

VampireS (€) X

AD 1900 {One Thousand Nine Hundred} through
Anno Domini (in the year of our Lord) 2003 {Two Thousand Three}
February Twenty-Third
8:00 p.m.

You will never know who I am. I will not describe my physical characteristics to you. However since I am generous, I will enlighten you this much. I am either a man or a woman, perhaps, even both. Feel free to laugh, life is too short—but I am, or rather was, human; and still appear human to anyone who cares to take notice of me. These accounts are nonfiction: a true and accurate chronology of my life, recollections and thoughts. Not some fictional fluff, not some attempt at a novel to entertain the masses. I am not concerned with plot or character or painting pretty pictures for you with prose. Believe me, your feelings are not my concern. I do not care what you think. What you shall get from me is what I decide to give you. If you don't like it, too bad! This journal will be completed in one sitting. And shall take as long as it takes. I require little to no sleep. How fortunate for me. How fortunate for you.

Here we go.

Sipping scalding tea, I lounge in an uncomplicated room, at a small antique secretary desk. Glancing out my bay window, the prairie grass sings while a hawk dives in for its kill. I enjoy spying the constant struggle of life and death unfolding outside. Do you care whether I am a male or female? Perhaps you do. But do not concern yourself with such triviality. This journey we take is a marathon, not a sprint. By the end, you will understand who and what I am. So enjoy the ride. The hawk's claws pierce the gopher's back and carrying its dinner, the noble bird soars away. The hawk lives. The gopher dies.

More often now, nostalgia dances with melancholy, forcing truths from me I wish to keep secret. Certain sentiments I prefer remain chained to my heart or head or buried somewhere cold and dead. Yes! I use sex as a diversion. But after so many years, even my lust hides in the darkest shadows and deepest memories.

My mission here—with you—is truth.

Outside resembles a postcard in three dimensions, a pretty though sad picture. This farmhouse, in Wildwood Wisconsin, I have called home for over two hundred years. Today is cold. Like angels falling from grace, potato-chip sized snowflakes tumble from heaven, riding on currents of air, they scuttle about from one whispered breeze to another. Summer's once noble oaks act as naked sentries, their barren skeletal branches silhouetted against a somber sky, the last fierce rays of the day's setting sun fighting the horizon in vain. Once more, the sun loses this infinite battle of darkness versus light—or is it good versus evil? Then night's curtain falls guillotine fast—Nighttime. My time.

Do you see? I can paint pretty pictures with words if I choose.

Outside, strange sounds catch my attention: mournful cries of pain echoing over my land. Is this Death approaching? No! Too soon for Death to make His entrance. Just cows grazing in my

pastures. Thousands of the stupid beasts, voicing their loneliness and sorrow. Or perhaps, they are warning me of danger—But what threat? Who, or what would dare to threaten me? No one! Nothing! Just lonely, stupid beasts—and, I understand their cries. I understand too well sorrow and loneliness.

February Twenty-Third, 8:47 p.m.

2003—Wildwood, Wisconsin

We are extinct.

Believe it. Believe this: I fear I am going insane. This makes sense to me. At some point, the mind cracks. Small fissures form over the centuries, small ripples in the framework of the mind. Perhaps you perceive what I mean? One-day walking down the street, sudden panic overwhelms you. Your heart pounds. Sweat pours. You can't breathe, gasping for air!

Terror erupts from your eyes, and you believe you are dying. Why is this happening? Yesterday, you were okay. And the yesterdays before that, nothing. Why now? Eventually, the terror eases off, and you understand. A panic attack! We are not so different, humans and vampires, but what is the cause of such anxiety?

Cracks.

Small cracks forming in your mind like fissures on a desert landscape. Over time these cracks seek company, splitting—over endless hours, days, and years until one joins the others. These small cracks grow larger, more formidable. Yes, time takes its toll on us all, but the mind bears the brunt of time's attacks. So often, I escape using diversions from madness, time, fear, and even life... Yet again, I digress. We were musing over my going insane. Over what you do, and do not understand about me and my kind. For over a thousand years, I have lived! Once, I was human. What I am now is for you to conclude after this reading. Myriad books have been written, and movies made; lies invented to make the stories, characters, and plots bigger and better and more cinematically impressive.

But exaggeration of misinformation does not make legend true. What happens over time is this: Myth and legend grow as tiny truths mix with outrageous lies, or, shall we say, for manner's sake, outlandish exaggerations. In most cases, the exaggerations' foundations are truth-based. Nonfictional accounts of events people did witness: murders that changed their lives, a loved one left for dead who springs back to life and does terrible things to the living. Human-like hunters hunting other human beings for food or sport or both. Let us begin with the lies. With the fictional novel and movie versions of what someone like me can and cannot do. With what can and cannot kill me: with how I live, where I live, where I can't live; and the whys and the wherefores and the such and such of things.

Shall we?

For the purposes of simplicity, I will use terminology we are all familiar with. Let's start with the obvious. Although I would argue I do not consider myself to be what you and your writers label me and my kind—monsters, undead, killers, and worse—or what they insinuate we are and are not capable of doing. Still, I will agree to use your culturally accepted words to address all the myths, legends, lies, beliefs, and truths attributed to vampirism—by both your media and your stupidity. Everything passed down from generation to generation while exploiting and exaggerating who we are. I shall suffer the indignity of having your authors and screenwriters define me until you understand the truth.

Allow me to warn and remind you. This is not a story. Not a movie. Not fiction. This is life: my life. What I gift you with my truth is knowledge: a priceless commodity which comes at a stiff price. Be careful if you decide to mock me. My sole motive in writing this now—my final journal—with the full knowledge that one day my writings may be discovered, is simply this: I fear and believe I am indeed the last of my kind. THE LAST ONE! Can you understand the depth of my pain? My story must be—according to me—and shall be—according to me—told.

I began this journal today because I fear these are my final days of living—or is it, of existence. Which better describes my life? You decide. I am the last. We are extinct. Truth must be told before facts vanish. Throughout my life, I walked with angels and battled devils: some human, some not. Witnessed the rise and fall of Pharaohs and Kings, basked in the glory of the empire that was Rome: in 1453, I observed how swiftly such a formidable empire can fall. Fought in holy wars. Lived through plagues. Found and lost religion, then found my faith again; experienced too much death and devastation, the inhumane cruelty of humankind. Witnessed over millennium, war and death too often attributed to the glory of one God or another. I bear witness to all. War! Plague! Fear! Persecution! Prejudice! Religion! Kings! Queens! Pharaohs! Gods! Hate! Hope! Genocide and Death and death and lastly, too rarely ... Love! Never enough love.

Slowly inhaling, I wait for my heart to calm its pounding. Oh, of course, you believe my heart does not beat? That my kind would not suffer a panic attack?

You think I am telling untruths? We shall see.

What about passion, beauty, and power? My stories, my life experiences fill volumes and overflow with all of life's emotions. Enough of the past. Those memories are recorded in my nine other journals. This journal shall be about TRUTH and LIES, not pain. Have I not suffered enough pain? Too much death and pain? Perhaps you will decide for me.

To live one must die, and to live-eternal is to hurt eternal.

Eternal pain.

Can you imagine such suffering? The depth of my pain?

Perhaps you might. We shall see.

So, I promise to tell the truth of what I am. To separate for you the wheat from the chafe. To slash myth from legend, fable from folklore: to dissect the accepted fictional accounts of me and my kind from the lies. Separate the twisted accounts which turned fact into myth and legend and lore into truth. To help you discover what I honestly am and am not. This I swore to do, and I will. For the first time in history, the truth of what is and is not Vampire shall be revealed in this journal. This is my promise: I will answer all your questions. Do you wish to find out if a mirror reflects a vampire's image? Can garlic kill me? Must I drink human blood to survive? Can I grow fangs to kill or drink? Does holy water burn me? Can I shape-shift into wolf or bat? Can I fly? Is a vampire equipped with superhuman strength? Do I Flit to travel unseen and at an excessive velocity? Can I enter a church? Do crosses burn my flesh? Can I enter your house without an invitation? Am I dead? Am I evil? Am I eternal? What about the sun? Will it burn me? Does it cause me to erupt into flame as I dissolve into ash before your eyes?

Can I enthrall humans with my eyes?

Is my skin deathly white?

Will a bullet kill me, in my head or heart or anywhere?

Does my heart beat?

Do I eat?

Drink?

Sleep?
 Do I only come out only at night?
 Do I use a bathroom?
 How I was made?
 Can I die?
 Can I love?
 Do I love?
 Is sex important to me? Is it different? Is it strange?
 Ah! The most important question of all: Can I make another vampire?
 Not only do I pledge to answer all these questions; more importantly, I promise to answer our deepest, most coveted secret: the most critical question...
 Can a mortal spawn a vampire?

February Twenty-Third, 9:36 p.m.

2003—Wildwood, Wisconsin

Ah! The best question, our most coveted secret, I will answer now.

Can a mortal turn another mortal into a vampire?

Yes. And I promise to tell you how anyone can accomplish this. How any mortal can spawn a vampire. This, I promise, is not hard. And I assure you spawning a vampire is still possible. This knowledge I will gift you, to do with as you wish. Perhaps you will decide to make yourself live forever.

Would you like that?

Let us start at the beginning. Real life is not a book or movie or folklore or myth.

Science lesson number one. On Earth—you, me, all of us—are governed by natural and scientific laws. For instance, you must eat and sleep and drink, or die. Like any living organism, I eat too. I eat food. Whatever I like. As do you, I utilize the loo, toilet, commode to empty my bladder and bowels. Think about this: use rational thought, common sense. Even if, as legend states, I could only drink blood, I would still need to eliminate whatever waste I produced by drinking or eating blood or blood by-products, correct? Do you agree? Not that your opinion matters much if you said no. Only a fool would argue this fact. I am or was a human being. As such, I am equipped with a stomach, a bladder, both small and large intestines, etc. You get the point!

Logic and science dictate, what goes up must come down. What goes in must come out. If I only drank blood—gallons, and gallons—let us assume truckloads worth in a year. Enough blood to fill an ocean over the thousand-years of my existence, then consider this: how enormous would I be? Massive! A massive blood engorged gelatinous vampire, overflowing with thousands of gallons of blood. It does not make sense.

So, we can quickly dispel this ridiculous myth. I must eat and drink, and I undoubtedly expel waste products produced by my body. Yes, I do enjoy drinking blood, and I must drink blood, occasionally—though not entirely, not exclusively, and not a majority of only human blood.

From AD 1642 to 1707 (sixty-five years, if the math is complicated for you) I went without one drop of human blood.

I digress.

IF YOU WANT TO FIND A VAMPIRE, start with a farm. Why search for a vampire on a farm? As I said earlier, I am writing this from my farmhouse, which overlooks 250-acres. This is a working farm with over two thousand head of cattle and 100 acres of wheat. My farm provides me with both income and legitimate cover. Because livestock, particularly large livestock like cows and horses provide an abundance of blood. An average human body contains 10 pints of blood; a cow comprises 40 pints. Cows won't complain or tell the authorities when a vampire feeds upon them. Cows hear fainter and higher noises than humans and smell scents up to six miles away. So, they warn me of approaching dangers: whether vampire, human, or other.

Incidentally, if you accidentally kill a cow by gorging like a monster (from one of your horror movies) on its blood until drained, leaving a cold, lifeless livestock corpse on the field—so what! A dead cow does not warrant an investigation by the local sheriff or D.A. Cows don't get an autopsy at the local morgue to discover the cause of death. And additionally, I make money selling its corpse for dog food.

When I was turned, in AD 1014, myth and folklore affected my kind. So many misconceptions existed. Even for me, these myths dictated how I lived my life as a new, young vampire. Of course, bleeding human beings for sustenance was a staple of my existence. I believed, as did we all at the time, in the myth and legends about vampires.

Vampires were killers. Evil, blood suckers who murdered the innocent without provocation; driven to blasphemous homicide by an unquenchable hunger for human blood. Not true! Now, I understand the truth, having lived as a vampire for over a thousand years. What I comprehend now, I did not grasp then. Shame on me. My lover, the one who turned me, taught me much, but believed in the lore of old. So, unfortunately, we lived as we believed.

Were murders committed for blood? Yes!

Though rarely did we bleed the innocent, and never a child—at least not I. We took our life blood from the elderly, from the criminal elements amidst the citizens of Sophia, Bulgaria, my birth place. This much I will allow you to know: where I was born so many centuries past.

We ate, and do eat food, like we did before we became the "undead"—as named by you, and history and fools. *Undead?* A joke amongst our kind. Soon you will understand. Again, all this I revealed in my first journal written over 900 yesteryears ago: of my life in the city, of the hardship of living both as a human then as a vampire. Of the riches, I gathered. Of my conquests in love and war and science.

Of my home.

In a dim room in the muddy back alley of Sophia's slums. I lay on my feather-stuffed mattress in the corner of the room, following shadows dancing over stone walls; the flickering obscurities snuffed out once the lone candle sizzled and died. The last of the candle's wax pooled on my homemade walnut table. This table served a dual purpose as nightstand and bench, and outside my window, I glimpsed my love—a vampire, a real vampire—though I didn't know it at the time. We had met weeks early when my lover's horse had knocked me over—almost killing me.

But, this is another story, perhaps for later.

As a baker, I made an honest but ill paying living. Eventually, I gave up baking once I became a vampire, a chameleon, a killer, a soldier...Again, I digress. Perhaps, I must speak of some of these things for my truth to be understood. Ah! Truth is always a war of facts over fiction. It was war that changed my life and led to my death, though not as you might be thinking. Again, this is a lane I had hoped not to stroll down, one leading to memories I preferred

not to recall. Rationality, meaning yours, will help you understand all the misconceptions that modern civilization has credited to the vampire. When I stand in front of a mirror, is my image reflected back? This is not a trick question. Light refracts and reflects off all surfaces, a mirror shows an animate or inanimate thing's reflection. If someone or something reflects or refracts light, it will be reflected in a mirror. Reasonable, yes? So, of course, mirrors reflect my image. If you must know whether or not my reflection is handsome or beautiful, that I won't share with you—not now, perhaps not ever.

What about coffins? Must I always sleep in a coffin? Do you sleep in the crib you first slept in as a baby? No! Good. Nor do I sleep in a coffin sprinkled with dirt from my place of death. A firm mattress best suits my back. Vampirism does not dictate one sleep in a coffin. If we slept in coffins, how easy we would be discovered by anyone who ventured into our homes or lairs. And. No! We do not sleep in lairs. This myth does, however, stem from fact.

Long ago in Egypt, a vampire maker would place the human—he or she had just spawned—into a sarcophagus. The casket would be locked until the turning, or change was complete. This is millenniums ago, circa 600 BC. When Pharaohs lived, and we honored our Gods of Life and Death. Placement in a sarcophagus protected the fledgling vampire during the change as well as being an important part of the religious ceremony that preceded and followed the creation of a vampire.

As your archaeologists discovered, mummies do not decompose. Most mummies are vampires who died. Contrary to what science keeps saying, a mummy's wraps were not treated with chemicals, nor did the desert heat preserve those bodies, it is because the Vampiric Virus in each of those souls prevented, even in true death, the vampire infused body from decomposing. This is a fact.

But, what about the blood? If blood any could be siphoned from the dried mummies corpse, would it prove to science that a mummy is not human? An excellent question which I will answer soon.

I am tired. But I cannot sleep My thoughts wrestle the sandman. So diversion is a must. Sex always promises temporary relief. My lover slumbers in my master bedroom.

Shall we visit her?

In my king-sized bed, under Egyptian silk sheets, she lays. Her breath whispers in the silent room. Sleep warming her body, I enter the chamber shrouded in silence. Her shoulder length hair fanned over the pillows. My Japanese princess, like a porcelain doll, asleep amidst silk and satin. Except for her black mane, no other hair covers her body. She sleeps nude, as requested. Deep in dreamland, she slumbers like the dead. Slightly, her chest moves under the red sheets, her erect nipples like small budding flowers tenting the soft material.

Easing myself on the mattress, I lift the sheet over her legs. Her blue pedicured toenails resemble candied treats and my mouth drops over her big toe, sucking softly. Higher and higher, I move the sheets, draping them over her belly until her hairless mound glistens in the candlelit room. Lust tempts me to devour her ravenously, but I refrain and ease her legs wider—careful not to wake up my Japanese doll. My eyes feast on her treasure. Between her thighs, my mouth hovers above her secret spot. Stomach down, I inhale her in. She wears no perfume. Her aroma is youth, fresh soap, and life. Eighteen years young, she is the promise of youth.

My right hand finds my groin, and my own sex comes alive as my left index finger and thumb open her nether lips, and I draw in her aroma: sweet musk and desire. Still, she sleeps. But a moan escapes her lips as she turns to the left.

Now my right hand joins my left, both my thumbs opening her flower wider. Dew drops of her desire drip down her pink lips. My thumbs rub up and down: gentle, methodic, intentional. Her wetness providing the lubrication as I caress her flower to open wider. Then her pink pearl peeks out from under its hood, and more velvet wetness soaks her in desire.

Her natural perfume drives me mad. My tongue flicks out, stealing a lap of her honey. Sweet, thick, velvety, she tastes like sunshine, and my body shudders.

Another moan escapes her lips, yet still, she sleeps.

So slowly, my tongue lowers over her pink button. Swollen with her lust, it throbs with her need as my tongue circles her most sensitive spot—slow... gentle... awakening her fire.

A gasp this time, and her teeth nibble on her lower lip—passion, lust, desire, all combining in her fantasy sleep. Her chest heaves and her hips buck toward me. Unable to refrain, my tongue slips past her opening and laps inside her velvet walls. Heaven! She drenches my mouth, forcing me to lap faster and faster as I swallow her sweet gift.

A tear slides down my cheek.

She never wakes during these moments. When the sun comes up, she will leave—happy, and in love. But her memory of me will fade. Then completely disappear, until nothing remains but a hunger for something she can no longer find. Ah! Perhaps the hunger I keep trying to satiate through all my loves.

Hours ago, I dug a room below my kitchen floor through the frozen earth. Muscles and a pickax did the job. This task I completed by myself, alone. My steaming breath, the only source of heat, a dying flashlight my sole source of light. Outside, screaming its ongoing rage, a blizzard knocked out the power to my house, rattling protesting windows. Don't fret. The power is now back on, the blizzard's rage expended. Underground, in pure blackness, I worked. First, I built the wooden staircase leading seven steps down from the trapdoor I had cut into my kitchen's original maple floor. This is the only access—and escape route—from my secret room. With no lights and no air, there is no escape if the walls cave in. Ice covers the dirt floor; the mud walls are solidly frozen. The room measures six feet long by six feet wide by five feet high—a frozen secret tomb to conceal my most prized treasures. After I am done with my writing and have placed my treasures inside this crypt, I shall pour a concrete slab over the trapdoor. On top of the trapdoor, I shall lay oak flooring over the existing maple, to ensure my treasures remain hidden.

But if you are reading this—YOU—whoever YOU are—then you have discovered my hidden mausoleum and its secrets. I feared over time, the trapdoor might collapse.

Did a sinkhole form in the concrete slab and oak flooring above?

Is this how you found my treasures?

I wonder.

You! The one reading these words take caution. Sometimes it is better to leave truth entombed, to ensure secrets remain hidden, to let the past die. This choice is still in your power to wield. You can destroy what you have found. Choose not to read on. Choose to stop!

Here!

Now!

What will you decide? Whatever choice you make, please understand, your decision will affect your entire life.

Are you still reading my journal?

Excellent! Then truth shall be shattered. Your truth. Your feeble attempts to understand your world, and your life. Is this a good thing? Perhaps? Perhaps not! I do not care. I am not here to impress or entertain you, merely to educate.

I am not your friend.

You are not my judge or jury.

Believe this: you read my words at your peril.

This is the last journal I shall write. There are ten journals in all. Ten keepers of my memories. Each handwritten throughout its respective century and, when possible, when events were fresh in my mind—though, at times, I confess having to drag recollection from memory as the centuries slipped one into another. Often, my recollections were buried under the weight of eras past. I have forgotten things. Too many, I think. This concept of forgetfulness should not be difficult for you to fathom. What were you doing four years ago this month? Forty years ago, yesterday? One hundred years ago, today? Ah! You do understand, don't you? The difficulty in remembering the moments. Perhaps not the major events, not the 'first times,' but the burden of day to day living crushes the mind under its weight.

Forgive me, I rant when I should write. Life's tiniest moments I find hard to recall years later. Memories skitter away from me. A lifetime worth of hours and days, lost.

How long have I lived?

Too long!

But, I digress. You were learning about my journals and the order and the rules and the such and such of all these things. Shall we continue? I have read ALL the books, poems, papers, and silliness, on the subject that is 'supposedly' me: what you decided to label me and my kind. Today is February Twenty-Third, Anno Domini, Two Thousand Three. I started this journal today, and as I said, there are ten journals in total.

Why ten?

Because each journal chronicles my life experiences through the century in which it was written. Now is an advantageous time for you to stop reading. Your last chance. Can you stop? Are you so curious to understand what secrets shall be divulged that you are willing to sacrifice everything? Should I help you make your choice? Will understanding WHO and WHAT YOU ARE DEALING WITH make a difference? Let us find out. A brief history of me!

Vampires (€) I, my first journal, I completed in AD 1099. I had moved from my birthplace to the exotic scents and exciting, dangerous metropolis of ancient Egypt. I resided in the Citadel, witnessing Christian Crusaders laying claim to Jerusalem as they charged the Holy City preaching their faith while offering death as an emissary. Many died by my hands. I took what I wanted: raped and pillaged at will. So much death. But this is another story, already written of so long ago.

Vampires (€) II began in AD 1110 and was completed in 1199. These memories chronicled my early adventures in France, Germania, and China; ending as I sailed towards Venice, murdering murderous pirates and weeping for those innocents killed by the Black Plague.

Again, a story I've already told.

Journals III, IV, and V were all written in various places from AD 1200 through 1499. Journal V being completed on December 29, 1499. All ten journals hold my most priceless treasures: my secrets and memories. The earlier five are well concealed elsewhere. Do not search for them here; do not expect to find them hiding close to the five you have discovered under my kitchen floor. I suppose, your kitchen now.

In 2017, this house will be put up for tender. Are YOU the new owner of my home, of my journals, of my memories? Do you fathom yet what lies within my recollections? Are you ready to stop, close this journal, hold on to your sanity? Not yet? Fine! We shall proceed...

Let us assume you are not an idiot. Do the simple math: I have lived for over one thousand years.

The journal you are reading now—and I am confident it is this journal you are reading because I labeled the cover, Journal I—Read First—is actually the last to which I put stylus to paper; and so, it should have been marked Journal X—not I (One)—as stated on the cover. Never fear, there is a method to my apparent madness.

This shall be my first and only deception.

Also, this is the only journal I did not begin and complete in the century that it reflects. These recollections, I started writing only today, scripting my memories from 1900 forward. When I finish this final journal over the next several days—in this month of February, perhaps on the twenty-seventh or twenty-eighth day in 2003—my work shall be done.

Your first truth: AD, from the Latin 'Anno Domini', means 'in the year of our Lord' not After Death. This is an understandable misconception, but one we shall correct immediately.

In this journal, Vampires (€) X, I shall gift you memories from my past one-hundred and three years of life. Tell you all my secrets, the riddles of my kind. Enigmas forbade under Law for me to share with any human. Secrets of sex. Secrets of death. Secrets that will prove to you what I am. Confidences which will dispel all the myths, legends, and folklore of what you believe me to be. But I jump too far ahead. First, I already admitted I intentionally deceived you by labeling this Journal I. This is an easy fix. Read on. For I require something of you: Quid Pro Quo, as they say.

YOU, whoever YOU are, who have discovered my words and are reading them now. The following is my offer to YOU:

GRANT OF RIGHTS: I hereby ASSIGN and GRANT in perpetuity throughout the universe ALL RIGHTS of every kind and nature concerning the material discovered by the person in possession of said journals. Said person, YOU, shall be the sole and exclusive owner of all rights in and to the stated material. Including, without limitation the copyright therein. And YOU, hereunder, I grant the right to use, exploit, advertise, sell or exhibit the preceding in any manner and in any and all media without limitation. Including (publishing, theatrical, and non-theatrical motion pictures, all forms of television, radio, legitimate stage, videodiscs, videocassettes, and all other home video devices, phonograph recordings, publications and merchandising). Whether now or hereafter devised, throughout the world, in perpetuity, in all languages at your sole discretion. Said Person, YOU, shall not edit, change, omit, or limit in any way; shall not hamper, interrupt or interfere with said material in any manner, but will execute any, and all copies of stated material VERBATIM as the original; insofar as the material has been laid out, paragraphed, spelled, misspelled, and authored.

Failure to adhere to these exact guidelines shall constitute a severe breach of this agreement, and such failure on the new owner's part shall produce harsh and irrevocable repercussions.

I hereby grant YOU, the right to amend the cover page labeled, 'Journal (€) I,' and modify this cover page to read: Vampires (€) X. Is it clever? Do I mean vampire sex, vampires ex, vampires 10 (X)? Yes. All the previous, and more. For me, the (€) represents Eternity, from the Latin word: Etern, derived from a vulgar Latin language, Catalan, spoken by the Romans who colonized the Tarragona area in Spain. As well, regarding the Journal intentionally mislabeled 10 (X), you will now correctly label I (One). My Journal labelled I (One) shall be corrected to X (10). These shall constitute the only alterations YOU shall be entitled to make to my work.

"Spelled" is intentionally misspelled above, and if anyone other than the new owner is reading my words, it had better remain so.

AUTHOR'S REMEDIES: You agree that the rights and privileges herein granted to YOU are of a special, unique, unusual, extraordinary and intellectual character. Which gives them a particular value, the loss of which cannot be adequately compensated for by damages in an action at law. It is further understood and agreed that a breach by YOU will cause me irreparable injury and harm. And as such, YOU confirm I shall be entitled to equitable relief for YOUR breach; and hereby grant me irrevocable permission to take your life in a violent, painful, and humiliating manner. The likes of which YOU will regret for as long as I care to make your suffering last. Which shall be, at my discretion, no less than an eternity.

If YOU agree to the above, then I grant you such rights.

YOU, the finder of my memories and I; we are now partners.

7) Find the needle on the same staircase where you located the lighter.

8) Prick your finger and place ONE drop of your blood...

Here:



If YOU agreed and signed with blood, please read on. If you FAILED to sign and do not wish to participate in my offer, this constitutes your last and final opportunity to stop—NOW! Immediately discontinue reading and do the following:

1) Close my journal.

2) Forget you ever found my memories.

3) Find the lighter on the bottom staircase, here in the cellar.

4) Burn all five of my journals.

5) Make certain they burn.

6) MAKE CERTAIN they burn, entirely.

This is our covenant, our contract, our binding promise, 'till death us do part.

However, if you decided to read on then I make this promise to You (Quid Pro Quo): I will tell you all my secrets, allow you to gaze into the abyss, and gift you my entire, horrible truth.

Read on.

February Twenty-Third, 11:13 p.m.

2003—Wildwood, Wisconsin

If you are reading this, then you signed in blood on the prior page and executed our contract. If you did not; your life is in peril. Stop now or accept my wrath.

If this journal has been published, and anyone other than the finder of my memories is reading my words, then you, dear reader, shall sign and date, below:

READER'S SIGNATURE: _____

Date: _____

Dear Reader, I do not require your BLOOD, only your WORD. For your pen mark above, I grant each Reader the most valuable of all riches: Truth.

With your signature, you shall grant me your willingness to be open-minded.

I ask nothing more. This shall constitute our entire pact.
Read on at your peril.

February Twenty-Third, 11:19 p.m.

Understand this: I adore the written word and the authors who weave words into magic. When Johannes Gutenberg printed his version of the Latin Vulgate Bible in AD, 1454, my world changed forever. Of Johannes original works, forty-five were printed on vellum and one-hundred and thirty-five volumes on paper. A complete copy of his Bible comprises 1282 pages bound in two volumes. One established copy is bound in three volumes (there is a second three-bound volume which remains undiscovered by others, but not I).

Tearing through the pages, enthralled by the enormity of his task, and ignorant to the fact Gutenberg had to create a new ink—an oil based ink instead of the traditional water based version—so it would stick to the metal types in his press. I read Johannes work in one sitting, going without sleep for fourteen days and nights.

That book, one of the original two-bound volumes printed on vellum, resides with me still. In my library, which is by far the largest on this planet. My three-bound volume, printed on paper, and one of the original 135, rests next to its sibling. Perhaps by the end of this journal, I will tell you where to find my hidden treasures. Not the gold and jewels collected over the centuries, but the real treasures: my books. For my books are, for me, worth far more than all my other riches combined. Treasured more than my gold, my diamonds, my money, stocks and bonds and the crap (antiquities) accumulated over the years.

Again, I digress so often now, forgive me. Would I enjoy witnessing my words being read by many? To observe the effect that truth will have on you? Yes. But dreams are for the young, the foolish, and the brave. Once, long ago, I possessed all those traits. But no more do I dream the dreams of my youth. Most likely, I soon will be dead...so...I shall leave the weaving of dreams with the living, but still, memories torment me. My past haunts my present. Of matters of the heart, there can be no difference of opinion. No discussion. No debate. Through time everlasting—from the first recorded history to history unrecorded but lived—we all, humans and vampires equally, share in our hearts' journeys: discovering through life's passage love's ability to soar above heartbreak, heartache, and folly. How else does one uncover the soul's enormous capacity for love, for forgiveness, for healing?

Several of my kind have lived for over three thousand years. Can you imagine the capacity of the heart in a being experiencing life over so many millenniums? Do you believe monsters do not suffer, poignantly, the loss of human life? That we could live eternally and not love eternal? How would we survive without falling in love infinite times with both humans and vampires?

Don't be a fool. We suffer deep pain.

I have lived longer than some and less than others and throughout my existence have loved many souls—both mortal and immortal. To differentiate the love between a vampire and human is like choosing whom you love more: your sister or brother. Why differentiate and label by race or color? I am as blind to race as I am to species. It is an aberration to so divide humankind by color, creed, sex, and race. Shame on us all for being guilty of doing so.

For me, after what you would consider many lifetimes, the truth became clear. A heart beats. The soul lives. Rejoicing and celebrating each moment is paramount to finding joy in life. From poetry to novels, from classic masterpieces to country songs, Broadway plays to cinematic

spectacles—and everything in between, on the subject of the human condition— let me crystallize the truth in three words—

Love
Is
Everything

L.I.E. (Love Is Everything) and the greatest LIE you tell yourselves is that this is not true. The tragedy of many souls is that they coast through life never knowing this fact. Often, only when a loved one's life is over, or your own death becomes eminent, do people understand the LIE as truth. Too often, too late to realize...

Love Is Everything.

There has been much written about one of my infatuations, whom you would call, Catherine the Great. We met in Russian in the late spring of 1754. She had just turned twenty-five, eight years before she would become empress. A princess in her native Germany, Catherine's real name was Sophie von Anhalt-Zerbs. Throughout our twenty years together, only I called her by my pet name—Sophie, which was her real name—and always only in private. Once she became empress, she rewarded her lovers well, gifting us slaves and art or titles and riches. Occasionally, even a palace with land. Several unknown paintings by Rubens, Rembrandt, and Raphael were given to me by my dear Sophie. They are still in my possession.

Outrageous stories exist about Sophie and her lovers. About her affairs and her insatiable sexual exploits. Some of the rumors are true while others are pure fiction. Yes, she toyed with her lovers as did her husband. And yes, she suffered from a medical condition which required her personal physician to drain her blood up to five times a day. Blood which I always offered to dispose of, though not in the way her doctor believed. Throughout our relationship, I never told Sophie what I was. We had not seen each other for many years, and she believed I had died (because I faked my own death after every so many years in one place). Only on her death bed, close to her end, did I visit my Sophie and reveal my true self to her. Since I hadn't aged, believing came easy to her.

I realize now in sharing my story with you, I must reveal some aspects of my physical appearance so that you might understand my ability to deceive mortals—even an empress. As I stated, vampires are experts at deception: makeup, wardrobe, wigs—all used to deceive mortals. And I told you when we began this journey, I would not describe myself to you, but this much I will share. Throughout history, I have lived as both man and woman. As Lord or Lady, Duke or Duchess, Baron or Baroness, Prince or Princess...you get the gist. Perhaps now you believe that you have figured me out. Understand my gender and sexuality—do not deceive yourself.

I am an enigma and not so simply understood.

In Sophie's time I lived as a powerful male landowner: rich, well-known, able to move freely amongst the citizens. I did not appear as a vampire. A monster. An immortal. In fact, I was one of Catherine the Great's well-known lovers, an important figure who helped her ascend to power by removing any opposition to her throne. I won't bore you with exploits of her other lovers; her reign, politics or religion. But to give you an idea of our passion, join me in...

RUSSIA—1764 A.D.

My green and white Winter Palace on the banks of the Neva. The palace is built in the shape of an elongated rectangle. It is a massive fortress. The dining table—which we all would stand before when feasting since no seats were provided—held up to five hundred guests. Yes! Five hundred partygoers at one table. My staterooms could comfortably fit 10,000 people. The palace

contained 1,500 rooms and 2,000 windows. Often, Sophie and I entered through a secret door leading into a windowless room. Built to Sophie's particular demands, this room was located in the new Hermitage wing designed by French architect, Jean-Baptiste Vallin de la Mothe. We entered silently, the dark blue and white walls were accented with wrought iron artworks. The art works depicting various sexual positions and acts. A young palace maiden and stableboy, plied with a copious amount of vodka, stood in white silk robes waiting for us. Both teens shivered, nervous and excited, not expecting the empress and me to stroll into the chamber. Though it is possible they were aware of the rumors regarding Sophie's particular desires and needs, they remained oblivious to what was about to transpire.

Unique furniture decorated this hidden room. The settees were shaped like vaginas, each of the four legs carved in the shape of penises. Chairs resembled breasts. And the couches: testicles. Various artwork throughout the room depicted women and men, animals and creatures, and gods and goddesses in the throes of deviant, passionate sex. Candles burned. As did incense, filling the room with a sweet musky smoke. Even shadows seemed to undulate with lust and abandon. Behind a gold partition, a quartet of blindfolded musicians played various instruments while two famous opera singers—one male and one female, silk coverings over their eyes— filled the room with their powerful voices.

In her white silk robe, the housemaid's long black hair framed her stunning face. Her innocent green eyes shied away from our approach. But her full ripe lips and high cheekbones tempted us closer while her tiny hands kept gripping her wrap, trying to cover her large breasts peeking out from under the thin silk robe.

Fixated on her dark areolas, I glanced up and caught her curious eyes. Then I studied the stable boy. His robe also failed to contain his rippling muscles and bulging groin, and I understood why Sophie had chosen him. Blue eyed, light haired, innocent and drunk, the mere proximity to the raven-haired maiden had made his rod stiff and his grin wide. Unafraid, he did not cover up his manhood but thrust his hips forward at our approach, showing off.

Casually, I led the stable boy and house girl to the middle of the room. Gently, I removed their robes before strapping them both to the large X-shaped table. Leather cuffs fastened their feet and hands to the spreaders. The stable boy I placed on the north side of the X, the maid on the south. Their legs and arms were splayed out, their naked bodies glistening in the candlelight as the singers' aria built in volume.

Sophie approached with lust in her eyes and heat in her groin. On an iron table in front of the dark-haired maid lay several phallic shaped objects. Each either made of steel or carved from smooth wood. The largest of the sex toys stood over eighteen inches long, the smallest perhaps the size of a thumb. Sophie's lips tasted the girl's body, while her hands kneaded the maid's pale flesh. Behind Sophie, I stood, removing her clothes as my hands roamed over Sophie's supple flesh. From my position behind the Empress, I reached around and grasped the stable boy's rigid member. His hands fought against the restraints as he moaned and ground his hips into my palm. The silky-smooth head, already engorged, mushroomed out even larger as I squeezed and slowly pumped. At the same time, my left hand found Sophie's mound. With my index finger, I teased her.

Sophie held a steel phallus in her right hand rubbing it up and down between the girl's legs in tempo with the music, until the girl's nether lips opened and the toy entered the maid's peach. Sophie eased the steel toy deeper. The girl gasped and shuddered, her legs quivering as the Empress eased the toy in and out faster and faster.

My hand tightened on the stable boy's organ, and he sighed as his breath hitched—eyes closed, sweat streamed down his chest, past his rippled stomach, to his lush groin.

After another thirty minutes of teasing, tasting and toying—we freed the stable boy and maid and led them to the westside of the room where huge pillowed sheets covered the black marble floor. I threw the maid down, groans escaping my lips as I knelt between her legs. All four of us were naked now. Initially, when I had dropped my undergarments, my uniqueness had stunned and electrified our companions (although I promised I would never divulge my gender to you, I am considering recanting. The truth would allow you to understand my uniqueness; my extraordinary appeal to all genders—to mortals and immortals—explaining why everyone desires what I have to offer).

My gentle kisses drove the maid wild. My lips and tongue softly caressing her neck, belly, and thighs. With her sweet wetness glistening on my lips, cheeks, and chin, I lost myself in pleasuring her. And looking over, I noticed Sophie's lust-filled eyes as she lost herself in the stable boy, swallowing him deep in her throat, moving in time to the staccato beat of the violin. Until suddenly, both Sophie's and my movements reached their apex and the singers' voices soared. Simultaneously, the maid and stable boy groaned while their eyes rolled back and their ecstasy peaked.

We all reveled in the gluttony of sensual abandon.

For three more hours we played and toyed with one another.

After a snack of honeyed walnuts, pudding, and more drinks—we tied Sophie to the rack on the east side of the room.

More fun began—

But that is another story, for another time. And I promise I will give you more details of my lustful encounters, but not yet.

February Twenty-Fourth, 12:59 a.m.

Unlike life, into which you were born and are now living your limited years; I was born, and died, and lived again as death incarnate. My past, as I stated, flows over one thousand years down a lane of memories so extensive and consuming we must start first at the end then work our way to the beginning. This is for your sake. To make your understanding of the facts possible. For even I wouldn't believe my story if I started at the beginning.

Are we clear?

Excellent!

My Truths are as follows:

I lived as a human being for 24 years.

I have lived 1013 years in total— or 369,745 days, as of this writing in 2003.

I feed off humans.

I feed off my own kind.

I kill.

I died.

I am a demon.

I am a god.

Born human in AD 990.

Turned, in the year of our Lord AD 1014.

My death (as you would label my turning) endures 994 years. Still, I live. But after 1013 years, what I feared would happen has finally come true.

I am the last of my kind.

The last vampire.

But more importantly, I am unique. An original. Unlike any other vampire that has ever lived.

If you care to know how different—please continue.

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