

# Excerpt from Kindle Version, 2018



## **Rabbit Legacy**

By Ellen C. Maze

Fifth Edition

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*This Fifth Edition is released in tandem with the long-awaited Book Three in the Rabbit Trilogy –Rabbit Redemption—freshened for old and new readers.*

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**Mild Language, Sexual Situations, Vampire Violence**

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Raleigh, NC  
November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 8:00 p.m. ET

Isaac Akaron sat up and looked about the tiny cubicle he called an apartment. His landlord was a commercial psychic, and for room and board, his talents made her a truer one.

Tonight, as vivid as life, he telepathically witnessed Father Damien's capture. He'd also witnessed Tyson and Gage failing to nab him the night before, yet a late success was better than none. Spying on the lunatic Elder in Jackson had become a source of entertainment, and Rufus rarely bombed a performance. Beryl and Meryl were pleased with themselves and Rufus was ecstatic. Isaac saw all this from several states away without their knowledge. He was an amazing Rakum with unparalleled power. At least that was what Father Damien used to tell him when they shared quarters in the good old days. But now? Father Damien was human.

Isaac humphed and shook his head.

*I need to get into the show.*

His visions regarding the distant future were hazy at best, but he thought for sure he'd get to see the old Father once more before they killed him. Maybe he could spit in his face. Father Damien's un-Rakum-like behavior set Isaac in a spin and his anger simmered deep. The Father deserted him five years ago to search for the God of the mortals. Isaac's eyes glazed over as he rehashed the memories.

Born in 12 A.D., Damien was highly respected among the Ten. He had Abroghia's ear, which few, if any, of the others could claim. And three decades ago, Damien took 13-year-old Isaac under his wing and moved him into the Chamber. It was a necessary move as his peers had

become too fearful of him to maintain amity. When Damien and the other Fathers took him in, Isaac truly began to grow and expand his extrasensory abilities to their fullest.

The Ten Fathers educated, disciplined, chastised, and encouraged him daily, and on the advice of the High Father, they fed him as well—from their own veins. From the moment Isaac arrived at the Cave, their official underground headquarters in Nevada, until the Rakum were disbanded, he never touched human blood. He drank solely from the Fathers and as a result, his telekinetic and telepathic skills sharply increased. By his twentieth birthday, no Rakum, even among the Fathers, could outperform him in clairvoyance and foretelling. The only one he was forbidden to buzz from was the High Father and he expected that. Abroghia was above in every way imaginable. He was their god, their king, and their perfection.

And as such, he would have broken Tyson and Gage in two for failing to bring in the apostate, Damien.

*The traitor.*

A surprising turn of events to say the least.

Five years ago, Father Damien sent him packing. With very little explanation and much sermonical dialogue, the person closest to him his entire life completely shut him out. Pushing him gently out the door, Damien spoke of abstracts, mortal emotions, and the origins of the human species. Isaac thought him insane, but what could he do? Damien spent most of his nights at a monastery in the hills, communing with the monks, and learning from their books. The friars knew him for what he was, yet they looked for his arrival and kept him until nearly daybreak. So much so that Isaac would sit in their shared basement sleeping quarters anxiously watching the door, afraid that one morning, the Father would be burned to a crisp trying to make it home.

When Damien finally missed a return, Isaac hiked to the monastery at dusk to seek him out. What he found was a spiritually broken Rakum Father, humbled and pitiful, lying face down on a dusty floor before a wooden cross; not resembling in the least the mighty and frightening leader that he'd known most of his life. It wasn't long after that he and his guardian parted ways.

Isaac lowered his head atop his folded arms and closed his eyes. He concentrated on Damien, tried to pull him up, and couldn't. A week ago, he found he was no longer able to spy on his Father as in days of old. It had something to do with the traitor's new faith, his new God, and the spiritual forces that surrounded him that blunted Isaac's view.

Isaac sighed. If he never saw Damien again, it would be for the best. They were different species now, completely incompatible. If he laid eyes upon him now, he'd most likely shudder in palpable disgust.

He'd most likely kill him.

Who else was about?

Now and again, he would look in on Beryl and Meryl. The twins were under the impression that no one else was telepathic. It was sad, really. Isaac was half their age, and they didn't even know of his existence. But did any of them? Until Abroghia deserted their race, Isaac was kept shut up in the Chamber anterooms. He saw very little of their brethren and only when he left the confines of the Cave with Father Damien did he begin to meet other Rakum and their human companions.

*Canaan...*

There was an interesting fellow. Isaac hadn't met the man in person, but many of his vision-like dreams involved the intimidating Elder and his homely common-law wife. Especially the last ten days, Isaac was repeatedly shown a mighty battle between Rufus and this tough-exteriored brute. In the scuffle, Rufus annihilates Canaan, drains his blood, and leaves him for dead. It was the kind of prophecy Isaac would share with Rufus if he trusted him, which he did not. One of the last things Damien told him before he lost his mind to an unseen Deity was to avoid Rufus Delouve at all costs.

Isaac's stomach grumbled and he thought of Boris, the one Rakum in town who was willing to buzz him periodically so that he could maintain the purity he'd spent his life achieving. He'd be along soon enough. But first...

A knock sounded at the door and Isaac didn't budge; he'd seen her coming. She was a creature of habit.

Miranda—landlord, substandard psychic, all-around-nutcase—knocked again and her key turned in the lock. She was fearless. Isaac considered snuffing her out, but that solution would have him on the street as soon as she was discovered missing. He could suffer her attentions a little while longer.

She entered the room and Isaac remained as he was; head down at the card table. In a moment, she would speak—try to draw him out. Then she would attempt for the umpteenth time to seduce him. It was ridiculous, and by mortal standards, illegal. Close to 50 chronologically, Isaac's apparent age was just fourteen. He aged even more slowly than his brethren because of his specialized diet, and this woman's attraction to him was not motherly in the least. Isaac heard her approach and he

sighed. It would be so easy to stop her heart. Father Damien taught him how to do it.

“What’re ya doin’ in the dark, sweetie?” She clicked on the lamp as she drew near.

Her drawling voice grated on Isaac’s nerves. She was drunk. Again. And now her hands were on his shoulders; massaging, kneading, irritating.

“I thought tonight’s sessions went great. When you lifted that Georgia chick off the ground with your mind, I nearly tossed my lunch. What other surprises do you have in store for me, sweetie? Is there anything you can’t do?”

Isaac grunted, and Miranda’s hands slowed and were still, cupping his biceps now from behind. In their sessions, as she called them, Miranda sat at the proverbial circular table with the fake crystal ball fragmenting the light. Isaac stood to the side, dressed in black, blending into the dark purple curtains that surrounded the small space. When the show began, he’d go to work—throwing his voice, moving objects, flashing the lights and occasionally, mentally shoving a guest to the floor. It was great drama and the mortals ate it up like candy. Although bored to tears, Isaac would bide his time. His day was coming and he was patient.

“It’s no effort for you at all, is it? You play with me, with them. You’re above it all, aren’t you? Isaac, look at me.”

Isaac lifted his head and controlled his expression with extreme effort. His stomach grumbled again and she heard it, her eyes growing wide. She knew he was a blood drinker; the spiteful familiars she listened to helped her figure it out. But they obviously didn’t tell her that he never drank human blood, for that was what she constantly offered him.

“You could stoop down to our level once in a while. Some of us down here worship you. Some of us would do anything for you. To please you.”

Miranda pressed her abundant bosom against his back and ran her hands down his arms. Isaac’s lip curled. He detested her wanton come-ons. When he refused to meet her eyes again, she came from behind to stand at his side. Producing a small knife from her copious skirts, she brought it to her throat. Isaac’s eyes followed out of habit, but he had no intention of drinking anything she might draw out. He never drank from humans and Boris would be there at any moment.

“Why don’t you like me, sweetie? Is my blood not good enough?”

Am I too old? Do I look too much like your mommy?”

Isaac cut his eyes at her and she flinched, seeing his hate at last.

“How old are you, Miranda? Forty-eight? Fifty? How old do you think I am? Tell me?” Isaac hissed his words and she was offended by them. She lowered the knife and her face took on an inexplicable feminine grimace. “You’re a meaningless blip on the screen of eternity, Miranda. In another fifty years, you’ll be long gone. I’ll still be here in fifty *thousand* years. Leave me be. Our contract is strictly business.”

“How can you be so cruel?” Miranda dropped the knife and Isaac gestured for the door.

“Hit the road Miranda. My brother has arrived.”

As he spoke, Boris entered through the open door and nodded a greeting. He looked at Miranda and smiled. He’d always had eyes for the dumpy matron and she knew it, although she didn’t fully understand the nature of Isaac’s dark compadre.

“Boss lady.” Boris bowed to Miranda with flourish. She crossed her arms and stiffened her posture.

“This is my house. I refuse to leave before I am ready.”

Isaac caught Boris’s eye and nodded.

*“Please come, brother. I couldn’t care less if she watches. Come now.”* Isaac sent his plea mentally and Boris stepped forward, rolling up his sleeve. Isaac came to his feet and met him halfway. Boris was black as night and as strong as an ox, and Isaac was more than happy that his geographically closest brother was an amiable donor. Using Miranda’s discarded knife, he shoved the tip into Boris’s inner elbow. As he suppressed, he listened to Boris and Miranda’s exchange.

*“Oh, my god. Will you look at that!”*

*“What do you think, boss lady? Make you jealous?”*

*“Hush and be nice. I don’t get it. In the movies, they can’t get enough blood. But he won’t come near me.”*

*“I’ll come near ya.”*

*“Don’t get fresh.”* (a giggle)

*“This pup is too young, boss. He has no use for a beautiful, full-figured gal like you. In our world, it takes a century to become a man.”*

*“What’re you doin’?”* (another giggle)

*“I’ve seen three hundred birthdays, boss, and I’m always hungry.”*

Isaac moved with Boris as he stepped a few feet aside to put his free arm around Miranda’s shoulders. He pulled her tight and Isaac was pressed into the stiff lace of her costumed bodice. She giggled a little more and he knew Boris was nuzzling her neck.

*“Now? It has to be now?”* Isaac transmitted, his irritation no doubt

evident.

“The meat is fresh, little brother. Don’t want it to spoil,” Boris murmured over his head.

Angry, but not willing to stop his meal, Isaac pushed hard against Miranda with his inside hand and sent her sprawling.

“*Tell her to be still or I will shut her up for good.*” Isaac knew how much blood he needed and he wouldn’t take any less. Miranda screamed his name and came to her feet, but Isaac remained as he was, eyes closed and facing away from the furious old gal. Moments before his frustration reached its threshold, Boris spoke up.

*“Boss lady...Boss. Shhh...”*

*“That monster! Ingrate! Sp—”*

*“Shhh... he can kill you with a thought. Yeah. Uh-huh. Betcha didn’t realize that, eh?”*

(quiet pause)

*“He’s a god among our people. He can kill you like that.”* (snaps fingers)

Isaac finished his meal and smiled, appreciating Boris’s allegiance.

“Okay,” Boris said to no one and took back his arm.

*“Thank you, brother...”* Isaac sent telepathically, and then spoke aloud, cutting his eyes at Miranda. “Now take it upstairs.”

The woman opened her mouth to protest, but Boris held up his hand and crossed to meet her where she stood, disheveled and red-faced. Isaac watched him lead her out the door by one flabby arm and then ascend the stairs out of the basement to her part of the rambling old house where Boris could romance her, drink her, whatever he wanted.

Isaac sighed, happy she was gone and glad he hadn’t killed her. Yet.

# 9

Jackson, MS  
November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 8:45 p.m.

Meryl dragged the night's unfortunate soul out of Rufus's room and down the hall. Beryl walked ahead of him, mumbling to himself. It was a man this time, obese and smelly. Meryl thought back to the old days. Days when he was free to choose his Cows, pick out the most desirable mortals and lure them into his clutches. The last was a matchless and stunning creature named Simon. He'd swiped him out from under that wimp Javier before their final night in the Cave. Simon had been young, strong, and oh so delicious...

"Simon? Judas Priest! It's time you let that moron go."

"That's not what you called him then," Meryl teased and Beryl made the tiniest grin.

"He was definitely pretty..."

"Oh, yeah, Meryl chuckled. "Let's find him when this is over. A Cow needs a master."

Meryl watched Beryl's dark cloud roll back into place. *"Bitching and complaining doesn't help anybody. Suck it up, brother, and stop pining for the way things were!"*

Meryl smirked at Beryl's telepathic reprimand. They were both on edge and grumpy, but it had little to do with the boy Simon, or Rufus and his idiotic attempts at leadership. No, they recently picked up an errant telepathic whisper from a foe they



thought long-ago vanquished. The missing Elder had been overheard making some serious Rabbit plans. Worse, they'd lied to Rufus. This Elder could possibly be a threat to Rufus if not handled soon.

"How did he escape us? We've been hunting the Elders for five years and not a peep." Beryl again, speaking low before he switched to telepathy for a more private conversation. *"Elder Canaan is very powerful. I sense it. Even now, without the Fathers on the throne."*

*"I don't suppose you can narrow down where he is?"* Meryl yanked the fat corpse hard and maneuvered him into the small elevator which would carry them to the basement furnace where Rufus cremated his victims. Thankfully, there were two junior Rakum on duty who would do the dismemberment. Meryl could think of better ways to spend his time than spoon-feeding chunks of a derelict into the mouth of hell.

*"I might have an idea. I need to get to a computer."* The door closed on the trio and the elevator started down. Rufus's house had two floors and a basement and the former owners ensured the entire estate was handicapped accessible. Of course, the former owners were the first ones to test out the crematory in the bowels of the house.

*"We'll hit the Starbucks on Promenade. Less foot traffic and the girl there has the hots for me."*

"For us," Beryl corrected and helped his twin get the dead man off the elevator and into the waiting arms of the brutes assigned below. They looked hungry and they'd probably find time to nosh on Rufus's leftovers.

Meryl averted his eyes in disgust and without a word, the twins headed back up to the main floor. They'd make a lame excuse to Rufus; their leader didn't keep close tabs on them. He wasn't truly capable of controlling them, his hope being to merely manage them until his plans came to fruition. For now, they amicably filled their respective roles in tense harmony.

*"What was that business about Kite? Did you get any more of that rambling?"* Meryl hoped his twin gathered more information than he had because when Rufus thought about their slow-

witted brother Kite, the transmission grew faint quickly. Almost as if—

*“Almost as if he can still block us. At least to some extent,”* Beryl piped in as he led the way to the back door. *“I heard what you heard. Don’t come back without it. That’s all I got.”*

Meryl smirked and followed his twin out the exit and into the cool night air. Rufus was likely collecting another man’s prize for himself. But it didn’t matter. Their leader was constantly spouting ridiculous new edicts. He was insane, so Meryl wouldn’t give it anymore thought. They had their plates full already.

The Starbucks was quiet and closing in ten minutes. Meryl sweet-talked the starry-eyed cashier into loaning out her laptop and Beryl was busy tapping away across the room, following leads that had not yet blossomed into useful information. Meryl glanced at his brother and picked up the latest search in his mind. *State parks*. Whoopee.

Sighing, he turned his attention to the teen behind the register and leaned on the counter. Blonde and buxom, the highschooler hadn’t a clue about life, the universe, or anything important. And she hadn’t enough sense to fear strangers.

“So, Hildy, how’d you get so cute?”

The girl blushed and tipped her head with a question of her own. “What’s it like to have a twin?”

Meryl smiled. “It’s pretty fantastic.”

For no reason, the girl laughed one short burst and then put her manicured fingernails to her pouty lips.

“I can read his mind.” Meryl tossed her a grin and she blushed deeper. He lowered his voice to a whisper, *“Watch this.”* Meryl spread out a napkin on the counter top, grabbed Hildy’s pen from her hand and wrote a message in block letters: *What are you doing, Beryl?*

Without looking up, his brother called out annoyed, “Buzz off, Meryl, I’m busy.”

Hildy burst into a fit of giggles and covered her mouth

with her hands. “He sounded like my boyfriend just then—”

“Boyfriend?” Meryl questioned and she fell silent. “What does he think about you working so late every night?” Meryl held the girl’s eye and licked his lips. She was breathless and lost in his gaze. When she didn’t answer, he winked and made a face. “Well? Hmmm?”

Hildy giggled and her tight corkscrew curls shook as she laughed.

“Is he the jealous type?” Meryl pressed and then settled his chin in his hand, giving her an adoring look. “Do you think I could take him?”

“He...” Hildy giggled again and glanced at her only co-worker, a shapely Latino girl a couple of years her senior wiping down the prep counter. Hildy’s brown eyes flashed and she leaned on the counter, reducing the distance between them and making a shadow in the scoop of her shirt. She whispered, “He’s *kinda wimpy.*”

Meryl inhaled the aroma of her shampoo and fantasized about touching her impossible curls. She was plump and soft, her skin as pink as a rose, as if she never sat under the rays of the hateful sun. And she was young. When did they let these kids start work? Was she fifteen? Sixteen? Meryl wondered if he should ask. It had been some time since he touched one so clean, fresh, and unsullied. Across the room, Beryl made a noise and pulled him out of his thoughts. Meryl stood up slowly and smiled again to the young Hildy. If only...

*“Don’t start that again. Look. Come here.”*

Beryl’s mental voice was annoyed and excited at the same time. Meryl didn’t have to see to absorb the information his brother had obtained. Elder Canaan finally slipped up and left them something they could use. On a reunion web site linked to the Tennessee State Parks Community page, a familiar name popped out at them.

*“Ranger Marcy Haddle. That’s Canaan’s mate. We met her at Assembly in ’82. She was peculiar,”* Meryl sent thoughtfully.

*“Annoying.”*

*“Cute, though. She gave him a hundred percent, remember?”*

*"Hub,"* Beryl agreed with a chuckle. In the photo, the Elder leaned against her like a love-struck school boy. *"...and she's still giving it to him."*

*"Why stay with her? He seemed like such a brute..."* Meryl touched the monitor as he spoke. The few times he'd crossed paths with the Elder they sought, he'd bullied him out of the choicest Cows in holding during Assembly. Meryl went hungry more than once because he was no match for the Elder's brawn.

*"Tough, yeah, but amiable,"* Beryl sent still eyeing the monitor.

Meryl nodded with a hum. Back in the day, the lumbering gorilla stood up for Meryl when he was too hotly pursued by Elder Dawn's contemporaries. Beryl chuckled and Meryl punched his arm.

*"Jack would never have loaned you out, don't worry,"* Beryl sent, his silent voice smiling. Meryl didn't respond; all of the Elders sought possession of the twins, but Jack Dawn never once shared them.

*"Jack respected Canaan,"* Meryl surmised. *"That's enough for me."* In the old days, Jack, Tomás, and Canaan were inseparable at Assembly.

Beryl sighed. *"Canaan didn't attend the last few Assemblies."*

*"I wonder how he stayed under the Fathers' radar. He must have had help. Another Elder sympathized with him and covered his duties."*

*"Good point,"* Beryl said, his brow furrowing. Each Elder closely supervised ten lieutenants, a hundred captains, and a thousand brethren. Someone would've had to cover for him.

*"Is it possible he stayed away from the brethren so that he could spend all of his time with this mortal?"*

Beryl nodded. *"I sense that this is exactly what he's been doing."*

*"Hiding,"* Meryl admitted.

*"Hiding among the mortals. He's gotten good at it."*

*"So we're going after him before the Rabbit? Is that wise?"* Meryl questioned Beryl's plan, but his brother was resolute.

*"We told Rufus he was in the clear. Let's make our words true, and then go to Montgomery again. Stone has seen us. We'll give him a few*

*days to freak a little."*

*"Cool. So..."*

Beryl closed the laptop and stood up from the tiny circular table.

*"It's a seven-hour drive to Nashville."* He checked his watch and swore under his breath. *"That'd put us there too close to sunup. I do not want to go back and look at Rufus tonight."*

*"What're our options?"*

Both twins searched their memories for alternate spots to sleep away the day, but Rufus's estate was the safest place in Jackson. Meryl shook his head and glanced at Hildy who was pretending not to watch them from the counter. Meryl's hand went to his pocket where he kept his knife.

*"That girl needs to come with us wherever we go, Beryl. Please."*

Beryl's smile turned up on one side.

*"Ask her to come with us. Hell, we're leaving town. Who'll know? This place has been deserted since we arrived."* Beryl's gaze fell on Hildy's petite coworker busily scrubbing the counter. *"Let's take them both."*

The second girl looked up then and blushed at the attention. Meryl nodded and returned the computer. Getting her to consent to a ride in his BMW was a breeze and by happenstance, her friend needed a lift home.

In the car, Beryl drove with the second girl on the passenger side. She admitted that she needed a ride because she loaned her car to her roommate for the week. Maria, her name tag read, had the apartment to herself for seven days.

Beryl caught Meryl's eye in the rearview mirror and didn't have to hear his reply in his mind. The twins had always been lucky. Tonight they'd do whatever they pleased, enjoying the company of Starbuck's finest. Tomorrow night, they'd head for Nashville to deal up some death to the last Elder resister.

Beryl smirked. No worries.

(END OF EXCERPT)

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