



KNIGHT WRITINGS



BY SCOTT WILLIAM FOLEY

FROM THE CHRONICLES OF PURGATORY STATION
(PART II)

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by

Scott William Foley

Entry 7579

Earlier today I witnessed something I thought I would never see, and that was the end of the Nether Man. More unbelievable is the fact that Pastor Irons played a major role in stopping the behemoth. Of course, without the man called Freedom and his heir apparent, Anthem, the rock man would likely have run his course and re-entered the sea, only to terrorize my city again.

Freedom seemed to be the sort of man I can respect. The pawn called Anthem was quite the opposite. I don't know what Freedom's situation is just yet, but it's obvious he's detached himself from his government control. I wish I could say that's a bad thing, but when you've been in the game for twenty-two years, you discover not all evil walks in the form of living rock or creates portals into nothingness. Some evils wear tights, some wear ties, and some wear stripes. Not just of the jail variety, either.

This Freedom has been at it publicly for a few years. He's proven himself time and time again. He is a good candidate. Technologically produced flight, low-caliber bulletproof skin, very high intellect, and more importantly, a moral heart in his chest. Could be perfect.

This brings me to Shadow Serpent. I found another of his victims tonight. I was first on the scene. Female. Caucasian. Brown eyes and a brunette. Appeared to be in the vicinity of five feet, three inches and around one hundred and thirty pounds. Late thirties. Body was found in an alley off O'Neil. Nothing stolen from her person. Other than four puncture wounds to the stomach, no trauma to the body. Death, as usual, caused by injection of poison yet to be determined. Until I can get a sample of a victim's blood, or the perpetrator himself, the toxin will remain unknown.

This makes the Shadow Serpent's body count 52 in nineteen months of known activity. He has no method to his routes or choices in victims that I can determine.

I hate to admit this, but I may not be enough to stop him. He has eluded me since I began focusing my efforts on him thirteen months ago, when it became evident the PSPD could not stop him. I arrogantly thought the Nocturnal Knight, as the media long ago dubbed me, would succeed where they failed, as had been the case so often before.

The idea of a task force dedicated to stopping the serial murderer grows on me with every new victim.

Entry 7580

The Shadow Serpent claimed another victim tonight. Male. Hispanic. Looked to be in his late teens. Approximately five feet, eight inches. One hundred and sixty five pounds. Brown eyes, yellow and blue highlights to his hair. Two puncture wounds to his forehead. As usual, no witnesses. Body was found in a parking

garage, top floor. Nothing stolen from person. No trauma to body other than punctures. Makes 53 in nineteen months.

I called it in and then departed the crime scene after determining there was no external evidence to be had. As I jumped the ledge, I noticed a silhouette on the building above. I knew it wasn't my prey for two reasons: someone still living has never seen him, and the figure was that of a female. That being said, I don't like being seen either. I would know my observer. What I found disturbed me greatly.

She called herself "Devil Woman." Strictly amateur. Don't get me wrong, I'm all for women bringing down Mega-Mals. Oime, if she didn't hate me, would be a candidate in a heartbeat, and she's as female as they come. This "Devil Woman," however, did not hear me approach from behind. She didn't even know I was near her until I tapped her on the shoulder. I'll give her this, she turned swinging, but it's obvious she has no combat skills beyond basic self-defense. The diamond-shaped mask, the red horns, the "DW" belt, it all screams "wanna be." No function whatsoever. All form.

She will get herself killed if she keeps it up for long. I told her as such as rudely as possible. I've been intimidating the good, the bad, and the beautiful for decades. A smile didn't get you far when I started, and it gets you even less now. I'll follow her for a few nights; let her get roughed up just enough to call it quits. I don't need another corpse in my city.

Entry 7581

Even though I was shot, it was a good night.

A new Colossal appeared this afternoon. The boy told the press to call him “Excitor.” He’s young, but he’s got power to spare. Seems to wield some form of bioelectricity in the super-Colossal range. Typical youth—brash, cocky, overconfident. He may be perfect. With him and Freedom, I’d have a tactician with muscle and flight and the enthusiasm of youth backed by raw power and fearlessness. Is the boy morally dependable? He’ll need observing before any decisions are made. He brought down Barrage, however. No small feat.

Near First Redeemer, I found “Devil Woman” attempting to apprehend participants in a drug deal. She was quickly overtaken when they pulled out their nine millimeters. That’s when I intervened. I disabled one of them immediately, but the other got a shot off. The Kevlar and leather armor held. He passed out when he saw me get back up. Ah, that little episode will drop non-Mega-Mal criminal activity by twenty-five percent over the next three weeks. I guarantee it.

The amateur put up a brave act, but I saw her hands trembling and the puddle at her feet. I pointed the puddle out. I haven’t survived for two decades of taking on the city’s worst by being nice. I don’t want her dead. She seems like a decent person. Can’t say I approve of her garb, however.

Entry 7582

I found myself on the island’s northwest side. The Serpent murdered yet another. This time it was an elderly African American. Approximately seventy years old. Two sets of puncture wounds on each shoulder. Six feet, four inches tall. Two hundred and twenty, give or take. It’s apparent the Serpent is using some form of needles to inject his victims. The media loves to propagate the notion that the

Mega-Mal is literally “biting” his victims like a real snake, but all the evidence suggests nothing of the sort. There are always rectangles surrounding the sets of punctures. The rectangles are bruises. I’ve nearly come to the conclusion that the killer has two needles mounted to some contraption on each fist. As there are never any witnesses, I have no way to confirm this. Just a hunch.

As expected, it wasn’t long before Turf arrived on the scene. As his name would suggest, he’s very strict about maintaining order in his neck of the woods. He was not happy to find me sulking around, but he was even less happy to realize the Shadow Serpent had struck on his watch.

I don’t know if Turf considers himself any more of a Colossal than I believe myself to be, but I’ve always thought highly of his efforts since he started protecting the innocent eight years ago. How a man who doesn’t wear a mask maintains anonymity while fighting crime is a mystery even I can’t solve. Of course, I discovered his real identity seven years ago in order to avoid a catastrophe.

In eight years, he’s never killed. He doesn’t use weapons. He depends on his enhanced strength, speed, and intellect to get him through the tough spots. I once heard a rumor that he also depends on a higher power. We may have something in common.

I told him that I was thinking of putting together a group to combine their talents in order to terminate the Serpent’s activity. He didn’t seem interested. I’m thinking he’s still miffed about not being allowed to join the old team, before most of us were killed trying to stop Hate. I think Solar Flare knew what he was doing

in refusing Turf's admission back then. I've always maintained that Solar Flare knew death was coming for some of us on that team. His powers gave him a strange talent for escaping time's perimeters.

I should have been with them on that day.

Entry 7583

No Shadow Serpent victims tonight.

No Devil Woman sightings either.

I should consider myself lucky. I'm hoping both of them gave it up.

Trover brought in the young Colossal today to First Redeemer. Again, I don't know how these people who don't wear masks expect to fool anybody! He seemed very interested in finding a purpose beyond just being one of the nation's greatest heroes. Pastor Irons sat and spoke with him for a very long time. Trover simply faded into the background with a smile on his face.

The young man, Freedom, is a perfect candidate. In fact, if this new team works out and we stop Shadow Serpent, I'll gladly hand leadership over to him. Solar Flare was right; I'm not exactly the most diplomatic fella running around in armor and a cloak.

Speaking of armor, I'm thinking this "Silver Streak" could be a logical addition. His biomechanical suit gives him extremely enhanced speed. I'd love to know how it works. I didn't even know such a thing was in development, which leads me to believe it's not government related. The news has never been able to clock his speed. I find this rather odd. Like Excitor, however, Silver Streak

has not been on the scene long enough to prove his morality. I'll not have any ethically ambiguous members on my team.

Entry 7584

The Serpent was mine!

It was on the Metzler Building in Old Downtown, right on the edge of Grell Harbor. His back was to me, but as soon as I saw his figure I knew who it was. He had something hanging from his back, blowing in the wind. It almost looked like shed skin, but that's impossible. The killer is all too human, of that I'm certain. He was dressed in all black. I got about twenty-five meters away when I pulled out a tranq dart. I wish I could tell you that I find it dishonorable to take down an adversary from behind, but when their body count is closer to a hundred than zero, honor goes out the window.

It's a moot point anyway. His latest victim was still alive.

Shadow Serpent turned to face me even though I hadn't made a sound. I couldn't make out his build due to the skin-like cape billowing behind him. I could see two piercing eyes with only crimson showing, two fangs, and a red, forked tongue.

I was right about the needles.

On the end of the knuckle-guard on each of his gauntlets were two needles. Big needles.

After the half second it took to take in the features of Purgatory Station's most talented serial killer, I next observed his victim.

This took considerably less time than the half-second I spent on the Serpent.

It was the Devil Woman.

I could see nothing in those red eyes, and the Mega-Mal said nothing. He just stuck one of the two needles from his left hand into her left arm, then shoved her off the building into the harbor.

He ran and jumped to the next roof; I ran the twenty-five meters to the ledge, lost as much armor as I could en route, then dove in after the amateur.

Entry 7585

Twenty years ago a man named Trover nursed me back to health after Odium cut me to shreds. This, of course, was before I began wearing much more durable armor.

Back then, I wore a mask instead of a helmet. He did not remove it in the nine days he, his brother, and his brother's girlfriend took care of me.

Out of respect to him, I won't remove the Devil Woman's mask.

It is obvious the Serpent did not want her dead. He simply used her to distract me from pursuing him. I'm certain that he was ready to be seen. I walked right into his plans. He had choreographed all of it.

I quickly pulled Devil Woman from the water and rushed her to my quarters. It took a few days, but she's finally coming around.

Unfortunately, the Serpent did not pump enough of his venom into her for me to get an accurate read of its composition.

Was this also part of his plan?

Could the Serpent be more intelligent than any of us?

Entry 7586

I have my work cut out for me.

Devil Woman is up and moving, and she is thirsty for vengeance. She's demanding I train her to take on the Serpent. I try to explain to her that even I don't know if I can take the Serpent, and I've been trained by the best and have over two decades experience.

She won't take no for an answer. If I don't train her, she'll be killed within the week.

To make matters worse, she's a heathen. I suppose that is not without its irony.

Entry 7587

It has been days since my last entry. I have been very busy. Devil Woman is coming along sufficiently in her training. She does not remove her mask, and I do not unfasten my helmet. There is no personal connection whatsoever. I keep telling myself that. Although she is an amateur, she is not entirely clumsy or unintelligent. I've begun training her in the art of the staff. It will allow her to keep her distance from criminals while engaging them. I did not respond when she mentioned a gun would be easier.

On another note, the Shadow Serpent killed once again over the last few days. Again, no witnesses. Two set of puncture wounds along the collarbone. Female. Asian. Forty to forty-five years old. Five feet, one inch. Approximately one hundred and seventy pounds. No irregularities in appearance other than the

wounds. Killed while cutting through Morrison Park. Supposedly on her way to a graveyard shift at work.

Where is the connection between the Serpent's victims! I CANNOT believe that anyone, Mega-Mal or not, can kill so many so indiscriminately! Even history's worst murderers had a method to their viciousness. What is his method?

It is time to put a force together. Loathe as I am to admit it, I can't protect the innocent AND track down and stop the Shadow Serpent at the same time. I will need assistance. Devil Woman asked me who I would like to have working with us. I told her the names of my candidates, then I reminded her that she is not one of them, therefore negating the term "us."

She did not respond to my latter statement positively.

Entry 7588

Even though I had explained to her that I needed a few days to observe some of my candidates, Devil Woman summoned them.

She and I were to meet tonight on top of First Redeemer for a training run on rooftop combat. When I arrived, she was standing with an impressive cadre of Colossals.

Freedom stood in his red, white, and blue with his cape flowing behind him looking exactly like the Colossal he is. He was the only one I was sure would join.

To my surprise, Turf was there as well. He didn't appear happy, but he did look resolved to put an end to the killings. That's all I ask.

The Silver Streak stood with this suit gleaming in the moonlight. I wish Devil Woman had given me more time to watch over this fella, just to be sure. His membership is probationary in my book.

Also there on trial basis was Excitor and some other kid I've never seen before. Excitor had blue electricity jumping from hand to hand looking as though he's ready to save the world.

The other one was covered from his boots to the top of his forehead. Only his hair was exposed; it was black and hanging down to his eyeholes. His suit had an orange flame riding up his legs and chest, set against black. He called himself El Fuego. Unlike Excitor, he gave no tells to his abilities beyond the suit and the name, but I think it's fairly clear.

I don't know how in the world Devil Woman convinced these men to join my little club, but I saw in her eyes that she expected to be admitted for her deed. I guess that makes four probationary members.

The Shadow Serpent will be stopped.

Entry 7589

It's been weeks since I began training my recruits to battle as a team. While we've been training, the Serpent has struck time and again. I now have 57 murders in my city over the last twenty-one months, all accredited to the Shadow Serpent.

He will pay dearly.

In the meantime, the recruits are progressing tolerably enough. I've come to rely on Freedom and Turf for their veteran experience. They seem to get along well enough. As well as anyone can get along with Turf, that is.

Silver Streak is a different story. He's not a particularly gifted combatant. He doesn't have any passion for our drills, either. I don't know why he's joined up with us. He says he wants to take down the Serpent, he owes a friend, but his heart isn't into what we're doing. I've seen that suit of his in action. Actually, I haven't seen anything more than a blur. He refused to explain to me how it works, but I'm beginning to think it's got nothing to do with enhanced speed. If he's going to stay a part of this outfit, he'll detail the specs or else.

Then we have Excitor and El Fuego, as I've discovered he likes to be called. That's Spanish for "The Fire," by the way. We have a "no real names" policy amongst ourselves, although I've already figured out by happenstance three of my six recruits. I'm not going to commit their names to paper, but Turf and Freedom were figured out a while ago, and I just happened to come across El Fuego as well. The rest would be easy if I wanted to put some real effort into it, but I don't. My only concern is the Serpent.

At any rate, these two kids do not get along. Every drill we run with them acting as a team winds up a pissing contest between those two. If they both didn't have such raw power, I'd kick them out on general principal. But, I need them.

Devil Woman is doing fine. Even though she's driving me crazy with all the personal questions she asks, she's got more passion in her little finger for

taking down the bad guys than Silver Streak has in his entire body. But, like Excitor, Silver Streak, and El Fuego, she's an amateur. These kids will probably get Freedom, Turf and I killed if I don't take every precaution. The only problem is, the rookie boys have enough power to keep their hides safe in a crunch. Devil Woman's only got her heart and her brain. Not many of us survive doing what we do with just those. Until I met her, I thought I was the last.

If we could just catch a break, if the Serpent would just slip up once . . .

Entry 7590

Devil Woman is off the team.

After a training session, I caught her taking notes. She thought we had all left. In fact, we had. I came back because I had a hunch. My hunches are always right. There she was, huddled in a shadow, jotting down everything.

I can't believe I let her get the best of me.

I should have known when I first encountered her that she wasn't the real deal. I mistook her greenness with just being a novice. I never dreamt someone would risk her life over something so trivial. I'll never understand her sort.

I threatened to break every finger she had if she breathed a word of what she learned to the public. When I first met her, she probably would have started crying. I'd made her tough, though. She handed the notebook over to me, but she didn't say a word. I turned to leave, but she asked me to wait. It killed her pride, but she begged me not to tell the rest of the recruits about her. I don't know why, but I agreed.

I'd like to think it was because I didn't want to hurt team morale.

It's not that.

It's a good thing what happened, I'm too old to get mixed up with women like her. Besides, Pastor Irons would never approve.

Entry 7591

More weeks have passed since my last entry, more people died.

61 people in twenty-two months.

Finally, we caught a break. Last night, Turf was on patrol on his own when he came across a dead body. It was a female African American. Turf doesn't bother to analyze details as I do, but I got him to remember that he thought she was around twenty years old, about five six, and probably one hundred and sixty pounds. He said she had one set of puncture wounds to her right cheek. No other signs of damage.

But, she had a note attached to her.

It said that I was to meet the Serpent tonight, alone, at Waid's Wharf. It's on the northwest side of the city, the rough part. An old shipyard. Barely used anymore, not for anything legal, at least. That's Turf's part of town; he'll know where I can stash away the team.

I'd love to take you down myself, Serpent, but I won't risk another innocent life for my own pleasure. Tonight, you will be no more.

Entry 7592

It has been four weeks since my last entry.

Just like with my other team, all those years ago, things went wrong.

Terribly wrong.

I got to the wharf. Turf, Freedom, El Fuego, Excitor, and Silver Streak were a quarter mile behind me hiding in a warehouse. They had a clear view of me, and with Silver Streak in the crew, I could have help instantly if I needed it.

I saw him.

Again, his back was to me with some sort of skin hanging from it, whipping in the wind.

He turned to face me.

Once more, I saw those bloodlike eyes, those white fangs, and that red, forked tongue. He stood perfectly still, perfectly relaxed. I've seen such a stance before. It is a stance that only the most deadly and capable of warriors employ. I knew if it were a fight he wanted, I'd have my hands full.

Keep in mind, I've never gone against someone I wasn't sure I could beat one way or the other.

He held up his arms for me to take a look at the needles protruding from his gauntlets. I think he was reminding me, just to make it a fair fight.

I reached behind me and pulled out my escrima sticks. I kept them at my sides, however, beneath my cloak. I did not feel the urge to let him know what I had waiting for him.

He reached at me and motioned for my approach.

I rolled my shoulders as though warming up for combat. It was the signal to attack.

I saw a blur pass me, and then, next thing I knew, Silver Streak lay on the ground. He had not been punctured, but it was obvious from the boot mark on

his face that the Serpent had somehow reacted to his attack. I had it in my head that his suit was a temporal displacement unit rather than a speed machine. I guess I was wrong.

Phase one of Operation: Head Crush had failed.

I dove on the ground as phase two initiated. Blasts of flames and electricity soared over my head, aimed at the Serpent. Where he had been, all that remained were sparks and flares.

I got up and positioned my escrima so that I was ready for both offense and defense.

Excitor, El Fuego, and Turf formed a perimeter around me. We kept Freedom hidden as our ace in the hole if things got worse.

Freedom is wanted as a traitor to the government, after all. He tries not to go out in the open unless it's absolutely necessary. The last thing I need is Meta Agents like Hell Hound and Anthem crawling all over us.

We looked everywhere, and finally, atop a crate as big as a semi, we saw him.

The Serpent stood, glaring at me. I had betrayed whatever sense of honor he thought existed between us. I recognize no honor in murderers.

He picked up a remote control device of some sort and pressed a button.

The crate fell to pieces, and within, the nightmare began.

He had four people strapped to a table.

As the crate had fallen apart around the hostages, the Serpent leapt into the air, did three somersaults, then landed on the table in the middle of his

victims. He immediately sank a pair of his needles into the poor soul on the far left. He twitched violently before dying. Excitor vomited. I think it was the first time the boy had seen someone die violently.

We all made a move to rush the Serpent, but he paused just as he was about to drop his “fangs” into yet another victim.

He kept the needles just above a woman’s forehead, then stared us all down.

We froze.

With his left hand, he pointed at me and motioned for me to approach him.

I did.

He allowed me within ten feet of him, then gestured that I stop.

I did.

He pointed at the three men twenty feet behind me and gesticulated for them to remain in place.

He then exploded from the table and commenced attacking me.

I got the escrima up just in time to block a set of his needles. When he pulled his hand back, he took one of my wooden attack sticks with it. I couldn’t allow him the time to pull the escrima from the needles; I had better odds against one set than two.

Then, El Fuego and Excitor did something stupid.

I heard Turf yell “No!” before streaks of unrefined energy blazed past me. Again, the Serpent easily dodged them, landed next to the hostage on the far

right, then punctured her trachea with his venomous spikes. Another innocent dead.

Shadow Serpent waved his finger sternly back and forth at the boys. I didn't have time to yell at them myself because the battle was back on.

It became obvious to all that he was toying with me.

Freedom didn't dare come out of hiding for the sake of the victims, Excitor and El Fuego had been rendered useless, and Turf wouldn't risk movement either. Silver Streak remained unconscious. And I was just an old man getting the tar beat out of him.

It'd been a long time since I had taken that kind of punishment. I knew he could have stuck me anytime he wanted. The only part of my body that wasn't armored was my chin. He made a point to strike it with an open palm and kick it with the heel of his boot as often as he could. And trust me, that was quite often. He was showcasing my vulnerability to his needles.

I didn't land one blow against him.

Finally, he stabbed me under the chin with only one of his needles. He didn't have enough surface area to get them both in. My face went numb and I dropped.

I watched him bend down to unfasten my helmet. He knew one poke from one needle wouldn't be enough to do me in. He meant to finish the job.

That's when Freedom made his move.

The boy's got guts, I'll give him that. He broke through the wall of the warehouse, hoping to get the edge on the Serpent, but the killer was too quick.

He back flipped from me to the table with the victims, tore loose the escrima, then placed both sets over the two remaining hostages.

Freedom had no choice. He'd almost made it, but he had to land next to my body, just mere feet from the Serpent.

He almost made it.

With the top half of my body now ice-cold, I looked up to see Freedom staring at me. He knew he'd failed. I could see he was a man who didn't fail often, and hated it when he did.

In the time it took Freedom to make the quarter mile, the rest of the team had gotten halfway to the hostages. They stopped, thankfully, when Freedom did.

We had a good old stalemate. None of the Colossals dared move. The Serpent knew if he killed his last two victims, he had no collateral for escape. He had nowhere to go. My men blocked his only route. He only had the harbor behind him.

He meant to take it.

He fluidly scooped up the smaller of the still living hostages, threw her over his shoulder, then motioned for Freedom to back away from me.

With one set of his poisonous darts pressed against the butt of his victim, he knelt down and lifted my helmet half off. My entire jaw and mouth was completely exposed.

I felt the needles push against my skin when thunder erupted.

Before I blacked out, I saw Devil Woman standing over me with a PSG-1 sniper rifle.

God forgive me.

Entry 7592

It has been five days since my last entry.

My healing goes well.

Bodily, at least.

My soul is a different matter.

As an absolute last precaution, I implemented Phase Omega in the stratagem against the Shadow Serpent.

He could not be allowed to continue.

I was ninety percent sure we'd be able to take him, but the hostage situation changed matters drastically. When Devil Woman saw that all other phases were a bust, she took the action I had instructed her to take. Long range termination.

I abhor guns, and I detest killing.

I don't know what is worse, that I ordered the death of a human being, or that I used someone else to execute the action.

When all was said and done, I couldn't condemn just myself, I had to bring Devil Woman down with me.

I was told that the Serpent had been hit squarely between the eyes, but he had still bolted for the water. No one was willing to dive in after him, and I can't

say I blame them. There were innocents to tend after. There were the dead to see to.

His body never surfaced.

The team disbanded.

Freedom, while no stranger to death, couldn't condone my actions. Turf is a loner. Silver Streak doesn't have it in him to continue, said he'd missed first place yet again. Excitor and El Fuego are simply too green. They have to deal with the death of those hostages for the time being. They'll get over it, eventually. I hope they've learned a lesson from what took place.

And Devil Woman, well, I owe her a great deal. She was the only one I knew would be willing to kill. She was the only one who saw the big picture. She was the only one prepared to do anything to get back in my good graces.

The question is if my good graces have cost her someone else's?

Entry 7593

I was able to get out of bed today.

Thankfully, there was no permanent damage. Pastor Irons and Devil Woman did a fine job of nursing me back to health.

My soul still aches for the death I caused.

Is it right kill in order to keep others from dying? Was it right for me to assume the mantel of judge and jury? Was it right to appoint a naïve young woman as an executioner?

I don't know.

After doing this for twenty-two years, I'd always found a way other than killing. Now that I've done it, will I resort to it again?

More so, even if I don't, will Devil Woman? She was nearly massacred by the Shadow Serpent when she took him on hand-to-hand. But, she defeated him soundly from a half mile away with the aid of a rifle! That sort of success is difficult for people to ignore.

I will call on her today to see if she'll meet with me. I must see her again. I wish I could say it is only to discuss the actions I ordered her to take.

Entry 7594

When Devil Woman came to my quarters, it was not the Nocturnal Knight she found, but rather, it was Pastor Irons.

He handles these sorts of situations better than me.

Pastor Irons first asked her to remove her mask.

Although she hesitated, the Devil Woman disappeared, and Pastor Irons found Sydney Attwater standing before him.

She asked Irons what this was about. He told her it was about several things. He told her the story she'd been working on for WPUG news was now out of the question since she had committed murder. He informed her that her days as the Devil Woman must end, for Devil Woman had killed. He alerted her that the redemption of her soul was all that mattered after what she'd done.

Of course, Sydney is an atheist, so Irons last proclamation did little to stir her.

Sydney argued that if she hadn't done what she'd done, the body count would be in the seventies by now. She was right. She also reminded Irons that it was me who'd ordered her to exterminate the Serpent to begin with, it was me who taught her how to fire the sniper rifle, and it was even me who assigned her vantage point for the shot. She may have pulled the trigger, but the Nocturnal Knight killed the Serpent.

Irons told her that I was misguided in my sense of righteousness and needed help.

Irons will never forget the look on Sydney's face after he said that. She looked at him as though he were psychotic.

She replaced her diamond-shaped mask and left Irons, that old, naive fool, standing alone in my attic headquarters within First Redeemer.

He contemplated deeply as he rubbed my bandaged chin.

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