

Excerpt From Chapter 2: 1861-1865 Virginia

Nearing sunset: 6:00 pm

As the sun slowly begins to set, the boy wipes his hands on his torn pants that are stained with an assortment of colors: red, blue, purple. He sighs, letting out a startled gasp at the sound of a strangled cry from the master's headquarters. He looks in the direction of the scream along with many other slaves who hear that cry. The boy rushes towards the headquarters, hesitantly pushing open one of the doors, heart picking up speed as the door creaks open to reveal a shadow of darkness. He enters, darkness enveloping his figure as he squints to make image of anything that can lead to the cry. He quietly saunters around the building, wooden panels beneath him making soft sounds despite the lightest of pressures. A wooden staircase of stairs is spotted in the corner. His toes brush the first step, splinters of wood lightly pricking the padding of his skin in which he winces never once stopping him from continuing up the steps. One foot after the other, and he is at the top of the stairs. He notices a door that is swung open, the front pressed against the wall with a light illuminating the room and portions of the hallway. As he inches forward, he is unaware of his fists clenching and unclenching from nervousness. His breathing quickens, body trembles, and mayhem resides in his mind. Peering inside, he views the corpses of the overseers and their master, dismembered as body parts are scattered,

forming a shape. Blood continues to pool beneath their bodies, wooden floors stained red as strips of red collect in between the cracks of the floorboards. They are arranged in the shape of the *Sigil of Baphomet*, a satanic symbol that forever engraves itself into the boy's mind.

Excerpt From Chapter 4:

It is 7 am in New York City, 4 am in Los Angeles, California. New York City is alive and awake despite the earliness of the day. People are roaming the streets, calling for taxis to take them to their early morning shifts. It is just a normal day of constant traffic, and heavy bustling just to get from one part of the city to another. People shove past one another, pushing through small crowds of others trying to get to their destinations, unaware of their phones and every other technological device experiencing slight static with every minute that passes by on the clock. A young woman is standing on a corner, her phone in hand as she listens to music while waiting for her ride. Her music pauses for a second before starting back up on its own. She furrows her brows in confusion as her song hits a sharp pause every few seconds.

“Um...” she softly mumbles, restarting the app in hopes it is just an issue with the application. The process repeats once again. *Play, pause, play, pause...* she fumbles with the application, frustration building as her music refuses to play. As her fingers continue to hit random buttons, an image in the form of a note flashes across the screen for a few moments. It is bright. Almost blinding. “What the hell?” she asks as her phone flashes once more, eyes squinting at the blaring light that radiates from the small screen, and once her eyes focus on the image on the screen, her eyes widen as she feels compelled to read it aloud to herself. She does

this in the corner of the street. She goes unnoticed, as she finishes reading the poem to herself, a horrifying gaze lingering on the screen after a few moments. She feels pressure, as if being choked by an unknown force. She drops her phone, the screen shattering into a tiny shards, fragments dispersed. She clutches her throat as she struggles to breathe. *Gasp, gasp, gasp.* Her eyes widen as a silhouette of a face appears momentarily. Wrinkles, dark, matted, lengthy hair, hollow eye sockets revealing a black hole of desolation, the skin of her lips lightly flaking and cracked, a face portraying an abyss of torment come into view for a split moment. It disappears, and she continues to clutch, one hand pressing up against a wall beside her as she fights to cling onto her last breath. *Gasp, gasp, gasp.* There is restricted airflow. A shade of bluish pale begins to shade in her features, eyes distending, blood leaking, as her head feels like it is swelling, on the brink of an explosion. She falls to the ground, hand incapable of holding her up. Her body is laid out, bruises forming along her throat in the shape of a hand. Spots of red scatter throughout her eye, blood vessels ruptured. She goes from standing, simply trying to get to work, to laying there with a lifeless hand a few inches away from her broken device.