



**A Cautionary Tale**  
Kadrey, Richard

**Published:** 2002

**Categorie(s):** Fiction, Fantasy, Short Stories

**Source:** <http://www.infinitematrix.net/stories/shortshorts/kadrey23.html>

### **About Kadrey:**

Richard Kadrey is a novelist, freelance writer, and photographer based in San Francisco. Kadrey's first novel, *Metrophage*, was published in hardcover in 1988 by Victor Gollancz Ltd., and went on to various other American and foreign printings in paperback. Mac Tonnies' *Cyberpunk/Postmodern Book Reviews* calls *Metrophage* "one of the quintessential 1980s cyberpunk novels," going on to describe "a gritty acid-trip through an ultraviolent L.A. where nothing is what it seems... . Alongside novels such as [William Gibson's] *Neuromancer* and Lewis Shiner's debut novel *Frontera*, *Metrophage* helped establish the cyberpunk aesthetic: relentless, paranoid and playfully cynical." Kadrey's second novel, *Kamikaze L'Amour*, is described by the same source as "mesmerizing... a surreal (and distinctly Ballardian) account of synesthesia and mutant desire set in the jungle-choked ruins of L.A." Kadrey's short story *Carbon Copy: Meet the First Human Clone* was filmed as *After Amy*. The publisher website, Amazon booksellers, and other sources list a July 15, 2007 publication date for Kadrey's next book, *Butcher Bird: A Novel Of The Dominion* (Night Shade Books). Other works include collaborative graphic novels and over 50 published short stories. His non-fiction books as a writer and/or editor include *The Catalog of Tomorrow* (Que/TechTV Publishing, 2002), *From Myst to Riven* (Hyperion, 1997), *The Covert Culture Sourcebook* and its sequel (St. Martin's Press, New York, 1993 and 1994); Kadrey also hosted a live interview show on Hotwired in the 1990s called *Covert Culture*. He was an editor at print magazines *Shift* and *Future Sex*, and at online magazines *Signum* and *Stim*. He has published articles about art, culture and technology in publications including *Wired*, *Omni*, *Mondo 2000*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *SF Weekly*, *Ear*, *Artforum*, *ArtByte*, *Bookforum*, *World Art*, *Whole Earth Review*, *Reflex*, *Science Fiction Eye*, and *Interzone*. Source: Wikipedia

### **Also available on Feedbooks for Kadrey:**

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They were taking down Black Boars along Hell's western edge. Black Boar was what they liked to call the horned demons at the hunting lodge. That or Long Pig. No matter how many times they heard it, it always made them laugh. There was a lot of drinking at the lodge in those days.

It was old Tom Atell's turn to perform the annual rites of Assumption. Celibate, alcohol-free, and a dedicated scholar for a year, Tom seemed positively eager to bleed himself and get to the killing. He mixed his blood with swamp herbs within a mandala, and Hell opened up. The hunters grabbed their guns, food, and coolers full of beer and headed out.

Two days later, the group had split into three separate hunting parties, meeting back at camp each night to tell war stories and clean the gristle from their trophy horns.

Pete Winnetka told the rest how his group hadn't seen a single demon that day, but had found some ruins over a ridge to the north. He and his buddies had approached carefully, wary of traps, but none of their charms had vibrated to indicate danger. They didn't venture far inside, but they didn't have to. Pete and his boys showed the others pocketfuls of what appeared to be diamonds, each marked with a character in what Tom Atell verified was a kind of angelic script.

They set out for the ruins the next morning, leaving their supplies and stacks of cleaned horns at camp. It was hard going. The switchbacks up the ridge were hell on Benny Gershon's trick knee, and, when Norm O'Farelley got off a potshot at a passing demon, he almost took a header into the clouds below.

The ruins were less impressive than the men had hoped. Most were looking forward to some crumbling Camelot, but what they found looked more like a branch bank at a burned-out mini-mall. Still, the lure of heavenly diamonds led them inside. When they'd filled their pockets and knapsacks with everything on the ground, they got out their Mag-Lights and descended the rotting wooden stairs Tom Atell found in the back of the place.

There was fetid standing water at the bottom. Rows upon rows of metal storage bins, like safety deposit boxes, stretched in all directions into the gloom. In the distance, one whole row was twisted where the floor had collapsed. Benny Gershon hobbled over to the nearest bin and banged it open with the butt of his rifle. Light flooded out. Covering his eyes with his hand, he cracked open another. Again, there was a burst of light. Something fell into the water. The hunting party crowded around

to see what had fallen. It was one of the diamonds. "They're stars," said Tom Atell, remembering something in one of the books he'd been studying all year. "These are new ones. The ones we found outside must be old, burned-out ones." The others mumbled in agreement.

Pete Winnetka called from the other end of the place, and the men ran to the sound of his voice. There was a big vault door, half-open, a darkened room beyond. Tom Atell was the first to squeeze in. The others came in behind. In the center of the room was nothing. A big dark ball of it, like a miniature black hole. It absorbed light and seemed to suck all the sound from the room. The men could barely hear each other.

"What the hell is it?" asked Norm O'Farelley, and reached the barrel of his gun toward it. Something moved inside the bubble, enormous and reptilian.

Tom Atell was already backing toward the door. "Leave it, boys. I don't like the smell of this place," he said, but no one could hear him. When O'Farelley's gun touched the edge of the nothingness, it sucked him in. He crumbled like wadded paper, all splintered bone and jetting blood, but the grip of the nothingness was absolute and it didn't leave an atom of Norm behind. Then one-by-one, it laid into the rest of the hunting party.

Tom Atell was out of the vault and running. He didn't look back. He knew his buddies were all dead. It was too bad he had to let them die, but when dumbass Norm woke up whatever the hell lived in the vault, Tom knew this was his only chance to get away. And he almost made it. He was halfway up the rickety stairs when the thing grabbed his leg and began pulling him inside. From this new vantage point—eyeball to gullet—Tom could see its great crocodile head and maw. Sliding past its teeth, he even remembered its name. Ammut. The one Egyptians called the Eater of Souls. Heading for its stomach, Tom wished he'd studied better, but the whole celibacy thing had been too much of a strain. It wasn't fair, though. He'd only lost control those couple or three times...

To this day, demon children play in the ruins of the old haunted vault. The brave ones will even venture down a few steps on the wobbly wooden stairs. When they misbehave or won't finish their dinner, demon parents tell their children that they'd better be good or the mortal hunters will creep from the vaults and into their rooms at night to chop off their horns.

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*Butcher Bird*

Spyder Lee is a happy man who lives in San Francisco and owns a tattoo shop. One night an angry demon tries to bite his head off before he's saved by a stranger. The demon infected Spyder with something awful - the truth. He can suddenly see the world as it really is: full of angels and demons and monsters and monster-hunters. A world full of black magic and mysteries. These are the Dominions, parallel worlds full of wonder, beauty and horror. The Black Clerks, infinitely old and infinitely powerful beings whose job it is to keep the Dominions in balance, seem to have new interests and a whole new agenda. Dropped into the middle of a conflict between the Black Clerks and other forces he doesn't fully understand, Spyder finds himself looking for a magic book with the blind swordswoman who saved him. Their journey will take them from deserts to lush palaces, to underground caverns, to the heart of Hell itself.



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