

# **Carruthers and the Beautiful People**

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It all really starts, and ends, with Charlie. We met at one of the many schools I'd attended in my youth. We had a strange kind of kinship. I had never fitted in anywhere as a child. Children can spot difference in an instant, and then they fixate on it. They can't help it, it's an old survival instinct. Protecting the whole by rejecting the weak, or something along those lines. I've never really understood boarding schools. Why would any parent think its a good idea to imprison their sons, with hundreds of other pubescent boys, in confined quarters for months on end. Mind you, sadism has always been a trait of the upper classes.

Anyway, when I arrived at the Hopkins School for Boys, Charlie was already there, an oppressed mass. You see Charlie was one of those people who's genetics pushed him towards the large size. He was, in all honesty, the walking definition of the term "Fat Kid", complete with low self esteem and poor dress sense.

Now if I had wanted to fit in at school, I would have joined in his ritual bullying. But I was far too determined to be different from the herd. As a result, I decided that Charlie would become my comrade. I extended the hand of friendship, and it was returned tenfold. Of course our friendship meant that some of his abuse was transferred onto me, but I had become used to a certain level of maltreatment by then. In the past, when life at a particular school got too hazardous, I had just engineered my expulsion. However, my friendship with Charlie put thoughts of expulsion far from my mind

For some time there was only the two of us, keeping each other sane. Giving each other as much support as we could muster. But, two became three when Nigel joined the school. His haemophilia was a major barrier to an active sports life. This in a school where your social status was determined by your ability to throw, kick hit, catch or run with various unusually shaped balls. Nigel was prevented from taking part in sports, Charlie was physically unable and I was actively disinterested. This further increased the amount of hate directed towards us.

Anyway, the three of us became the school freaks. The butt of every joke, the victims of any humiliation, or torture, the various bullies could come up with. But in our friendship we felt beyond any punishment they could inflict. We supported each other, and weathered the storms. However our collective immunity only enraged the bullies more, and they began to explore more extreme ways of venting their frustration.

It finally ended with Nigel receiving a beating for which he was hospitalised, and the blame being transferred onto Charlie. There were special hearings at the school, and the police were involved, but they never discovered the truth. Through it all he protested his innocence. His parents were convinced, and they put a great deal of pressure on the school. By the end of the ordeal the whole school, including the staff, had turned against Charlie. He faced hate and humiliation every second, of every day. It was at this point that I decided it was about time to get expelled again. But I would make sure I took Charlie with me.

I had been dabbling in the invention of curses for some time, but had never taken it very seriously. At this time real magic only existed, for me, in fairy-tales and Disney cartoons. With no arcane texts to work from, Charlie and I had to use our imagination.

We started to collect rats, as sacrificial offerings to whatever gods we could get to listen to us. We discovered an overgrown part of the school grounds, and made an altar out of old bricks and a plank of wood. Then we sacrificed the rats, by hitting them with a rock.

We made thirteen Rats go splat, and thought that it was probably enough to be a suitable offering. We then took their little corpses and disposed of them in the school water supply.

Our devotion was rewarded two days later when everyone in the school, except for us, came down with a strange disease. Vomit and diarrhoea were abroad in the land. No student, or staff member, was spared. All were cast down.

We informed the head that this was a punishment from the gods, and that got us expelled pretty quick.

We had won. We hadn't run away, they'd had to get rid of us. They'd had to admit they couldn't cope with our superiority. At least, that's what we told ourselves. Anyway the humiliation and torture were finally over.

Charlie, Nigel and I were sent to different schools and, as children often do, we thought about each other less and less. We grew apart as our lives went in different directions, eventually losing all contact.

Ten years later I learned that Nigel has died, from a paper-cut sustained while masturbating. But Charlie had turned his life around. He formed a software company just as the computer revolution started to shake the world. His company made him rich, but his size never changed. In interviews he always emphasised that he was happy with his body, and I was glad that he had come to respect himself. I thought about getting back in contact with him, but to be honest, I didn't want to bring back any bad memories. I thought he might have removed any thoughts of Hopkins School from his mind. So it was a complete surprise when I received a letter from Charlie's lawyers. It was a greater shock to learn that it was for the reading of Charlie's will.

Apparently the news of Charlie's death had not been released to the press in case it affected his company's stock prices. There were only four people at the reading. Myself, Charlie's sister Clarissa, an Uncle, who looked as if his entire life had been spent being a friend to damaged children, and David Somerset.

Nobody in the room knew who David Somerset was, but we were all impressed by his entrance into the office. He was a physically beautiful man, poised and elegant. He didn't walk into the room, it was as if the door just open in deference to him, and the room took him in. While the other three of us mourners were in various states of actual mourning, David appeared almost happy. Although he was tactful enough to try and hide it.

Upon the reading of the will it became clear why he was less than distraught. Apart from generous gifts to his sister and uncle, and a few minor pieces of sentimental value for myself, Charlie had left his entire estate, including a controlling interest in and the managing directorship of his software company, to David Somerset.

Mr Somerset was alone in being unsurprised by this announcement. While the three of us left the offices in a shaken and confused state of mind, Mr Somerset remained behind to fill in or sign various bits of paper. I took this opportunity to ask Charlie's relatives what was going on, who was David Somerset, and what had happened to Charlie.

On the first two counts they had no additional information to offer, but the third was discussed over coffee at a nearby restaurant. Charlie had apparently been at a health farm he co-owned. Since buying into it a few years ago, he had come into the habit of shedding a few pounds each year. Unfortunately he always put them back on again by the next month. Every year his stays at the farm would become longer and longer, until he was spending over three months there with no real progress. It appears that the stress, depression, physical exertion, and starvation diets finally did for him, and he collapsed with a heart attack. Two

months in a coma at a private hospital, then his body just gave in. It was a sad death, and I could not help feeling that Charlie deserved better.

I kept in touch with the uncle and sister. I wanted to make sure that Mr Somerset wasn't going to run Charlie's company, his only remaining legacy, into the ground. I need not have worried on that account. Not only did Somerset keep all the current employees, he embarked on a radical expansion plan and with the resulting rise in profits, gave everyone a substantial bonus..

There was still no information on his background, and that worried me. I'd put out some gentle feelers amongst my community, but nothing was known about his past. Much was known about his present. He was an eligible bachelor, his good looks and money made him flypaper for the women in society circles. And for several months he indulged himself. To all accounts his sexual prowess matched his business sense, it was impeccable.

Some had mentioned a slight over enthusiasm in this department. And the word "rough" was heard occasionally, but nothing out of the ordinary for that section of society. In a year he was married to a supermodel, of course, who was as beautiful as he was. And still, no past emerged. No history to explain his connection with Charlie.

Then it all went wrong for David. The model left, claiming he beat her. Mr Somerset was dragged through the press backwards. There were violent outbursts in restaurants and clubs. People were hospitalised.

Finally, it ended, in a cheap hotel in Kings Cross. A room destroyed. A prostitute, battered to death, unrecognisable. David disappeared. Last seen running from the building. It was a sensation, but of course, it wasn't the first incident to have brought scandal to London's society set. A month earlier there had been the distressing tale of Natalie Palmer.

She'd had a sudden rise to fame as an author, with a dark, powerful, personal book. She was herself beautiful, commanding and attracted to the same in men. Always at "the" parties, or so I read in those welcoming celebrity magazines. London Society throwing its arms willingly around the rich and attractive, and Natalie indulged herself. She partook off all that was on offer. She refused herself no experience.

She never wrote a second book. High on a cocktail of narcotics, paranoid and delusional, she killed six of her new friends with a sporting shotgun, and then threw herself out of a tenth floor window. The reporters claimed that as she lay on the pavement, a broken woman, with the life-blood flowing out of her, she said

"It's not easy being beautiful."

Natalie and David were just the most recent examples of crimes and casualties amongst what was once called the "Jet Set". However, these lurid tales of death and murder were appearing more frequently. It appeared as if London society was self destructing. Many of the incidents had similarities, excessive violence, out of character behaviour, suicides, and I could see something of a pattern forming. This was more than just the idle rich destroying themselves, there was a real darkness pervading their lives. There had to be some connection between them. If there was, I was worried that David might have got mixed up in it. So I decided to try and uncover this connection.

Somerset was still missing after four weeks, and his connection to Charlie was still a mystery to me. Now, I dislike mystery. I've always had a desire to seek out the hidden. So I resolved to find out everything I could about David Somerset. The problem was, where to start. The only person I knew who had any knowledge about Somerset was Charlie. So I

would have to get in contact with him. For that I would need a medium, and luckily I know the best one in town. Old Ezmae.

She's been running her pub down in White Chapel for over Sixty years. It had been rebuilt after the war, as it was hit by a V2 one lunch-time in '44. That rocket killed most of her family, but old Ezmae survived somehow. Ever since that day she's been able to see beyond. She always said she was the seventh daughter of a seventh son, but she does like to tell stories. If you listen to her stories for long enough, you usually end up with what you want to know. So I took a cab and headed off to historic Whitechapel, birthplace of the serial killer.

The pub, the Kings Head, was packed as usual, As an old pub it actually had atmosphere instead of quaint character. Paintings on the walls, not posters. No Jukebox, just honest talk.

As I ordered my malt whisky, Ezmae came over to talk. Although she was skirting around eighty she looked the picture of health and vitality. As if she had given up ageing for lent years ago, and just forgotten to start again.

We talked for a couple of hours. Sometimes she would be talking to me. Other times she would be asking those in the other realm to find Charlie's spirit, to inform him that there was a party in the pub who wanted to talk with him. But for some reason, none of her spirit friends could find Charlie.

After a couple more whiskies I thanked Ezmae for her time and left, perplexed. If Charlie wasn't in limbo then there were only two other places he could be.

The next morning I headed off to the Tower of London, to have a chat with a Raven. The Keep was filled with tourists buying cheep Beefeater souvenirs, in between chomping on their beef burgers. Some were throwing pieces of their "Buns" to the indifferent birds, but I had a far better lure. Sponge cake soaked in rum.

Some of the Ravens recognised me as I entered the courtyard. They hopped over to my feet, looking up expectantly. Dutifully I pulled pieces of the cake from my nondescript carrier bag, and started to scatter it across the ground. A storm of Ravens erupted around me. As they swirled and squawked, I whispered to them in my best Enochian, asking if they could enquire about Charlie with their superiors. With a harmonious chorus of cawing, they signalled that they would.

I'd only used up half the cake. The Doves of Trafalgar Square are also particular to it. When I visited them, they also agreed to find out what they could about Charlie. All I could do now was to go to my townhouse and wait.

It did not take long. A pecking at my window informed of the emissaries arrival. Neither the Ravens nor the Doves had any information for me. There was only one, rather confusing, conclusion I was left to draw. Charlie was not dead.

Now there are many ways to find a living person, but most of them rely on having a piece of them to start with. Hair, nail clipping, an arm, that sort of thing. My problem was that, even though I had been given a few of Charlie's belongings, I did not have anything which was that personal. So I needed a different approach. The quickest way left to me was based on an ancient Tibetan tantric ritual.

You write the true name of the person, and some unique personal information about them in gold ink on a piece of specially prepared silk. Then, while thirty virgin monks stand in a circle chanting the forbidden mantra of Golgaddon, two lovers join in spiritual union. The silk is then immersed in their newly sanctified sexual fluids. This forms a source of incandescent

light the lovers can perceive through their, now opened and attuned, Ajna Chakra, their third eye. The light then guides the way to the barer of the name on the silk.

Well, that's the long way round. The short way involves a biro, old school tie, and a quick wank. One dog eared copy of penthouse later, and I was off.

The arcane auric light that would lead me to Charlie was a bluish yellow, indicating that he was in a state of fear and rage. This was not a good sign. Something terrible must have happened to make Charlie fake his own death. Whatever it had been, it was clearly still having an effect on him. If I wanted to be of any help, I would need to find him sooner, rather than later. So I headed off right away.

There was the problem that, while the light showed the direction to Charlie, it gave no indication of distance. However the ritual had worked quickly and the light was quite bright, so I reasoned that Charlie was still in this country.

I set off on foot, as it would be too confusing to search by car. The auric light would distract me, and it was unlikely that any road would take me straight to Charlie. Anyway, with London traffic, it would be far quicker to walk.

The light led through the tangle of streets in the city centre. Getting stronger as I reached the more affluent sectors. I was homing in on the Square Mile, walking past the fast living young professionals who fill the area, by day, like locusts on a corn field. As the sun was setting they were starting their mass migration to the suburbs. I was the only one who had apparently lost his instincts, heading in the wrong direction to find the evening feeding grounds. I was receiving disapproving looks from the swarm. In their eyes, as I didn't look like a cleaner or night watchman, I had to be mad. There was no other explanation for my desire to force my way through their buzzing plague.

By moonrise the streets were dead. The locusts had picked the field clean, only the buildings and stalk like streetlights remained. There were lights on in some of the offices. A few stragglers, confused or bloated, unwilling to leave the Square Mile until the last of its harvest had been devoured. Mostly the lights were for the army of cleaners, acting as relief workers, disposing of the wreckage of this infestation. This part of the city, at this time, was as peaceful and as desolate as any disaster site I had ever seen.

I emerged out of the Square Mile, but only just, and found myself outside an imposing Victorian facade. The auric light was strongest here. Charlie was somewhere inside.

It used to house the Dragoon Club, the kind of gentleman's club which has been all but outlawed now. It had prejudicial policies about women, race, occupation, politics and all the other important issues. The club had gone bankrupt in the early Eighties because no one who wanted to join had pure enough credentials. The members they did have were dropping like flies, and with nobody to replace them, simple mathematics took over. The building and contents were bought wholesale and converted into a restaurant and club. It made enough money in the mid Eighties to survive the rest of the decade and beyond. It also embraced every fad and trend that blew its way. The philosophy of the Dragoon Club was always "Now, not then". This means that the restaurant serves food you've never heard of and the club has six resident DJ's. But it's still just as hard to get into now as it was a hundred and fifty years ago.

I stood for a moment to watch those who breezed in, and the hopefuls who milled around the entrance. Only the fashion victors made it inside. Anyone with yesterdays look, was yesterdays man. There also seemed to be a strict gender purity policy in effect. Not in terms of race or sex, but beauty. A kind of aesthetic eugenics, with only the most attractive men

and women allowed in. Occasionally I saw one of the unattractive hordes being allowed in, but only when they were obviously recognised by someone on their way over the threshold.

Now, I have never considered myself ugly, but I would have had a problem getting inside. I certainly was not dressed for an evenings clubbing. This would take a little magic and misdirection. I needed to distract the doormen in order to get past them. With the limited resources I had available I reasoned that it might be possible to put them into a light hypnotic state. All I had to do was stand in the crowd, and catch their eye. Once locked onto them I could overpower their reasoning faculties with the power of my will. The effect is enhanced by a low humming, as the low amplitude sound waves help to put them into an alpha state, where they are more susceptible to suggestion. So I walked forward into the crowd, and started my work.

Catching their eye was not difficult, they were being paid to watch the crowd after all. I could see by their glazed expressions that my plan was beginning to work, so I started to edge forward. Unfortunately, some other members of the crowd had also noticed the doormen's lack of vigilance, and started to make for the entrance. In the surge I lost eye contact and their trance collapsed. However in the resulting crush and confusion I did manage to squeeze my way into the club, along with some other undesirables. Charlie's auric light was still glowing in front of me, and so I followed it deeper into the club.

Beyond the entrance way and ancillary rooms, was the main body of the club. A huge dance floor, an elegant bar, and enough discreet seating for a few hundred. The DJ's booth stood out from the surrounding Victorian decor, which had not only survived but been revitalised through fastidious restoration.. Not that any of the patrons noticed. Hedonism was not just the order of the day, it was the only business around. At a glance you might have supposed an orgy was in progress, with the writhing flesh on display. However, If you gave it any amount of attention, you would see the clothes. They were not designed to cover anything, and they did their job well. The point was to display the beautiful flesh of the clubbers, both male and female. Bodies this perfect were there to be seen. It was an visual orgy only. Wherever you looked there were groups of people simply being gorgeous. This, added to the overbearing rhythm of the music, proved a considerable distraction.

The light show from the dance floor disoriented me for a moment. I was seeing ghost images of the auric light. But, within a few seconds I had regained my composure.

The light led me across the dance floor, where I received a few accusing looks, and through a corridor leading deep into the centre of the club. There were private rooms off the corridor, but the light led me onwards. Past a pool room, and a pool. After the riotous sounds of the dance floor, this part of the club was blissfully peaceful.

As I walked down this long corridor, the Chakra light leading me to Charlie started to move to my left. As this was happening I became aware of the odd noise coming from farther down the corridor. It sounded like grunting or growling. Certainly vocal sounds, but nothing you could identify as human. I presumed a guard dog, confined until required. However, this did seem rather out of place, and why so far into the heart of the building?

The light was now far more intense and definitely shifting to the left of my field of vision. The noises also grew more intense.

The light now pointed to a door in the corridor, and from behind it I could hear the growling. Charlie must be behind the door. And with dread I realised, so was the thing making such a racket. I grabbed the door handle, and tried to wrench it open, but it was

locked. I grew more fearful for Charlie's safety, and in desperation started to kick at the door. After a few solid contacts, the lock gave out. The door burst open.

A shaft of light penetrated the dark, dank room. For a moment the noises stopped. Cautiously I entered. Immediately I felt I was the subject of something's gaze. Whether animal or person I could not yet tell. As my eyes grew accustomed to the dim light I could see on the opposite wall, about ten feet away, the figure of a person. The auric light was centred directly on this figure. It gave a low moan, as if in pain. As I drew closer I could see that the person was chained to the wall, with what appeared to be, padded restraints.

Suddenly it started to thrash about, screaming and groaning, trying to lunge at me. Its attack was hampered by the restraints. Secure in the knowledge that it was secure, I moved in for a closer look. The figure was pale, and dishevelled, but I recognised the face. It was David Somerset.

It looked as if he had been here for some time. But the auric light was focused directly on him. I could not understand it. Then he seemed to recognise me, which struck me as unusual as we had only met once, at the reading of Charlie's will. Anyway, he had calmed down a little and stopped trying to claw at me. His growls had reduced to a mere whimper.

There did not seem to be any other exits from the room, and from my rough idea of the layout of the club, I did not think that there would be any rooms behind this one. This was where the auric light had lead me, so where was Charlie.

As I stood there in confusion. Somerset started to mumble something. At first I could not make it out. Then it struck me. It was the old Hopkins school song. Somerset had never been at Hopkins, if he had, I would have known about it. Then the light of revelation finally sought me out. Somerset was Charlie.

Somehow he had gone from fat, downtrodden, loser, to beautiful, athletic madman. The change was too extreme to be purely natural. Something deeply arcane was going on here. But before I could investigate further I had to help Charlie. With a few well chosen words of Tibetan, I cancelled the location spell, and set to work freeing Charlie from his shackles. Now that he recognised me, I was sure he would not attack. However, as soon as he was free from the chains, he grabbed me and started pulling me towards the door. He was jabbering something, but I could not make it out. I wondered to myself what could alter Charlie so drastically, both physically and mentally. He had been a kind and gentle soul when I had known him. Now he was a violent lunatic, probably psychotic considering what he had done to that poor prostitute. But even having been chained up for, god knows how long, he still looked beautiful. His whole body shape had been altered. You certainly could not accuse Charlie of being fat now. And this was not some illusion or glamour, I could tell.

Charlie pulled me into the corridor, then shot off further into the club's interior. I dashed after him, calling out for him to stop, or at the very least slow down. But he just kept on going. He reached a staircase at the end of the corridor, and in a few bounds he had descended. I followed, down into a corridor which was only sporadically illuminated.. Charlie was now so far ahead of me, I could only hear his footsteps and ragged breathing.

We were now in an ancient part of the cellars under the building. They must have been four or five hundred years old.. The passageway smelled of damp soil and every now and then I heard the scratchings of a rat. Ahead of me Charlie had stopped. He was waiting at a door which marked the end of the passage.

There was a wild look on his face, and he kept gesturing at the door. It looked pretty unremarkable. It had an old brass lock, but no handle. Luckily, as part of my misspent

youth, I had learnt to pick simple locks, as well as the older style of safe. As Charlie hovered around, anxiously, I fished in my coat for an appropriate tool, and then unlocked the door. Once I had finished I gave the door a gentle push, and it swung open silently.

I looked at Charlie, to get some clue as what to do next, but found him cowering beside the door. Well, I thought to myself, I suppose I had better go in and investigate. Curiosity may have killed the cat, but up till now I'd been too smart for it.

Past the door was a dark area, so dark that I could not tell if it was room or just another corridor. I felt along the wall beside the door, hoping for a light switch. My luck was in. One flick, and the room was filled with a bright white light. A shock to the eyes after all the dim corridors. They took a moment to adjust.

I discovered that I was in a large cavernous cellar. Worryingly, there were arcane symbols chalked around the door and walls. But the most singularly disturbing feature of the room was the figure, suspended in the middle of it, and the equipment arranged around it. The harsh light from the bulb seemed to be reflected and intensified by the figure.

The figure itself, was suspended from the roof in an inverted crucifix position. Tubes ran from punctures in its arms into containers of some kind. These containers were set out on the floor around the figure. Also on the ground, encompassing the figure and equipment, was a large occult circle, drawn in chalk or salt. I was so taken aback by this sadistic sight that it took me about a minute to register what the figure was.

It was naked, but had no hair or genitals. An Angel. Someone had captured an Angel, and was torturing it.

Then it opened its eyes, and looked right into me. I was transfixed as this being looked directly into my soul. Then it spoke.

"Free me." It said, the words seeming to pass right through me, with a strange force I had never encountered before. They seemed to carry with them the weight of a threat. There was a definite darkness in that voice. I found myself, without thinking about it, moving towards the Angel and the occult circle around it. As usual my curiosity got the better of my reason.

"Why was this done to you?" I asked.

"I bleed for them." It replied flatly.

I was at the edge of the circle now. I could see that the tubes were clear plastic, and that blood was flowing down them into the containers below. I could now see there were about twenty similar containers, all about a meter high. I could also see more containers staked up against one of the walls.

"Dear God!" I said. "How long have you been down here?"

The Angel fixed its eyes on me again and said;

"Seventeen years, three months, ten days, eight hours, thirty two minutes and one second."

"And I think we will be keeping him for several more years." The voice came from behind me. I spun round to see a group of people walk in through the open doorway. There were seven of them, and they all looked gorgeous. They had the kind of beauty and poise that makes you stop dead in your tracks. At the front of the group was a twenty something in an Armani suit. His face was perfect, but there was a cold malevolence in his eyes.

"Step away from him, there's a good chap." He said calmly.

My brain was now getting over the initial shock of what I'd found as was coming up to speed. Some of the arcane symbols around the walls must have been part of a guardian spell. It had alerted these people when I entered the room. Then another, more curious,



thought entered my head. How exactly were they keeping an Angel trapped down here? It was part of the divine fabric of the universe. It would have been missed. The occult circle. It must be keeping the Angel separated from the rest of the sacred cosmos. It would remain divine, but not a part of the divine world.

However, these musings did not help my immediate situation, and I needed to come up with a safe way out of the there. I started stalling.

“What do you use the blood for?” I said, “if you don’t mind me asking.”

“It’s what we’d all been looking for.” Said the man in the suit. “It’s the doorway to eternity.”

Now, that was not quite the answer I had been expecting. It lead to all kind of strange and interesting ideas.

“You’re absorbing it’s divinity.” I blurted out.

“My, you are quick.” Said Mr Armani. His companions started to edge forward into the room. “Angels never die. Never grow old. They are beautiful forever. And now, so are we.”

By now my brain was fully up to speed, and pennies were dropping all over the place.

“Well,” I said “you’re certainly not acting like Angels. And I don’t suppose you’ve even stopped to ask yourselves why?”

“Just protecting our interests.”

“Charlie wasn’t.” I responded, “neither was Natalie Porter, or whoever she was before. They were brutal and psychotic.” Now the man in the suit gave me a smug smile.

“We’re not perfect you know.” He said.

“Quite right” I agreed, “But Angels are. This one’s been on its own for so very long. It used to be part of the great divinity, but you cut it off from that. You had to put it somewhere it couldn’t be seen.”

“We can make places where even God cannot see.” Said the Suit, as his friends were getting closer. I looked into the cold eyes of the man in the Armani Suit, and said;

“Heaven really is missing an Angel. And I think its about time they found out.”

I dragged the side of my shoe across the chalk circle. Breaking it. There was a loud crack and a coldness descended on the room. Nobody moved. Then the Angel went into spasm. It’s body twisting and blistering. It’s mouth chattering, as if shouting out a million words a minute. In it’s contortions it snapped the chain holding it up. It’s body smashed into the ground, scattering the equipment. Blood spilled over the floor. The man in the suit, and his fellows panicked, and bolted for the door.

Slowly the Angel stood up. It’s body was scarred and twisted. There was raw hate in it’s eyes. God had found it after all those years. He had listened to it’s thoughts. Finally heard it’s prayers. Prayers for justice, for vengeance. Now he had answered them. There was a price to pay, and the Angel had paid it willingly.

The man in the Suit was now out the room, and like his companions, was running for his life. With slow, purposeful steps, the Angel advanced towards the exit to its prison. It ignored me completely. It was now only interested in it’s one time captors. Then my heart sank. Was Charlie still outside the room?

I tried to dash in front of the Angel, but it was too late. The Angel was out the door. Seconds later I heard the sound of bone crushing and flesh rending. When I reached the doorway the Angel had gone, and Charlie was a battered and bloody corpse. There is no point denying the wrong Charlie had participated in, but this did not feel like justice. All

Charlie had wanted was to be liked. To fit in. His dream was to be beautiful, like the people he saw around him every day. No, his dream was to be happy, and he thought beauty would give that happiness to him.

They must have been drinking, or injecting, themselves with the Angels blood. Making it's divine essence part of their own. Taking on it's supernatural beauty, it's ability to suspend ageing. They clearly knew a great deal about the occult. But I don't think they had been reading their Milton lately. An Angel is only an Angel for as long as it doesn't sin. With the suffering that this particular Angel had been through, I'm sure that it would have been having impure thoughts for quite some time. But it had been taken out of the divine loop, isolated within that mystic circle. Sinning, but unable to receive punishment for it's sins. However it already knew the judgement for an Angel's sins. When Angels sin, Demons are born. So, for the past few years these poor fools had been mainlining pure demonic evil.

I left Charlie's body for the police to take care of. This was all getting too complicated for me to handle. I retraced my route out of the club, which had, unsurprisingly, emptied. There were signs of fighting on the dance floor, and as I exited the building I heard the dark chorus of police sirens approaching.

Weary, and emotionally exhausted, I made my way back home. I took the tube, and as I ascended the escalator, out of Victoria Station I shut out the images from the advertisements of the walls. The beautiful, white teathed, faces which beamed out of them only evoked pity in me. I did not understand why so many wanted to be as bland and conformist as they. The body is merely a shell, on its own it is just a corpse. True beauty is somewhere within. I just wish I could have convinced Charlie of this.

And now, out in the world, is a creature which stalks all those who have embraced the ugly side, of the beautiful people.