

*The Ninth  
Acolyte Reader*



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# One Hell of an Angel

by **Paidrig MagUidhir**

"God Damn he's beautiful!"

I was sitting my myself, as usual, at one of the side tables in Tilly's Bar. It was Sunday and once again he was there. He might have been a big eight or a small eleven; it didn't matter: he was an angel.

"But actually he's not," I said to myself as I downed another gulp of cheap beer and crunched on the chips. He was standing by the video game trying to push by the bigger boys to get his coin into the machine.

It always amazed me how in these Spanish bars the kids were all over the place, behind the bar pulling a drink, beating at the video game or crying at the tables, interrupting my efforts at a quiet read.

Right now I couldn't bother with the magazine on the table top. I had eyes only for him. I'd seen him many times before, but only on Sundays when his father came in to catch the latest football match on the TV. His boy didn't take that much interest, preferring to spend his time by the machine. He was easy to spot. He was short and slightly out of proportion. His head was just a bit big for his body; his hair wasn't the stereotypical Spanish black but a medium brown that he wore flowing down around his neck and ears. His ears! He had a hearing aid in one.

Obviously hard of hearing, not proportionally correct, sweet looking. I wondered if the father wanted English lessons for him. Not much of a chance of finding out here and now. But Las Colinas wasn't the typical Spanish small town. Prosperous orange groves and the big city nearby meant that I'd been able to eke out a modest income for the last couple of years giving English lessons to kids in the better-off families. Tilly's was my local and I was the town *extrajeno*, or foreigner. Folks tolerated me, enjoyed me, as long as I kept my hands off the dark-haired, dark-eyed youngsters that tramped up the stairs to my small apartment for their weekly lessons.

They weren't in danger. I'd learned my lessons several years back at the hands of the Brazilian police and had been lucky to get out of the country with only a minor beating over a minor beating off.

"I wonder what your feet look like?" I mumbled, just loud enough that I

could hear myself saying it but not so loud as to bother the football fans around me. His feet were encased in one of those ridiculous pairs of thousand-dollar basketball shoes. "Damn, why do they have to hide all the best parts?" I asked myself under my breath again.

My mind went back to good times and bad, from the little store-front out-reach center in Cleveland with the barefoot hillbilly boys, to the beaches in California. It seemed there was always some reason to move on, some problem, some failure. Or just being late. I arrived in the Philippines weeks after Pagsanjan fell. Friends in Thailand said that I should have been there the month before. Times Square had once been hot, but not when I got there.

The boy's eyes turned from the machine for just a moment, long enough to glance by me but not at me. Damn, damn, damn, why was it always the same? I was always too late. Now I was probably too old. I palmed the big beer glass and poured more of it down my mouth. I glanced down at the belly that hadn't been there a few years ago, then at the thin frame of the boy. I didn't even know his name. If only I could know his name, or see his feet. If only he wouldn't wear those damned jeans and that big floppy shirt And why only on Sundays?

I glanced around. There were many truck drivers here today. They were easy to spot. They weren't speaking Spanish and had tattoos. But then I saw one person whom I couldn't put anywhere. He wasn't a local and he wasn't even Spanish. He wasn't a Brit. He wasn't an American, thank God. But who was he?

Tilly's was a small place but even this guy would have been able to slip by the crowd. He was thin, but thin! He was dressed in dusty blacks and faded brown. He had on "fruit boots", stove-pipe pants, a high turtle-neck sweater and a sport coat that could be called that only because there was no other word to describe the tired old jacket that hung on his bony shoulders.

His hair was sort of yellow blond and long, his skin all sorts of pinks and whites and little red spots. His thin hands reached out from bony wrists to hold the glass of Coke he'd ordered and passed it on to a pair of bloodless lips. But it was his eyes that really caught my attention.

Pale, almost pink, and unblinking, they were staring at me with a frightening intensity. I'd found Spaniards, young and old, to be friendly to strangers. None of them would have stared at me the way this guy was. It wasn't a dangerous stare: it was more as though he was examining me, appraising me, as though he was trying to read my mind.

I quickly avoided the stare, picked up my magazine on the table,

raised it and held it high enough to hide my face a bit but at an angle where my eyes could run over the little figure of the boy again and again. What the hell was it that attracted me to him so much? He was good looking but not that exceptional. I had no idea what his body looked like, although I could guess that it was nice. I'd barely heard his voice and the voice of a boy is a beautiful thing.

I glanced around, meaning to catch the bartender's eyes to ask for another beer, when I saw the mysterious stranger looking at *him*, my boy, with that same strange intensity. A chill ran up my back. Then his glance turned to me. And he smiled. The chill turned to ice.

I quickly scooped up my magazine, went to the bar, paid. I tried to cast a last glance at the boy, but he was lost among the game players.

Outside, the early evening was getting cool and I was glad for it. I gulped some fresh air and headed down the street. My mind was still full of the boy, and battling to forget about the weird stranger. The boy was becoming the archetype of all I longed for and had lost. I found a park bench under some palms and settled onto it.

"Mind if I join you?"

It was the thin stranger. He sat down beside me, obviously not caring whether I invited him to or not.

"His name is Roberto," the stranger said. "He's nine and does suffer from a very mild case of dwarfism. That's the reason for the slightly large head. His hearing problem is a minor consequence of it as well. Unfortunately he is the spawn of two very unhappy and immature people. The reason you see him just on Sunday is that he is with his father only on the weekends, though the family lives in the village."

The stranger's English was perfect, too perfect. As I looked at him from up close I had trouble guessing his age. He wasn't old. He wasn't young. Or rather, he seemed younger than I but his eyes seemed ages older.

"Roberto's one of those rare children of a Spanish divorce," the stranger continued. "His father basically ignores him. He's an only child and very vulnerable."

I had to pull my eyes away. I had to assess whether I was drunk or stoned. I was none of those things, hadn't been for years. I took a deep breath and became aware that the stranger gave off a particular smell: of earth, of funk in its actual meaning. But there was also the smell of locker rooms and dirty clothes and that rotten egg smell of little boys' farts. Not unpleasant, but certainly unexpected.

I found my voice at last "Why are you telling me this?" I asked.

"You want him, don't you? You want him as much as you've wanted all

those little boys that have passed in front of you all these years. All the little campers that you kept your hands off of, all the good students whom you wouldn't touch for fear of losing your job. All those little lovelies that you've seen on the streets from here to Viet Nam to Scotland to South America to...."

He stopped for a second to give me a chance to take all of this in. Where was I? Who was this guy?

"You're getting older," he continued. "Life's slipping away. You had a bit... once. Back in Cleveland. Remember the boys under the railroad bridge? And in Vermont. Do you remember Thomas?"

Indeed I did! I had to choke back a sob. I wanted him to stop because he was tearing at my scabs and it was starting to hurt unbearably. I looked around to see if anyone was hearing us, but it seemed as though the little park was empty.

"You stopped a lot of times when they were asking for it. Scared about yourself rather than of what they wanted."

"Who the hell are you?" I hissed.

"Call me Luke," he said. I knew that was no more his name than that I was straight. "And I came here to make you an offer. I'm empowered to give Roberto to you. Completely. He'll come to your little apartment with his father's blessing. He'll strip naked for you the first meeting and you and he will be extremely happy for four weeks – one month."

"And what do *you* want?" I gasped.

"You will have all of that in exchange for one little thing."

"And that is?" I said.

His pale eyes locked onto mine. He took a deep breath through his nose and said, simply, "Your soul."

Oh, wow. I'd read about Faust and all, but this was too much. This was 1993 and this was democratic Spain with all of its problems and the environment and everything, and there were micro-chips and men had been on the moon, and.... Okay, fuck it, I thought. This guy doesn't look like the devil, but then what the hell *does* the devil look like?

"Let me get this straight," I said. "You'll arrange Roberto to somehow get together with me for four weeks, and we – he, I – can do anything we want – and you seem to know what it is that I want. And in exchange for that, you want my, you want my..." I was having a hard time spitting out the word 'soul'. I'd forgotten I had one, if I'd ever believed I did. But this Luke seemed to think I did, and he wanted it.

"Come, now, it's not so hard to say. Your soul." He had a sweet look on his face, almost of sympathy. "You have a good one, actually, and the

organization wants it."

"The organization?"

"We'll give you a month. And I can guarantee that the four weeks of that month will be, if you'll forgive the expression, heavenly."

"Heavenly?"

"I've followed your life for some time. I've become something of a specialist on you. As a matter of fact, I think I know you so well that, while we were in Tilly's, I made the initial arrangements with Roberto's father for him to ask you to give Roberto English lessons.

"Lessons?"

"Oh, c'm on, Patrick, am I talking to an echo or what? You know the drill. You've seen the movies. You're a literate person. You may even have read the book. We give you what you want, everything you want. You'll enjoy it a great deal. But after a month we get your soul. Of course," he said, a bit too casually, "that'll require your death."

"If I recall correctly," I said, "wasn't one of the original deals for a lifetime?"

"That might have been okay back when life expectancy was forty years for men, but now we can't take that kind of time."

Why was all of this sounding so damned logical to me now? What was the use of a soul if your life was hollow? Who needed more years with only your right hand for a sex partner?

I turned to Luke. "Is there some kind of scorched parchment I need to sign in a graveyard?"

For the first time Luke laughed. There was triumph in his pale eyes. "Don't be so old-fashioned. We're computerized now and I'll take care of it all through our satellite connection."

Somehow I should have known that

I made it back to Tilly's before the game ended. The boys were still all crowded around the game machine, the men screaming at the TV. I ordered a beer and put myself close to Roberto's father. During a lull in the action, we struck up a conversation, and soon, effortlessly it seemed, we got to the subject of his son, his sweet little son Roberto. The boy was going to be getting some English in school the next year and, yes, it would be wonderful if I could give him a head start. Damn, it all seemed too easy.

I didn't know when my month started, but I took no chances. I made an appointment for the next day, early. And there he was, at seven o'clock, looking shyly and ravishingly beautiful, dressed in sandals and a real pair of shorts, no socks and simple T-shirt, squinting in the low morning sun.

I ushered him in, set a cup of coffee before him, and right away we started on the body – the vocabulary, that is. The parts of the face were easy to work on. When he asked me what a *pecho* was, it was all too easy to suggest that he take off his shirt to show his chest. The Spanish for finger and toe is the same, *dedos*, and he had no qualms when I unbuckled his sandals to count his dusty little toes. My hand worked quickly and simply up his leg, his *rodillos*, knees. By now he was in my lap with only his light shorts on.

Luke was correct again. We giggled and laughed as we explored *labios*, or lips, and *narizes*, noses. My left hand cradled him by the back. His right arm was around my shoulder. Our free hands played with each other; it seemed so natural when they fell onto his crotch. I let mine rest there. I could feel a bit of bundled flesh under my little finger. I got my hand loose from his grip and moved it back and forth.

There's a tension, a tightness to a boy's penis when it's hard. And Roberto's young hard-on was responding to the play of my finger. He smiled and looked in my eyes. It was a look of total understanding. His free hand gripped my wrist and pushed my hand harder into his crotch.

"*Ye esto? Que es?*" The Spanish would have been too simple. I gave him the English 'dick' and he laughed. He retracted his arm from around my shoulder and pulled the front of his little shorts down and out.

The lesson passed quickly and easily. By seven-thirty he was naked in my bed, exploring my body as I explored his. He was a little kitten, a nanny goat, a colt, a wave of emotion and feeling rubbing himself all over me. The lesson was supposed to last an hour. He assured me that it would be no problem if he got home a bit later. I had to believe him. I sucked his toes. He licked my nose. He gave my dick a name. I licked his balls. He pulled his foreskin back as far as it would go. I helped him jerk off, and he helped me. He wiped my cum from his tummy and said it tasted yucky. I dressed him and told him I would see him tomorrow.

The tomorrows came all too quickly. I canceled my other classes. His mother and father were amazed at the quick way he was picking up the language and how happy he seemed all of a sudden at home. When a little boy has total control of a grown man and his own dick he does become more self-confident. Roberto and I were a pair in the village within days, and I didn't give a fuck what anyone thought. For the first time in my boy-loving life, I was free. I knew nothing could hurt me. I could give himself totally to him, and I did.

We found a beach where we could both run naked. His mother and



father soon agreed to let him stay with me, and now my nights were full of him, full of the texture of his small ass, the pimples, the bent-over little toes, the network of veins that stood out on the white of his dick.

Much of the time was spent in simple tasks and delights: videos, computer games, cooking and eating and cleaning up together. His English and my Spanish grew apace. By the second week he could work over my dick as long as I could stand it. Then I'd lay him on his back on a pillow, lift his legs and put the bottom of his feet to my face, slide my dick between his legs and he would grab it tight with his hands as I'd lovingly thrust in and out until, with a great gasp, I'd shoot onto his tummy and chest.

His own sex was quicker and easier but no less active. My cum was no longer 'yucky'; he often smeared it on his own little hard-on (to make it grow, he said) and paraded around the room, pretending the semen was his. He must have averaged three orgasms to one of mine, and his favorite way to experience one was for me to hold him tightly, stroking his back, while we kissed voraciously and he rubbed off with a great shudder against my hip.

But my month was coming to an end. On that last, sad day – sad for me, not for the unsuspecting child – Roberto spoke enthusiastically about the coming school year. He was still a little boy with long brown hair and a hearing aid, perhaps a bit short for his age, but he was an active, happy, confident and very sexually experienced nine-year-old.

Tilly's was crowded, but I spotted Luke right away. He was the same dusty, dark, thin person I'd seen thirty days earlier. I took a deep breath, went over, ordered a soda, looked him in the eyes and said, "So, what now?"

"First," he began, a bit formally, "the organization wants to thank you for taking such good care of Roberto. He'll be very surprised, and a bit hurt, when he finds you're no longer... present, shall we say. But he'll quickly get over it. You've made him a much stronger person than he was before. He will grow up into a loving and understanding man and will be very happy."

"You know the future, too?" I asked.

"A bit of it. But now it's time to go. No, please don't worry, nothing horrible. It'll be no more bother than us going through the back door of the restaurant here."

Having worked in the nether regions of a few restaurants in my time, it didn't surprise me that hell could be reached that way.

"Okay," I said, "there's no point in putting this off. Let's go."

It was the light that struck me first: it was so clear and limpid. Then the sounds, a thousand voices of boys, all singing the most sinuous and beautiful counterpoint, trebles and altos weaving their lines with simple but incredibly knowing artistry. I looked at Luke. "Is this really the way to hell?" I asked. "Showing me what I've missed by not keeping my you-know-what in my pants?"

"Hell?" he said, looking at me sharply. "What do you mean, hell?"

"Well, didn't I sell my soul to Satan, or Beezelbub or whatever his true name is?"

"Oh, my goodness, no!" The mention of the devil had disturbed him visibly. "Oh, I am sorry, Patrick – I thought it was obvious. My goodness, no. Hell is full to bursting. The Boss has had to sublet Purgatory to... the Dark One... just to take care of the lawyers and social workers. People are dying to get into hell. Oh, no, you're going to heaven, Patrick. That's where all your friends are. The Boss wants to be sure to get the best men before it's too late. That's why we gave you Roberto for a month. Perhaps that was naughty, tempting you into making a pact with us, but the boy will be a better man for the loving you've given him.

"And now... we've got a real nice spot for you, right by a clear lagoon and a crowd of..."

The light grew sweeter and the boys' melisma more meltingly beautiful. And when I saw them – row on row of cherubs, from perky eight-year-old trebles to sturdy altos watching over the little ones, all in sandals – I knew Luke was telling the truth.