

THE  
UNLEASHED

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UNLEASHED

BENTZ DEYO



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THE UNLEASHED: A NOVEL  
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*For Dave,  
my friend, who still teaches me courage every day.*



*“Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there,  
wondering, fearing, doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal  
ever dared to dream before.”*

EDGAR ALLEN POE





# CHAPTER 1

A man shot a burst of energy from his palm. The force hit the boy square in the chest, propelling him through a stretch of woodlands until he was flung out onto paved road. The back of his neck struck asphalt first, as he skidded into the curb, the road curving down a hill out of sight.

The boy could hear footsteps, many of them, scuffling up the hill. Through the haze of dizzy stars, he dragged himself to his feet and stumbled behind a nearby sidewalk garbage can.

Peering through the garbage can's metal mesh, the boy watched about fifteen figures approach. They were draped in trench coats as black as the sky had surely been an hour ago, although now, from below the horizon, the sun was lending the sky some light and a little color.

"Keep your eyes peeled," a short, dumpy man growled, glaring at the woods from which the boy had been flung. "Gideon wants this kid found."

"He wants this *prospect* found," a taller man with a razor-sharp goatee said. "But Kavitch is right, everybody, the boy could be nearby."

"How do we know that?" a third man asked, big and blond.

“The prospect disappeared from his home here in Harbing. Vanished into the air right in front of his brother and a girl of Light. Those two are being brought into headquarters now.”

The boy huddled closer to the garbage can, hugging his knees to keep them from shaking. Could he be this “prospect” these people were talking about? Why the hell couldn’t he remember anything? His home in Harbing? A brother? A...

“Girl of Light, Flint?” asked the blond man.

The man with the goatee nodded. “Daughter of the goon we got locked up in the dungeons. Seems to be a family affair.”

“What’s the prospect look like?” a black-haired woman with a hoarse voice asked.

“We go by his hands,” Flint said, peering at a spot near the middle of the road. “He’s got white markings on his thumbs and index fingers.”

The boy went straight to his hands and his heart lurched. Identical white, thick-banded scars curved from the tips of his thumbs to the tips of his index fingers. Two things struck him at once: he was some sort of prospect wanted by people in black trench coats, and he had no memory at all, no sense of identity.

He was also losing blood, which he could feel spilling down the back of his neck, running a wet warm trail between his shoulder blades.

“Flin’, wha’ you lookin’ a’?” someone masked by the others asked.

The boy followed Flint’s line of sight as Flint moved to the yellow lines, bent down, and put his finger to a small, shiny, dark pool. With a jolt of panic, the boy grabbed the back of his head.

“Blood,” Flint said, as it dripped off his finger.

The last thing the boy saw peeking through the mesh wiring was a flash of Flint’s palm before the garbage can blasted apart in an explosion of debris and metal shards. When the boy was able to blink his eyes open, he found himself completely surrounded by a circle of black trench coats. Facing him stood Flint.

“Gideon’s looking for you, buddy,” Flint said, his face darkening. “Believes you’re the culprit who foiled last night’s plans.”

*Plans?* The boy thought, searching for a way out of the circle but knowing it wasn't there. *What plans?*

"Was it you?" Flint asked.

The boy shrugged.

"You don't know?" Flint scratched his razor-sharp goatee. "What did you do last night?"

The boy shook his head.

"What *do* you know, buddy?"

"Nothing." The boy's gaze darted around the faces he could see. No kind eyes. No smiles. Heart hammering, he forced his face calm. "Just what I've heard from you."

A tall black man beside Flint grinned, all gums, no teeth. "Then why aren't you scared of us, handsome?"

"Quiet!" Flint shouted, drawing his ring finger to the side of his head. His eyes widened. The boy's extremities went numb. "Another telemast coming in, boys. Seems the prospect's status has upgraded. Enemy to be taken in alive." Without a breath, Flint added, "The order's from Gideon himself."

The boy felt fear shiver through the group, as each trench-coater raised beam-straight arms in unison, every palm faced right at him.

"Take him now, boys," Flint said, "before he vanishes, as he's apt to do."

With a quick swirl of dark movement, a hood was stuffed over the boy's head. Firm hands were gripped around his wrists and ankles.

The boy could see nothing but black.

## CHAPTER 2

Fluctuating in and out of consciousness, back and forth between full darkness and a thick grogginess where she sensed shadows of movement and blanketed light, Eloa tiredly wondered not if she was stuck in a dream or a nightmare, but whether this reality would be dreamlike or nightmarish if the fog were to clear.

“How far’d you stick the needle in, Cabus? She can barely open her eyes.”

“She’ll be fine, Samara; it was a pinch.”

Eloa didn’t recognize the voices. She was too sleepy, like her head was full of cotton.

“To the bone?” the woman, Samara, asked with a mixture of annoyance and panic. “Our orders didn’t say induce a coma.”

“She won’t slip that deep. She’ll be fully alert by...”

The voice of the man, Cabus, faded as Eloa fell back into blackness, swimming there until consciousness returned and reality was again weighed down by whatever drug they had administered. She was lying flat, it was dark, and she was moving, one captor by her head and the other by her feet. There was also soft whimpering beside her. She was not the only captive. She flopped her woozy head toward the whimpering, but slipped away again. Something

of a memory came to her: a shiny beige oval hovering above her, a face, a large face, with long locks of golden hair.

“Dad,” Eloi muttered. “Where are you? You okay?”

“What’d she say?” the voice by her head asked. Samara. Reality. Moving through the dark.

“Told you it’s not a coma,” Cabus said, gloating. Eloi tried to blink in her surroundings. Was it a tunnel? Where were they? What was this?

“What do you want from me?” a boy next to her screamed. “Wh-wh-what was I supposed to do?”

“Now, now, Holt pup,” Cabus said, his voice grinning. “Be still.”

“Leam was there! I did my job! I was roping him in and next second he was gone. How was I supposed to see that coming if no one else did?”

“Take it up with Gideon, Zach,” Samara said.

*Zach?* Eloi thought, battling the black clouds of the drugs for clarity. *Zach? Zach?* The thought of the name tasted bad.

“No one *told* me he was a prospect, whatever the hell that means!” Zach shouted with desperation. “No one *told* me he had powers. No one *told* me he could disappear into thin air. And I’m better than him anyway! Can’t you see—”

“I said take it up with Gideon, you little shit,” Samara snapped. “Another word and I’ll tear your tongue out.”

*They have Zach, too, Eloi remembered. Zach Holt. That’s right—they got us from Holt Manor. Zach dragged me there. I remember now. And Leam... Did he get away?*

*Leam... Leam...*

Blackness took her completely again, reality gone. The memory oval returned, smaller this time, paler, no golden hair. This face, also a man, was her dad’s age, her dad’s friend...

“Porlo,” Eloi moaned.

“Did she say...?”

Samara, even through Eloi’s haze, sounded stunned.

“Porlo,” Cabus said, sounding equally baffled. “I heard it too.”

“Porlo,” Eloa moaned again, opening her eyes. Bursts of red torch flames above her head illuminated patches of stone wall as they moved.

“How would she know Porlo, Cabus? She’s of the Light—by the look of her she might not have even purified yet.”

“Don’t know. But I’m sure Gideon—”

Pain suddenly rippled through Eloa’s body. She bit back a scream, her teeth digging into her lip.

“Her body’s fighting the injection—can you see it?” Cabus asked, sounding amused. “She’ll sleep hard soon, then come to. Yes, then she’ll come to.”

“We’re nearly there anyway,” Samara said. “Her first. Cell A.”

Through the pain, fear crippled Eloa’s mind. She could only grasp onto the horrible thought that she was now a prisoner, most likely at Darkness Headquarters, and her dad, since Leam had deserted her, she remembered now, was probably dead.

“And the Holt pup?” Cabus asked Samara.

“To his mother.”

Eloa closed her eyes from the pockets of red fire, trying to turn off her mind. Her pain was abating, as was the little strength she had been able to muster. Soon her eyelids grew heavy, and the brightness of the flames beyond them dimmed. The world went dark, the sounds of her captors’ footsteps faded, and her last thought was that whatever was to be the horror show she’d experience here, she’d wake up to it.