

DEVLIN'S DESCENT



ROGER
DALE
TREXLER

© 2009 Roger Dale Trexler.
All rights reserved.

**Chapter Twenty-One:
“Hey Joe”**

Finding where Joseph lived wasn't hard; Devlin already knew where it was. He'd been arrested for beating the man to within an inch of his life, and it had brought him to The Little Man. But, in between, before he'd first journeyed down into the brilliantly lit corridors of The Little Man's personal chamber of horrors, he had spent time in jail. And, since he wasn't a murderer or a child molester — just a man who'd beaten the shit out of a two-timing lowlife — his jailors had cut him some slack. He was allowed certain privileges that the more hardened criminals of the lot weren't. One of them had been Internet access.

"You can find anyone on the Internet," Robert Brown, one of his former co-workers, had once told him. "Just type in their name and presto! You find 'em." Devlin remembered the man shaking his head in disgust. "There ain't no privacy anymore!"

If only Bob knew the half of it, Devlin thought. But, he had found Joseph's address and had genuinely decided that, once he got out of jail, he would finish the job he had started and beat the other half of the bastard to death.

Things hadn't quite gone that way, of course, and Devlin's revenge had had to wait.

Now, he sat outside the home and wondered why he was there.

"You know why you're here," Daniel said.

Devlin turned and looked at the boy. Rosetta sat half a block away in her car. Devlin hadn't told her what he intended to do, but she knew it, anyway. Part of him didn't want her to get involved in this. But, she already was. The moment she had taken Devlin in, she had become an accomplice in anything and everything that he did. That didn't seem to bother

her, though. She hated The Little Man and his minions just as much as Devlin did.

“Tell me again,” Devlin told Daniel.

“The Little Man made him impregnate Caroline with a monster. He injected some sort of nanobots into Joseph. What’s growing in Mom’s stomach isn’t human, and The Little Man intends to use it against you.”

Devlin fell silent a moment. He stared across the way at the empty driveway. Joseph wasn’t home yet. Devlin had been waiting for thirty minutes or so. He would wait all night, if need be. Part of him wanted to kill the man for what he had taken away from him. But, that part had diminished in recent days. He knew that Rosetta was responsible for that change of heart, however slight it might be. There was still the need for vengeance, he supposed, but the fact that Joseph was walking around with something The Little Man could use again and again inside him made his death even more important. The world didn’t need Joseph impregnating other women with abominations, even if they might deserve their fate.

You can’t just cut off the head of the beast, Devlin thought. In this case, you have to make sure that all parts of the monster are dead as well.

Joseph had to die.

The thought didn’t hurt Devlin’s feelings one bit.

He glanced down the street and saw Rosetta’s car sitting there. He had made love to her again shortly before leaving for Joseph’s house. Afterwards, she had lain in his arms and the world seemed to make sense again.

“I need your help,” he said.

“Anything,” she replied as she ran her hand across his chest.

He closed his eyes and savored the closeness of a woman. The Pus whores he had partaken of could not give him the contentment he felt in Rosetta’s arms. He had forgotten how much he enjoyed touching a woman.

Rosetta had awakened that in him.

He kissed her and felt his passions rise again. She reached down and stroked him till he was hard, then rolled on top of him.

The sex was wonderful, Devlin thought as he stood there listening to the sounds of the night. He looked to the sky and silently thanked God for giving him the experience of a good woman again. He and God had not been on speaking terms since Caroline had done what she had done; Now, Devlin thought that his life might be making a change for the better.

He reached down and touched the three vials of Green Pus in his pocket. He had taken one vial on the way over to Joseph's. He had felt Rosetta's concerned eyes on him as he swallowed the bitter goo, but she had said nothing. She knew that he needed it for what he had to do. Devlin wasn't a natural born killer, but, with the help of a little Green Pus, he could do what needed to be done.

A vehicle turned onto the street and Devlin tensed. A dark, late-model car drove by. It wasn't Joseph.

"He'll be here," Daniel said. "He'll be here and we'll take care of him."

"I know," Devlin replied. He took one of the vials of Green Pus out of his pocket and held it in his hand, regarding it. Such a small, seemingly harmless container, Devlin thought. But people have killed and fucked and stolen to get its contents.

He smiled and gave a half-snicker as he thumbed open the container, raised it to his lips, and swallowed the contents. As usual, the Pus burned as it went down, and Devlin found himself wondering if, with Rosetta's help, he actually could give the stuff up. Rosetta had kicked the habit; why couldn't he?

Because you need it, Devlin thought. *You need it to make yourself feel whole.*

But, hadn't Rosetta helped him to feel whole without it?

Yes, she had.

He looked back down the street at her car. He couldn't make out her face in the darkness but, as he reached out his

mind, he could touch her now.

It'll be all right, he told her; thinking perhaps that he was lying, we'll do what has to be done and we'll run off somewhere, live a happy life. Maybe Mexico? Or the Bahamas?

Devlin didn't believe that lie, either. He knew that he would never leave the city. It was too much a part of him.

Another car turned onto the street.

"It's him," Daniel said.

And, indeed, it was. Devlin could tell that it was a truck coming toward him, and he sank back into the shadows as the silver vehicle rolled by and pulled into the driveway.

Devlin stood there and watched as the driver's side door opened and the man stepped out. He had tried to wash the image of the man from his mind, tried to pretend that their common past had not been shared at all. But, try as he might and no matter how much Green Pus Devlin consumed, the past always lay there in his memory.

Joseph was a tall man, a good six inches taller than Devlin was himself, but that hadn't stopped Devlin from putting the man in the hospital once. Devlin felt a mélange of emotions flowing through him — anger, dread, contempt, fear and, strangest of all, jealousy. Why Caroline had chosen to betray him with this man, Devlin did not know. He wasn't particularly good-looking, wasn't rich either. She'd had a good life with him and she'd thrown it away on....this man? It didn't make sense and Devlin had pondered on the subject many times over the past year and had come up wanting for an answer. Shit happens, had been his ultimate conclusion. Joseph had been in the right place at the right time to help shatter Devlin illusion of a perfect life.

It was as simple — and yet, as complicated — as that. Hundreds, thousands, even millions or billions, of things had occurred in sequence to bring about the chain of events that brought Devlin to Joseph's home to kill him.

He glanced once again down the street. He still couldn't see her, but he knew that Rosetta was watching.

"Get on with it," Daniel said.

Devlin looked down into the boy's face. *Was there malice in the child's expression? Did he want this man dead even more than Devlin did?*

Devlin stepped forward and reached out with his mind. It was only a second later that Joseph turned, looked at him with fright in his eyes, then fell to the ground and spasmed.

Devlin didn't let go of the man as he quickly crossed the street. It was night and most everyone was either already in bed, or watching late-night talk television. No lights came on, no cars drove down the street. They were alone, and that was just how Devlin wanted it to be.

He stepped onto the well-manicured lawn and strolled up to Joseph. The man grimaced with pain from what Devlin had put in his mind — an image that even made Devlin cringe in fear. Devlin would have felt bad for the man, but Joseph deserved it. He deserved anything Devlin would do him.

Devlin pulled back just enough for the man to stop shaking and look at him. "Remember me?" Devlin asked.

"Kill him!" Daniel shouted. "Kill him now, Daddy!"

Joseph's eyes widened and Devlin realized that he could see the boy, too. Whatever The Little Man had given him to impregnate Caroline with had made it possible for him to see Daniel.

Devlin bent forward and grabbed the collar of Joseph's shirt. He pulled the man up into his face, staring into his eyes all the while. "So The Little Man turned you into one of his science projects, too?" Devlin asked. He smiled. "You won't have to worry about it much longer, though."

Devlin looked into his mind and saw what The Little Man had instructed him to do to Caroline. He found out all about the nanosperm and the thing that now lived within Caroline's stomach — thanks to Joseph. *And this was a man Caroline trusted? A man she loved?*

"Jesus," Devlin said.

"He made me do it," Joseph said, a whimper in his voice. "He made me."

Devlin thrust the man backward onto the grass. Part of

him wanted to finish it right then, kill Joseph on the lawn that Caroline had once strolled across to have sex with a man who was not her husband.

But, Devlin wasn't ready for that. Not yet, at least.

"Call him," Devlin said.

"Call him?" Joseph asked.

"You know who.... the little bastard who's responsible for all this. The Little Man."

"I don't have his number."

Devlin concentrated and Joseph screamed. "Don't lie to me, motherfucker! I'm not in the mood."

"Okay, okay," Joseph shouted as he held his hand in front of him. "I'll call him. Just stop. Please!"

Devlin backed away a step and let Joseph's mind free. He could feel Daniel at his side; the boy was burning up with hatred. *Why?* Devlin wasn't certain. But, he could feel Daniel's desire to kill Joseph; and, to be honest, it was infectious. Devlin was trying hard not to make the matter more personal than it was, but it was difficult. He saw nothing more than a man who had helped to destroy his marriage before him, even if the man now seemed petty and afraid.

"Call," Devlin said.

"Okay." Joseph reached into his pocket and produced a cell phone. He flipped open the cover and scrolled down his contacts list. He stopped at an entry entitled HIM and punched the button.

He placed the telephone to his ear. It seemed to ring forever. "I don't think he's...."

".... He'll answer," Daniel said.

And, just then, he did. "Hello," The Little Man said. But, before Joseph could say a word, Devlin snatched the phone from Joseph's hand.

"How you doing?" Devlin asked. "Heard you had a health scare recently?"

There was a long, cold silence. "Devlin," The Little Man said finally. "I take it our time has come?"

"Yes," Devlin replied.

He heard The Little Man draw in a deep breath and exhale. "I suppose it was inevitable that Joseph would be collateral damage in our little cat-and-mouse game." There was a slight pause. "No major concern, though. He was really wasn't much worth a damn, anyway."

Devlin looked at Joseph. Devlin had felt petty and small because of what the man had done with his wife but, in truth, Joseph was the small man. He was a tool of a power mad little fool.

"I'm sure your boy appreciates your concern for his well-being," Devlin said.

"Kill him," The Little Man said with a snicker, "see if I care. See if the world misses an insignificant sack of garage like him."

Devlin turned to Daniel. The boy had stood at his side quietly as he brought Joseph to his knees. But, Devlin could still feel the hatred for the man that Daniel felt. It was emanating from him, rolling off in waves of heat like a blacktop highway on a clear, hot day. Daniel wanted him dead.

"I'm not going to kill him," Devlin said into the phone.

"What!" Daniel shouted. "You know *what* he did to you!"

"It takes two to tango," Devlin said as he looked at his son. "He didn't do anything to her that she didn't want him to do — and may God damn her for that."

Devlin threw the cell phone at Joseph. "Get in your truck and get the hell out of here before I change my mind." He turned, then stopped and looked back. "And, if I ever see you again, I won't be so kind...do you understand?"

Joseph nodded as he picked up his cell phone.

"That's good. Now go while the getting is good.... and don't ever come back here."

Devlin turned back toward the man's home and reached out with his mind. For a moment, nothing happened. Then, the sound of creaking wood filled the air. The sound intensified as the house seemed to be turning inward on itself. Shingles flew from the roof and littered the yard. Pieces of sid-

ing followed. Joseph watched as his house, the place he had brought Caroline to many times, crashed to the ground in a pile of rubble.

Devlin turned to him again. "Get the fuck out of here before I do that to you!"

He didn't have to be told again. Joseph jumped in his truck and started the engine. He threw the vehicle into reverse and squealed the tires as he pulled out of the driveway, threw it in drive, and sped off.

Devlin turned to his son.

"You should have killed him," Daniel said. "He deserved to die."

"Patience," Devlin said. He walked out into the street and stood there. In the distance, he saw taillights turn red. Joseph was braking.

He watched as the vehicle turned around. It didn't surprise Devlin in the least. The Little Man was a powerful little bastard. He could picture the scene in the truck as Joseph drove away, frantically trying to save his own miserable life. His cell phone would ring. He would ignore it at first, hoping that The Little Man would give up. But, of course, The Little Man would not give up. Joseph would have to pick up the phone and answer. Whatever he had on Joseph was enough for the man to risk his life. Maybe, like the physical version of Daniel, he had implanted an explosive charge in Joseph's skull and threatened to kill him if he did not turn around. Or, maybe, it was something more intimate and personal.

Whatever it was, Joseph was coming back toward him.

The lights in neighboring houses were already on, and curious onlookers were watching the scene from the confined safety of their homes. Devlin knew there were people standing in the dark, peering out the corner of their windows. He could feel them watching.

He thought it must look like some sort of bizarre bullfight, with Devlin the matador and Joseph's silver beast of a truck the bull.

Devlin stood in the middle of the street and watched the

headlights bear down on him.

"You told him you'd kill him if he came back," Daniel said.

Devlin looked down at the boy. "That, I did," he said.

He looked back up at the oncoming truck. It was fifty feet away when Devlin stuck his hand out in front of him and batted his fingers. Instantly, the truck veered to the right.

By the time it struck a telephone pole ten feet from Devlin, Devlin could see the horror in Joseph's face. Then, the truck struck the pole. A sound like a thousand crumpling soda cans filled the night, and glass and splinters flew. Pieces fell at Devlin's feet, but he ignored them.

He walked toward the wreckage, oblivious to the sound of voices saying, "call the police!" behind him. He would be long gone before the police arrived, and, if he wasn't...

Well, he would make sure he was gone.

He strolled up to the truck, Daniel at his side. The boy had a satisfied expression on his face, like he'd been denied something, then granted it for being good.

Devlin walked up to the driver's side window of the truck. The glass had been broken out, and Joseph's head lay upon the steering wheel. Both hands were clutched to the wheel, one of them still held the cell phone. Devlin reached out and took the phone.

"You're not gonna win this time," Devlin said into the phone.

There was a long pause, then The Little Man replied: "We'll see about that. I still have Caroline...and the baby."

"Yeah," Devlin said. "I suppose we'll see after all." Then, he flicked the cell phone shut and broke the connection. He had nothing more to say to the little bastard; what he did have to say, he would say to him personally. Then, he would kill him.

He threw the cell phone back into the truck, its usefulness over.

Joseph groaned and moved. He laid back in the seat, revealing a bloody face with a long, deep gash that ran in a semi-

circle along his forehead. He had struck the steering wheel so hard that it had bent it over.

“Help me,” he whispered in a weak, pathetic voice.

Devlin stood there. “I am helping you,” he said. “And it’s more than you deserve.”

Then, he walked away. Twenty feet or so from the wreckage, he paused long enough to finish it. He concentrated on the truck’s gas tank for a moment, and that was all it took.

The truck exploded.

Joseph’s screams filled the night air for a moment. Then, blessed silence.

Devlin walked away without turning. There was nothing he wanted to see there. He had come for vengeance and he had shown mercy, only to have it betrayed. Joseph had chosen his path, and he had died for it.

The Little Man would do the same. Before dawn, Devlin would kill him, if he could.

The sound of sirens in the distance brought Devlin no cause for concern. He reached into his pocket, thumbed open a vial of Green Pus, and drank it down. It burned, and the burn was the most satisfying thing he knew.

It felt like Hell had come to him.

Down the block, Devlin opened the car door and slid in. Rosetta looked at him. “Did he have to die so horribly?”

Devlin stared at the carnage he had caused. It looked beautiful. Maybe it was the Pus; maybe it was the situation. Regardless, he felt nothing. No remorse for what he had done. In his eyes, the punishment had fit the crime.

He turned and looked at Rosetta.

“Yes,” he said coldly.