe. We kill for pleasure, the thrill of the hunt. We kill because it is what we were born to do. It's what we excel at. It is in our blood. Murder is a generations-old family tradition. We are the serial killers called the Hunters—female and male, alike. When you're born into this family of murder, there is no escaping your fate. When you discover whose blood is in your veins, life finally makes sense. Within all of us, our blood is our legacy. The Council ensures we follow that legacy.

Cora forced herself to remain strong with each footfall as she walked the pathway in the confined space, trying to ignore the overpowering musty odors of centuries and the brick walls merely inches from her on each side. She kept her gaze on the back of the woman ahead of her. She needed to focus on something other than the walls and that awful smell.

Once I get there, it will be over quickly. The Council isn't big on elaborate ceremony or pomp and circumstance. No one wore long, flowing robes or cloaks. Everyone was dressed normally. There was no chanting. They did insist on all previous caretakers being in attendance. That was, whoever was still alive. This was not some crazy cult. They preferred to get to the point and move on.

Cora smiled.

Fine with me. A quick kill and I'm out of here and out in the open again so I can breathe fresh air and see the sky above me.

A scratching noise to her left jolted her out of her reverie. Cora drew her hand to her mouth to stifle a scream at a very large rat staring at her from one of the burial niches. As she watched, it was quickly joined by two others. Cora felt her heart beating faster as she quickened her step, forcing herself

to refocus her thoughts on what lay ahead, the ritual, not the rats.

She wondered who the kill would be tonight. Sometimes they brought in an anonymous victim from some other town. Sometimes it was someone they knew from town, usually some troublemaker they wanted to eliminate. The previous caretaker selected the victim. If for some reason she couldn't, the Council barrister selected the victim. The victim didn't matter either way. A stranger or friend, an innocent or an asshole, killing was easy for Cora. She was a Hunter, after all. Murder came naturally. She trained right there in the catacombs under the abbey in what they called the Red Room—quite an apt name. The floor of the training room for Hunters was literally red from all the blood that had flowed during thousands of training classes. It wasn't like they practiced on dummies. The floor and brick walls were soaked with blood. *Everything about Red Abbey has some reference to blood—whether it be from the flow of it from victims or our bloodlines that connect us. Red Abbey is a symbol of what and who we are.*

Cora trudged ahead, keeping her gaze on the woman ahead of her. She wore a navy blue dress and matching shoes. That was all she could see because of her navy blue coat that covered everything in between. Navy blue was obviously the woman's favorite color.

Okay, I'm a little nervous. It isn't like I haven't killed before. I'm not nervous about that. I'm nervous about having an audience. You don't have to be a Hunter to be a caretaker. You do have to be a killer, and you have to prove it. Therefore, the caretaker initiation ritual.

Finally, they reached the Ceremonial Room. Cora entered and let out a quiet sigh of relief. The room was large. Compared to the narrow path she had just traveled, this felt like the big open spaces. In the center of the room was a raised platform with a naked man lying in the center. He was obviously drugged, because he wasn't resisting or fighting. She could hear him groaning softly. He was awake enough to know what was happening, but he couldn't move or speak.

As per the ritual, the caretakers stripped Cora of her clothing. They stepped far back against the wall, circling the room as Cora made her way to the center for her initiation. She stepped onto the platform and gazed down at the naked man on the slab.

She recognized him right away.

Titus Harker. Rapist, wife beater, wife cheater, alcoholic. If his pregnant wife, Lorelei, ever knew the truth of what was happening here tonight, she'd send me a thank-you card. Lorelei will think her rotten husband took off on one of his alcoholic binges or shacked up with another girlfriend. The difference this time is that he'll never return.

Cora stifled a laugh.

This is going to be so easy.

She was not allowed to choose her weapon. The caretaker chose it for her. She picked up the ax from the floor.

Cora didn't waste time. She adjusted her stance, gripped the ax and raised it high, gaining purchase. Quickly and efficiently she brought it down on Titus Harker's neck,

separating his head from his body. Blood sprayed over her like a sprinkler as the man's head fell to the ground at her feet. She turned to look at the caretakers as she dropped the bloody weapon on the floor. Cora breathed heavily as she swiped blood from her face with the back of her hand. Seeing clearly now, she noticed the caretakers were smiling, albeit imperceptibly. She knew she had done well, but this silent praise from her peers filled her with pride. More than their praise, the thrill of the kill always exhilarated her.

Decapitation isn't my usual kill method, though I'd forgotten how good it feels. I might have to do this more often.

No one spoke a word. Two of the women approached and began pouring buckets of warm water over her, washing the blood from her body. When she was clean and dried, one of them walked Cora to the door and helped her get dressed. The two women began the walk back through the catacombs while the other two stayed behind to dispose of the corpse in the usual, efficient manner.

Cora kept her mind busy as she followed the caretaker, this time on the way out to return to fresh air. She thought about Titus Harker. Both pieces of him would be tossed into the large, heavy-duty incinerator. Built between the Ceremonial Room and the Red Room specifically for such purposes, it had adequately served the Council's needs for many years. The only graves at the abbey were the ones from centuries earlier, before the incinerator was built, although she had heard that bonfires had been in style at one point in history at Red Abbey. Cora saw the steps that she knew led to the courtyard above them. *Finally!*

As Cora Devlin and the previous caretaker exited the

catacombs, the woman spoke to her for the first time since the initiation process began.

“Excellent kill, sweetheart,” Joscelyn Devlin said. “Thank you, Mother.”

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Headlights broke the dark of night as a long line of cars made their way onto the Devlin Ranch. Council members were arriving for tonight’s meeting. As members parked their cars in the dirt lot, it soon resembled a car lot filled with an impressive array of automobiles. Buick Special, Chevrolet Cabriolet, Plymouth Coupe, Packard Super 8, Ford 2-door sedan, Chrysler Royal, Mercedes-Benz 230, Jaguar SS100, Ford Deluxe, Buick Century, Bentley, Dodge Coupe, Cadillac LaSalle, Rolls-Royce and a Morris Ten were all accounted for.

It wasn’t their usual meeting. Tonight, a new caretaker was being inducted. It was a special night, and everyone was dressed to the nines as they traversed the long path to Red Abbey. Women were resplendent in their fashionable and elegant dresses, luxurious coats and equally stylish hats. The men were dapper in double-breasted suits, topcoats and fedoras or homburgs. The night was cold, yet dry. No one had to slosh through a muddy trail tonight to get to the monastery.

The Council had been meeting at the old abbey as long as anyone could remember, long before Abbey Glen was a town.

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Overseen by the caretaker, the Council was a group of like-minded people with murder running in their veins. It had been in effect for untold centuries, albeit under different monikers.

Yet some things remained the same. As with most secret organizations, there were many customs that continued through the centuries. The position of caretaker was handed down through the generations. Unlike barrister, the caretaker had always been a woman's position. Often, the role of caretaker was handed down to the first-born daughter, but if the caretaker didn't deem her fit, the imminent position went to the caretaker's next female choice. The only rule was that she be of the Council's bloodline. Council protocol demanded that each new caretaker make a will so that in the event of the caretaker's premature death, her successor would be made posthumously. In this case, the Council barrister would be called upon to send a spokesperson to step in and make the announcement, reading directly from the will to the congregation from the lectern at Red Abbey's nave.

Barrister was the only position higher than caretaker. That position had nothing to do with daily mundane Council activities of which the caretaker oversees. The barrister stayed in the background, called upon only when it was deemed urgent and his services were required. The barrister's identity was kept under the utmost secrecy and was highly classified — only the caretaker knew the identity of the barrister. A position that is handed down in families from parent to child, the barrister was usually a male, though not always.

The caretaker initiation ceremony was a family tradition. Before a woman could be accepted as the new Council caretaker, she had to kill someone in front of the previous caretakers to prove she was worthy of the position, to prove that she could relate to her members, killers and non-killers alike.

The monastery had stood for at least four centuries, long before California was founded. Made primarily of brick, it had been built to withstand the sands of time and the elements. While part of it was in ruins, the main priory was in remarkable condition. It was the perfect place for shelter. It also served as an excellent location for the Council's secret gatherings, which always took place under the dark blanket of the night sky.

The early settlers who discovered the old abbey in the glen called it Abbey Glen. Situated in a long U-shaped valley, next to a winding river that flowed through the area, it was surrounded on all sides by deep and thick wooded areas for miles around. A beautiful land, it was rich and fertile and water was abundant with many brooks and streams.

For many years, Abbey Glen was untouched by progress, continuing to be the meeting place for the Council. They used the old abbey for three centuries. Before that, the rumor was that it was used briefly by a religious cult, though it could never be confirmed. As far as anyone knew, the monastery was built a century before that, presumably as a sanctuary, probably for monks. No one knew when it was built or by whom.

Eventually, as the area became more inhabited and a town began to build up around the old abbey, the town took the

name of Abbey Glen.

The abbey itself became known as Red Abbey.

Through the centuries, Hunters were trained at the abbey in the art of murder. Because of that, the abbey had been given the apt moniker, Red Abbey. Much blood had been spilled in the catacombs below the abbey. Strangely enough, the redwood door to the old monastery had always been a deep rusty-red color, almost as if the blood had seeped into the wood itself.

Now, Abbey Glen was a beautiful place tapping into the abundance of water, creating a town filled with lakes, ponds, creeks and streams surrounded by a variety of trees as far as anyone could see and a river that lazily meandered through the town, aptly named Lazy River. Numerous bridges and footbridges were spread throughout the town. Abbey Glen was idyllic and seemed to be hidden from the world, protected by the innumerable stands of giant trees that surrounded the town. Orchards of various fruits, acres of vegetables and large expanses of vineyards all became commonplace. Only part of the land was used for farming.

Abbey Glen also boasted a modern city center and a shopping plaza.

It was set on fifteen acres of Devlin land on the east end of town, deep in the woods, miles off the main highway. Generations of the Devlin family had used the secluded Gothic monastery for their secret meetings and base of operations. The entrance alone was daunting, as well as haunting. The old brick structure with its massive arched front door made of a thick, rustic redwood was set back

about six feet under a brick arch that covered the entrance. Affixed to the center of the door was a sanctuary ring – a simple iron ring set on a round iron plate that served as a doorknocker. Below and to the left of the ring was an ornate black wrought iron door handle with a key lock at the bottom.

The Devlin family had planted the expansive land with vineyards. Thick woodlands kept the entire ranch hidden and secluded. As the property was three miles off the main road, the only access to it was a narrow asphalt road and a fifty-foot old-fashioned covered bridge before anyone could see the ranch house or any of the outbuildings. Red Abbey sat a full mile beyond the main Devlin Ranch house. A large dirt parking area was sufficient for up to fifty vehicles for Council members. Surrounded by Oakglen Woods, the monastery was well hidden. From the parking lot, a long, winding path eventually led to another fifty-foot bridge over Lazy River. This private bridge was the only access to the monastery. Once over the bridge, a small metal signpost was placed just outside the brick arched entrance that held a sign simply stating who was allowed to enter there.

To many of the residents of Abbey Glen – the ones who were not Council members – the old abbey served as a private winery for the Devlin family where they were known to give many wine tasting parties, various galas for holidays and innumerable private family gatherings. To members of the Council, Red Abbey was where private meetings were held and officiated by the Council caretaker. Only the caretaker held the key to open the door. Once opened, a sentry was placed outside the door to allow entrance to Council members only. Non-members would be dealt with severely.

Inside, the cobblestone floors opened up onto the foyer that led under an archway to an open-air courtyard. Straight ahead to the rear left and up a zigzag of stairs to the second floor were four rooms that served as Council offices – this was Council Compound in Red Abbey on the Devlin Ranch. At the courtyard archway, turning right led to the door to the church nave where all the Council meetings were held. Another sentry was placed outside this door, as well, to ensure that only members got through. Only the sentry opened the door and allowed access to the nave. Once the meeting was in progress, the sentry stepped inside and locked the door behind him. The door stayed locked until the meeting was adjourned. After the meetings, members were often treated to Devlin wine in the large courtyard. Council members were sworn to strict secrecy. They all knew abusing that rule met with dire consequences. They had been living contentedly in Abbey Glen among the non- members for many years. That was the way it had to stay. Secrets were a way of life for Council members. Some secrets were meant to be kept. Secrets in Abbey Glen stayed secret forever. Some might whisper their rumors of what they thought went on in the old abbey in the glen. However, only Council members knew what really went on in Red Abbey. Council members knew how to keep secrets. Forever.

Against the ancient beauty and historic antiquity of the old monastery, there remained a harsh reminder that something dark was happening beyond its thick, brick walls.

This was Red Abbey. This was the Council Compound on the vast Devlin Ranch.

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Tonight, Council members were arriving for an important meeting. A new caretaker, Cora Devlin, would take her place on the nave's lectern as the previous caretaker stepped down.

A sentry stood guard outside the ancient, deep russet door, screening each and every person. It was his job to know who was a member and who was not. Sentry was a very important and respected position in the Council. The sentry determined who gained access to Red Abbey and who did not.

"Good evening, Mr. and Mrs. Devlin," the staid sentry said as he opened the heavy redwood door for them.

"Good evening, George," Murray Devlin replied courteously as his wife, Joscelyn, walked ahead of him into the abbey courtyard.

As the rest of the congregation made their way across the wooden bridge over Lazy River to the entrance, each member passed the familiar sign posted just outside the ancient redwood door of the old monastery. The simple message left no question as to who was allowed to enter Red Abbey.

Members Only

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Phase One—Infiltrate

Collateral Council female will infiltrate prearranged home of the target childless couple where male has a suitable bloodline mirroring our own and provide surrogacy for the birth of product child for adoption, leaving child with target couple.

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Chapter One

Abbey Glen, California, Sunday, November 3, 1974
Council Compound, Devlin Ranch, Red Abbey

“There have always been killers.

“Just as there has always been a Council to create them.

“However, the Council has been known by many other names throughout history. For a time, there was no name. It was merely called a secret “gathering” of like-minded people.

“These like-minded people all had violent bloodlines and a need—a birthright—to pass down that legacy to their

children and teach them how to use it, as well as control it.

“It was also their birthright to procreate more killers and continue the descent of their bloodline.

“Tracing our ancestry can take us back to the beginning of time.

“We are all connected to long lineages of people. Bloodlines trickle down and branch out through the centuries, tying us together in a long ancestral family history.

“Not all of those people on our family trees were model citizens. Some have a history of violence. Some have a history of evil. All have a history of murder.

“It is their bloodline.

“Our families have a long and infamous lineage of murderers – a family history of violence and evil dating back to William the Conqueror in 1028 and beyond that to Viking raiders.

“The bloodlines of all who came before us have produced a long line of descendants who are still populating the world today. Many descendants changed their names in order to hide their relationship to their infamous ancestors. Some of those descendants live here in Abbey Glen. The blood of our ancestors is in all of us. Our ancestors are our legacy of blood, our history of violence. It is important to become acquainted with your ancestors. When you discover whose blood is in your veins, life will make sense.”

Eighteen-year-old Bridget Renée Devlin was the new Council caretaker. Tonight she had taken her place at the

nave's lectern on the alter in the ancient monastery as so many women had before her — her mother, Lorna, her grandma, Cora, and Cora's mother, Joscelyn. There was a long succession of Devlin women who had been caretakers. Bridget's parents, Lorna and Patrick Devlin, looked on proudly, knowing their daughter had easily completed her caretaker initiation earlier that evening on a woman from Oakland. Zamora Flood had been a foul-mouthed, mean woman who abused her children. It was Bridget's first Council meeting as the new caretaker since her mother, Lorna Lowell Devlin, had stepped down. Bridget looked out at the rows of pews filled with Council members eager to hear what their new caretaker had to say.

Some of the crowd had let out gasps of shock when they saw Bridget's new look. Usually, she was as darkly beautiful as her mother, but tonight Bridget Devlin was the opposite. Her long, thick black hair had not only been cut utilitarian short — she had colored it a mousy brown. She wore no makeup or accessories. Her clothing was appropriate for tonight's special occasion, yet simple. The black suit and white silk blouse accentuated her shapely body.

Bridget was loyally committed to the future of the Council. She took after her mother in that regard. Tonight she planned to take the Council in a new and exciting direction. She took a moment to listen to the light rain as it danced on the old monastery's roof and let it soothe her. Bridget Devlin took a breath and gazed out at her congregation, who were hanging on her every word. Her rich voice and confident demeanor commanded her audience's attention as she continued her speech.

“Violence and murder have been a part of our planet since humans walked this earth. Everyone has violence on their family tree whether they know it or not, whether they embrace it or not. It’s simply a matter of taking the time to trace your family origins.

“Never allow yourself to be so shortsighted not to realize that we do not come from merely our mothers and fathers, grandparents and great-grandparents. Beyond that, there is an unending chain of people back to the beginning of time, without whom we would not exist. It would take merely one person to break that chain – that lineage – and we would not be here. These billions of people are our ancestors. Many are the ancestors of those of us in the Council. They are also the ancestors of a large part of the population of this planet who do not know whose blood runs in their veins. Sadly, most do not care and never discover such an important part of their lives.

“We, in the Council, do care. As your new caretaker, let me make it perfectly clear to each and every one of you that I care. We acknowledge and embrace our lineage, our ancestors, and the killing heritage many of them have passed down to us, their descendants. We care about whose blood runs in our veins and the legacy we have inherited. We nurture and encourage our heritage of violence. It is who we are. It is who our future descendants will become. We are proud of our unique family tree. “It is essential to know your Council manifesto for you to gain insight into our ancestral history. It is of great importance that you know your ancestral bloodline – we are the descendants that will continue the bloodline for many future generations. I have created this background information to give you an

overview of our ancestry, highlighting some of our more prominent and infamous families with their own history of violence. The manifesto includes brief stories that were taken from actual historical artifacts that have survived through the years from our ancestors who knew the importance of documenting our history. This will give you some background on where our bloodlines originated and give you a historical backstory of our own history of violence. Each of you has received a copy of this manifesto tonight. This is mandatory reading. Please be aware that this material is highly classified. This is for Council members only. Any part of this manifesto discovered outside of Council members' hands – in the hands of the others – will not be tolerated! Infractions to either of these will be dealt with severely." Bridget paused, gazing at her audience, ensuring that she still held their attention. She picked up the small glass on the lectern and took a sip of water. As she replaced it, Bridget Devlin continued her speech, her strong voice easily heard throughout the large nave.

"Our heritage is why the Council was originated. I cannot stress the importance of knowing your family history and their violent ancestry, to accept and be proud of the blood of your ancestors that flows in your veins. It is up to us in the Council to create future descendants and ensure they follow in our footsteps and those of our ancestors for many generations to come.

"We are proud of the Hunters we have spawned through the years and we will continue to breed and train more Hunters through our descendants here at Red Abbey. Our bloodlines, with their long history of violence, have always produced a Hunter. Although known by many different names

throughout time, they are all known for their expertise in the art of killing.

“We, with like-minded tendencies of our violent natures and ancestry, will band together for the success of this Council and do everything we can to procreate our bloodline at all costs.

“Now, I have an announcement. Tonight, I am proud to tell you about an unprecedented long-term program. I conceived, planned and will participate in this program for one reason – to mate with a target male with a unique bloodline not unlike our own and observe the product born of this mating for its inherent violent traits to manifest throughout its lifetime.” Bridget stopped when she heard voices mumbling in the pews below. It only took one stern gaze at her members, and the talking ceased. Bridget had paused merely for a moment, but in that brief time she was confident she had regained their attention.

“The program will consist of five phases. Each phase represents a product life event – infiltrate, manipulate, control, progeny, and procreate. The five phases are summarized as follows. Phase one. Collateral Council female will infiltrate prearranged home of the target childless couple where male has a suitable bloodline mirroring our own and provide surrogacy for the birth of product child for adoption, leaving child with target couple.

“Phase two. Product child will be assigned a sentinel who will monitor it closely for signs of inherent tendencies. If product child has not presented violent tendencies by an acceptable age, the parents will be killed, creating a course correction and high trauma event to induce its violent

ancestral genetic traits. “Phase three. Product will continue to be followed closely through adulthood, observing it for inherent violent traits. Product will be mated with a genetically appropriate male selected by the Council and a large family will be expected. Course corrections and high trauma events will continue to be employed as necessary at the Council caretaker’s discretion.

“Phase four. Product’s children will be observed and large families will be bred for further experimentation through selective mating.

“Phase five. Product will now be elderly and its grandchildren will be observed, mated, and bred for many generations, ensuring the continuation of our bloodline.”

Once again Bridget paused as she studied the faces of the rapt members who sat in the pews. Only when she felt sure she had their undivided attention did she go on.

“Familiarize yourselves with these phases and the product life events. Your knowledge of the program, no matter what your role in it, is critical to its success. A copy has been included in your manifesto as Appendix A. Again, I stress that this and anything that happens within these walls is highly confidential.

“This is an exciting time for the Council. The hybrid that will be bred through this mating of bloodlines will produce a new breed. I am hopeful that the program will produce a new Hunter. If not, the product hybrid will still be of the utmost importance to our bloodline studies. It may manifest in new and exciting ways we cannot even imagine at this time.”

The excitement in the audience was audible as the Council members spoke softly among themselves. Bridget allowed them their moment, taking another sip of water. As she replaced the glass on the lectern with a little more force than necessary, the dull thud of glass on wood alerted them to save their discussion for later. All eyes were now back on Bridget Devlin.

“Phase one of the program will begin next week. Specific details and location will not be divulged in order to maintain strict security over the program phases in order to ensure its success. Only Council members on a need-to-know basis will have access to detailed data. I will keep you informed as to any updates on how the program is proceeding. As you can see by my appearance tonight, I have already begun preparation for my assignment by altering my looks. I have also given myself a new identity – my code name will be Louise.” With her right hand absently stroking her new short haircut, Bridget smiled at her audience.

“How interesting it will be to see how fate will intertwine with genetics as to how this product will develop by phase three, which should put us well into the twenty-first century and all of us more than twenty years older.

“I will leave you tonight by reiterating some important reminders. We have a truly unique and fascinating family tree. It is made up of an unending chain of people back to the beginning of time. Without them, we simply would not exist. These billions of people are our ancestors. We embrace our heritage, our ancestors, and the killer lineage they have passed down to us, their descendants. We care about whose blood runs in our veins and the unique legacy that we have

inherited. We nurture and encourage our heritage of violence. It is who we are. It is who our future descendants will become. Never forget that we are all connected. Without the past, there is no present. Without the past, there is no future. Without our ancestors, there are no descendants.

“We are today’s descendants. Our children and grandchildren are tomorrow’s descendants. Our Council manifesto is the story of our past – the story of our ancestors.

It is the story of our bloodline and how imperative it is to see that our bloodline of violence continues onward through time. Our manifesto – our legacy – is to procreate more of our kind. It is imperative that you know our Council’s manifesto – our mission statement.

“Know your Council history. Know who your ancestors were. Know your bloodline. Know who you are. Know that we are all connected through blood. Know that your blood is your fate. Know that there are more Hunters among us. Know that there are more Hunters yet to be born.”

Bridget Devlin cocked her head, gazing at her Council members in the nave, pausing for effect. The large room was quiet. With a satisfied smile, Bridget confidently brought her first Council meeting to an end.

“Meeting is adjourned.”