

## chapter two

**K**ahn made his way through the antechamber out into a corridor lined with benches on the left and flat holographic scrims strung like animal hides to the right.

One end of the hall sped away into the darkness of the complex while the other looked out onto one of the many inner rooftop levels that opened up to the sky.

He settled down on one of the glyph-stamped suede loungers and pressed against the curved corrugated metal walls in the dark. His eyes glazed over in search of the climaxes that he knew were currently going down elsewhere, activities he knew would soon be linking up with Artyo's whether she wanted them to or not. The blurry images on the flat-screen seemed to be lunging after his thoughts.

The screen in front of him suddenly filled with static before breaking up into an off-kilter image of an ornately carved merry-go-round sitting in the middle of a patch of green grass that was edged with gnarled cypress trees and lit by headlights from cars that circled it. Kahn saw the shadows of the guardian angels originally assigned to the progeny sitting passively atop the trees that surrounded the glen and sprawled across the pinnacle of the kiddy ride. Fallen Angels-Ulteriors sat on the hoods of sport-utility vehicles, waiting.

The physically regressed progeny stepped into the forefront of the screen, one by one, stating their name, age, what had been done to them and by whom, and what they had done due to it over the years, between downing handfuls of ecstasy tablets and Aleve pills chugged with bottles of Killer Kool-Aid-GHB spliced with Datura root and Angel Dust in water, cut with a Red Bull for the taurine. They were still dressed in the diaphanous GLYPH tanks, leggings and tees, now blackened and stiff with poisoned blood from the day's earlier uprising.

With each kid, the descriptions of abuse absorbed became worse, and the things they had quietly done to equalize the pain became all the more comically standard in the self-medication arena. Anger rose as voices became shrill describing overachiever burnouts erupting at age 9.12.15.18. 21.25- Whenever it registered to them that no matter how hard they worked at being the perfect kid or adult, they still weren't going to be protected from the violent insanity that underscored their days.

Rampant alcoholism and frigidity after bouts of promiscuity and debauchery did little to numb out inner turmoil over past insurrections. Abusively toxic relationships in both directions kept any successes weighed down. Violence, drug use, work addictions, depression, diabetes, food issues. They didn't sound like children under the age of 18 that they now looked like, but like bitter old men and women who had lived through battles and returned from war, only to be ostracized by the blood they had to spill in order to survive.

As the Molotov cocktails hit their bloodstream and the childlike energies buried deep within them began to explode out all the more in torrents of impatience and activity, they cracked up at seeing light in the each other's eyes that hadn't been seen in ages. They cried out happily, seeing spirits they had thought died long ago, joy erupting as protective dental dams got spat out mid-hugs to one another in giddy spurts for the last times in their lives. They began to playfully push and shove each other out of the way of the camera to add on to their eulogies.

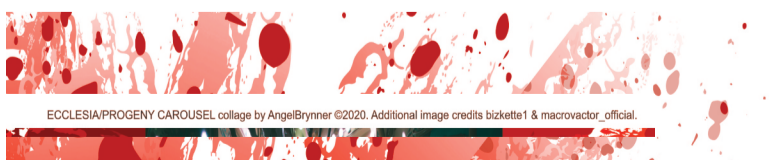
Shout-outs to childhood friends who had gone through and died due to similar things in solitude bubbled up between crying, laughing, and nodding jags as their shape-shifted bodies physically relived the premeditated attacks on their parents due to the crossing of the GHB with the high-grade heroin in the x. "This is on behalf of all the kids out there you let this happen to -" One cousin jeered into the screen. "You think other kids out there won't know what really happened?"

Playful punches flew. "-No matter how you adults try to suppress-suppress it-spin this on your 24 hour coverage... they'll know-" another called out as she was shoved out the way.

"You think they won't mimic us- see how ineffective all else is against what you all set us up for in comparison?!"

"Come on!! -This is a 45 minute memory stick-hurry the fuck up- you've had your turn-move!"

"You'll make us media monsters for slaying the real ones we begged you to protect us from-" pitched in a boy as two of his older female cousins knocked him away from the camera.



"This" slurred Nixa, "-is self-help at its finest!" She giggled as she spun around due to the way the x made the wind feel on her face. She slammed into her cousin and began to heave. One began to throw punches at Nixa's down-turned head. A handful of cousins swarmed on Nixa and dragged her bloodied body back towards the merry-go-round.

"You set us up to shut us -shut us down," screamed another cousin at the top of her lungs, both eyes bloodied, instinctively veering to the left to avoid toppling the camera. "You looked the other way when your grown friend decided he "knew me in another life-"

"Because no one protected you, you don't protect your own kids-"

"You do nothing to stop your friends from doing things to them-" ranted another. "Your daughter isn't "FAST!" She's fucking nine years old, you sick, lazy fuck-!"

"Why would you believe the person she told you did things to her before her? Lying on good old so and so! He wouldn't hurt a -?! It's crazy!"

"Kids shouldn't even be able to describe this shit- They were making it up?! You perverted adults flooding the airwaves with sexualized children and perversions so you can have your loophole out - She seduced me?! She's six! You're all psychos!"

The roughhousing got more violent as the diatribes continued, spat out so they could be left in the realm they had gone down in. "How many daughters got attacked by their mothers out of jealousy over scum they should have never had near their kids in the first place-?!"

"How many more guys ended up gay trying to fight off the shame of what their older brothers and sisters, or worse yet, what their own parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts- did to them as children?"

"You were not born that way!!! They did that to you, son! They raped you! Then told you that you felt something, or started it-that you must have liked it and had been that way from the beginning- they put the guilt on you at age four! That's why you're fucked up!"

"How many more size six women are wasting away inside of size 22 bodies, eating themselves to death, insulated against anybody ever "getting at" them again?!"

Maniacal laughter exploded somewhere in the background as the progeny began to chase each other around the merry-go-round, tackling each other to the ground and hitting whoever fell first until they stopped breathing, then turning on the next nearest to the ground to offer them up.

Behind the bloodied insane adolescents being dragged back towards the merry-go-round, leaves on cypress trees rustled with the cries of aghast guardian angels taking it all in. One by one they fell from the trees, only to be pulled back skyward, strung up by the chains of Empyrean counsel that had been fastened around their necks the entire time, lynching them and leaving them for lost in the trees.

They were coated with blood as it drained out of the ones they'd been assigned to, screaming like thorn birds as they took in what these kids were driven to do to free themselves from their impotent watch.

