

BOOK I

BOOK TITLE GOES TO

HERE

Style Eight
(Fiction Book Style)

Author

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Atlantis was a continent-island that was destroyed thousands of years ago by a cataclysmic explosion in the Atlantic Ocean. Many believers claim that the Caribbean islands are remnants of Atlantis. And the island of Haiti-Bobio—a spiritual and magical place—is one of them.

Atlantis was a place where people had attained great spiritual heights. Many authorities on the subject have articulated that the Bermuda Triangle is a portal to their unseen world under the Ocean where most of the continent submerged. That Triangle covers a large area of the Caribbean Sea, encompassing Miami, Puerto Rico, and Bermuda.

Each of the islands in that region has inherited some characteristics of Atlantis, including Haiti-Bobio, which was originally inhabited by indigenous Tainos—a very spiritual people who had many magical rites. Later, the Africans brought with them their voodoo, which compounded the island's magical and spiritual uniqueness.

The island has many highly mystical sites. The Haiti-Bobians would always tell their legendary stories of the magical powers of their waters. People would swear to have heard drums playing under lakes and even under the sea. Some claim to have heard voices as well.

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PROLOGUE

Two old souls had been reincarnating and killing one another, around the world, for thousands of years. The reason for that was a rivalry that had started on Atlantis. As Atlanteans, they possessed mystical powers associated with the lost continent that they carried with them through the millenniums. Each life would leave a residual imprint of the culture, philosophy, and magic of the places where they had reincarnated. Neither one would ever remember his previous life on Earth, but for some reason, they would always attract each other, and the curse would take effect after they became friends.

Over 200 years ago, the souls lived on the outskirts of Miragoâne on the island of Haiti-Bohio. In this life, Benepère Saint-Ange, the good soul, reincarnated a few years before his nemesis, Sam Mauvais, the soul who had turned evil, and whom he had killed on Atlantis for raping and killing his female counterpart. Before vanishing into rapid disintegration, Sam vowed to persecute Benepère and his family through the ages. Through their millennial reincarnations, he had killed Sam more times than Sam had killed him.

In this new life, Sam Mauvais was a white overseer on a plantation in Léogâne. An assassin. A very dangerous man who earned the title of

“Mauvais” for the atrocities that he had unleashed on the slaves. From his right ear to his mouth, a scar was the clear depiction of the hatred he enjoyed among the slave population. One of them revolted and almost killed him before he became marooned and joined the Haitian revolution.

Having worked for a long time under the hot Caribbean sun, Sam had lost his skin's paleness and could easily pass as a mulatto. His Atlantean heritage afforded him the tall and imposing physiognomy of the lost continent whose inhabitants were giants compared to contemporary men. He was over six feet tall with brown hair and a kind of piercing cat-like eyes.

When the revolution was over, Sam used a potion to make himself look even darker and began to incite the former slaves to go around stealing the gold of the whites in Léogâne. He gathered a small group and went on a rampage, killing white families to steal their wealth. The blacks were not thinking of wealth. They were escaping to the mountains to celebrate their freedom. The many years of atrocities they had endured under the ruthlessness of slavery were behind them.

Sam showed no mercy. He murdered his former boss, raped his wife and daughter, and stole his gold. One night as Sam led a band of blacks on a killing spree, the former slave, who had given him the scar, was among them. He didn't recognize Sam at first because of his disguise, and his new beard covered his scar. But during an attack at the house of a wealthy white planter, he yelled out, “Their destiny is to die. Me, I make my destiny.”

The man stopped. The day he was facing death came to his mind, Sam's phrase resonated vividly in his head. “Your destiny was to be a slave, and you want to shape your destiny. Today, your destiny is to die. Me, I make my destiny.” He turned to another and whispered, “That's Mauvais.”

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The other one repeated out loud. “Mauvais! I heard about that guy. We should kill him.” Sam didn’t wait to hear anything more. He ran out, took his horse, and stole the horse that carried the gold they were going to use for profit-sharing later. Sam knew that the slaves had means of communicating with each other; he fled through the mountains, heading south where the mulattoes were in the majority. He traveled mostly at night and would sleep during the day in caves or wherever he deemed safe enough. The killer feared being killed. Sam knew that his death would have been a festivity.

One night during his escape, he encountered a band of sorcerers who were having a ceremony. Since he was always bloodthirsty, he joined them and participated in the sacrifice. That was enough to secure his initiation in the Association of Sorcery that same night. Based on the belief of shaping his destiny, he felt that the area would be ideal for him to make a life. He settled in a small village at the foot of the mountain on the outskirts of Miragoâne. His new friends told him of a parcel of land with a house for sale by none other than his rival, Benepère Saint-Ange, a plantation owner.

Being a wealthy man now, Sam purchased the house, but Benepère never talked to him. He kept his distance. Sam’s friends also warned him to stay away from Benepère Saint-Ange, who had acquired so much wisdom and knowledge that he was not at all attracted to Sam for the rivalry to enact. He was very much older in this life and was preparing himself to cross on to the other side. He had a house on the outskirts of the village, but he practically lived in his small cabin on the mountain. No one knew of his ties to the lost continent.

As a wizard, Benepère had the respect of people, sorcerers, and

demons alike. There was never an overseer on his plantation. His subjects were not properties, and he fed them well. He would allow them to stay home if they were sick. No one would rape any female slaves on his plantation, and he would never separate the families either. After a certain time, he would set them free. As a result, he was not very wealthy and didn't care. Aside from the slaves, he also had very close ties to the Taïnos of the Xaragua kingdom of Queen Anacaona. His wife, now deceased, was a Taïno. Benepère, being the son of one of his father's female slave concubines, was not white, but no one knew. They accepted him as one. He enjoyed all the privileges and grew up with the whites.

His white friends couldn't understand why he treated his slaves with such respect. When they tried to reason with him, he would tell them, "I know something you don't. Life must go on. I must be free."

"But you're free," they would reply.

"It's all an illusion. We're not truly free."

"Ah, you and your wisdom. Me, I am free, and I am going to make the best of this life while I live it."

"Go ahead! I am doing the same in my own way."

He was ninety-nine years old when he passed away. This time, during his traverse on Earth, he had done so much good with so much love for people—white, blacks, and Taïnos alike. His unconditional love and his good deeds put him above all evil, above the curse. He crossed over untainted and unbound to the material world. According to Atlantean law, it was his final reincarnation into the physical world. The Elders of Atlantis were happy that the rivalry had ended eventually.

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Biishou Naï was a young Taïno under the protection of Benepère Saint-Ange. He acted like a mentally compromised human, but everyone in the village ignored him even though he could sometimes be as mischievous as a child. Sam never liked him, but he wouldn't dare touch him while Benepère was alive. However, soon after his death, Sam, looking for notoriety, began to exert his power in the village. He told the Taïnos that he didn't want Biishou running around the village anymore, and they ignored him. One day Biishou bumped against Sam and dirtied the white shirt he had just put on. Sam became irate. He got a musket from his house and shot Biishou. It was like a part of the village also died with Biishou. The whole village came and gathered around silently, staring at his body on the ground as though they were hoping to bring him back to life. But Sam, with insouciance, went about his business. The tribal chief came and took the remains back to their tribe. Many people followed the corpse like a funeral. That's how Sam began to make a name for himself and earned everyone's fear and hatred.

1

TWO YEARS LATER

1809

The civil war between the predominantly black north of the island, and the south, a mulatto-populated region, inflicted a major scar in the Haitian-Bohio people's hearts. But the nineteen-year-old mulatto, Lea Saint-Ange, could not have known or remembered such difficult times to warrant fear in her life. She had stubbornly chosen, against all warnings from her parents, to venture out in the village after dark, not even fearing the sorcerer-predator, Sam Mauvais, who had increasingly gotten notoriety since the death of her grandfather, the great wizard, Benepère Saint-Ange.

Lea was standing in front of her cousin's house, talking and giggling. Her aunt, Elvire, yelled from inside, "Lea, I am not going to tell you again. Go home! It's dark out. You're a young woman. You can't be walking around the village after dark."

The war of independence had been over a few years earlier, and Lea

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fearlessly insisted on walking around the village in the evening, not thinking of what could be lurking in the dark. Her aunt, Elvire, had many reasons for saying that, but Lea didn't see the danger or anything else.

"I'm leaving now, aunt Elvire. Bye, Annabelle." Lea ran away. She was slim and tall with brown eyes and straight brown hair tied in a ponytail. She weighed about a hundred-ten pounds, and her dress, hanging on her loosely, was below her knees.

Lea could ride a horse to her cousin's house, but she preferred to walk. To her, getting the horse saddled for such a short distance was a big deal, even though she wouldn't be the one doing it. Her parents never took issue with her for going on foot. The danger was her coming home after dark.

Besides the danger, the older people, who lived during slavery time, raised their children with discipline. They had to keep some specific standards. Normally, a young lady had to be respectable and well-mannered. Walking around the village alone after dark was one of the causes that could make her lose that respect and impede her chance of finding a good husband—a mulatto husband.

Aside from farming and being an exporter to Europe, there was not much for anyone to do. A young woman's main goal was to find a good husband. Surprisingly, Lea was carefree and didn't have marriage on her mind. *"I have been living in the village since birth," she thought. "And my family has been here for over a century. Everyone knew each other. What could happen to me? I have been going to my aunt's house since I was a little girl, and nothing wrong had ever happened. Why now?"* That was her reasoning, not taking into account that times had changed, and there could always be a first time.

When she reached the center of the village near the pathway that led to her house, Jacob and Jonas, two old friends, were still standing outside, talking. They were blacks, who had been free since Toussaint Louverture governed the whole island, and were owners of their homes and the parcel of land they cultivated.

“Mademoiselle Lea!” Jonas called. He was a medium height sixty-nine-year-old man whose hair was completely white.

“Yes, Mr. Jonas.” She walked over to him.

“Listen, I knew you since you were a little girl, and I know your whole family. It’s not wise to be walking around the village after dark. The other day I saw that evil man over there eying you the wrong way.”

“Thank you, Mr. Jonas. My aunt told me the same thing. I will not do that anymore.” She turned around and left.

Even Jonas saw the danger, but not Lea. Although she respectfully agreed not to walk around after dark anymore, she didn’t mean it.

“I am glad you told her. You know, if her grandfather were still alive, he wouldn’t dare look at her,” commented Jacob, a tall and skinny sixty-five-year-old whose gray hair receded to the center of his head.

“Oh yeah, her grandfather was a great wizard. Look!” he remarked.

While Lea passed by Sam Mauvais’ house, the notorious evil man came out of his yard and grabbed her arm. “Come here! I need to talk to you.” He was already in his fifties.

“Hey,” she yelled with her shrill voice as she pulled her arm away from him. “Who do you think you are? Don’t you dare touch me again? If you do, I’ll tell my brother.”

“Your brother is nobody. Remember, your grandpa is dead.” Benepère Saint-Ange died two years earlier. Sam thought she was easy prey.

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Jacob and Jonas were staring at him. "You see that," Jonas said.

Sam turned around and said with arrogance, "Mind your business!" He entered his house. "I must have her. I'm going to have her no matter what. I must mix my blood with the blood of a good wizard like her grandfather."

His house, decorated with an array of macabre artifacts, inflicted fear in the heart of villagers. A bull's head, hanging right above his front porch, represented the front yard's watchful evil spirit. A skull hung on each side of the front gate, played the role of gate watchers. People were afraid to look in the direction of his house. And mothers would scold their children if they pointed their fingers at the house.

Marcel Saint-Ange, Lea's father, and his family continued to live in the house left to him by his father, Benepère Saint-Ange, on the outskirts of the village, which had a paradisiacal appearance; a pristine, greenish beauty that the villagers' agricultural farming yielded. A multitude of trees canopied over the land and enclosed the village, lending a sacred and mystical mood to it. That plethora of trees and plantations would leave a heavy coat of morning moisture, giving it a slight feeling of hibernal weather to which only the soothing morning sun could offer relief. Throughout the day, the trees continued to provide a tropical cooling breeze.

Marcel and his wife, Lanise, were sitting on their front porch, having their regular nocturnal conversations. There was no electricity in the country, but the starlit sky and the moonlight provided enough clarity for people to navigate the tiny roadways.

Leon, a wizard in the making, came to the door brusquely. "Pap, you have to stop Lea from coming home after dark. I have a bad feeling about this." He walked back inside. The art of wizardry gave him the ability

to feel that something was wrong, to feel the danger coming.

With the Saint-Ange look bestowed upon him, the twenty-three-year-old Leon was also very tall—a gift from his Atlantean lineage. His long brown hair almost covered his light brown eyes. A well-shaped mustache and a clean-shaven face revealed the handsome man he was, thanks to his multiracial heritage. Unlike his father, he was impulsive and hot-tempered. Luckily, his grandfather had started teaching him the art of wizardry at a young age. Otherwise, he would've been unruly like any of the common colonizers.

In about five minutes, Lea came walking through the gate. Marcel got up and walked over to her. “Look,” he whispered. “Your brother was just complaining about you. I told you to stop coming home after dark. When your cousin comes here, she always goes home before dark. Why can't you do the same?” At sixty-seven years of age, the six-foot gray-haired senior looked very robust but was a quiet and peaceful man. His mother entrusted him with some of the Tāino traits. He was Benepère's only child.

“Nothing is going to happen to me, papa. Everyone knows me in the village. Except for that evil man, Sam, who is being fresh with me.”

“You see, your brother says he had a bad feeling. Look, your grandfather is dead. I don't want trouble with that evil man.”

“Okay! Mr. Jonas told me the same thing.”

“Good. I hope you listen.”

“I am not going to do that anymore. Anyway, I don't know why everybody is afraid of that man.” Lea continued to ignore the danger stubbornly.

“Sam used to respect my father because he was a great wizard. Me, I am no wizard, and I don't want your brother to start a fight with Sam. He

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has a bad temper, and he is not ready.”

“He told me my brother is nobody.”

“You hear that. Stay away from the village when it’s dark, please.”

“Yes, papa.”

“Don’t mention anything to Leon about Sam. You hear?”

“Yes!” She went inside.

Marcel went back and joined his wife, Lanise, who watched and listened silently to the conversation. Like most girls, Lea would always argue with her mother, which strained their relationship. Their conversations would be limited.

Lanise was sixty-three years old with salt and pepper hair, but her weight of nearly two hundred pounds didn’t complement her height of only 5’7. “Now, I want to see how long she waits before she starts again. One of these days, something will happen to her for not listening,” she complained.

“That child is too stubborn for me. You hear what Leon said. I hope my dad protects her against that man.” They sat there quietly, looking at the stars.

After a week of not seeing Lea, the eighteen-year-old Annabelle came to visit her cousin one afternoon. She was related to Lea on her maternal side, but she had the tallness inherited from the Atlantean roots. She had a set of bushy curly brown hair and also wore a pair of light brown eyes.

Obedying her mother’s orders, Annabelle wouldn’t stay past five o’clock. She knew that her mother, while being bedridden, wouldn’t allow

her to come home after dark. Her father died three years earlier, but her mother—disregarding the fact that Annabelle was almost six feet tall and well built—had been very hard on her and her brother, Jules, before becoming ill. Now, Jules was the head of the household. He continued to oversee the plantations and coffee business.

Lea incredulously decided to walk Annabelle back halfway and fearlessly ignored the predator's threat. When they reached the proximity of his house, Sam approached them boldly and said, "Where have you been, Lea? I haven't seen you in a week." His words confirmed that he had been watching and waiting for her.

"I stayed away because I didn't want to see your ugly face. You make me sick."

Jacob and Jonas, who would always meet outside every afternoon after returning from the field, started laughing. Sam became angry.

"You two, if you don't mind your business, I'll teach you a lesson... like I'm going to teach that Lea when she comes back." He ran inside his house.

"Jacob, go tell her to go back home right now."

Jonas entered his house, and Jacob ran after her. "Mademoiselle Lea, go back home right now. He said he was going to teach you a lesson. Hurry! Your grandfather's not here to defend you, girl."

"Lea, listen to Mr. Jacob. Go! If Jules is home, I'll tell him to follow you right away. Go!"

"Okay!" Lea took off running, but she was out of luck. Sam was already outside, waiting. When Lea came running by, he jumped in front of her and blew a magical powder in her face. She stopped and began to cough very hard. She held her chest, trying to gasp for air. He stood in front

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of her, smiling ironically. She slapped him and stood there, unable to move, shaking her head, fighting the drug not to take effect. Unfortunately, it was too late. She became disoriented and groggy. Sam dragged her inside his house.

Jonas was, at his window, watching and saw what happened. “Oh my God, what do I do?” He ran out and went to Jacob’s house. “Jacob, Jacob,” he yelled.

“What’s wrong? Why are you screaming like that?”

“He blew something on her face and... and she became dizzy, and he took her inside his house.”

“Let’s go to her cousin’s house quickly to let them know!”

“We can’t meddle in this. I want no problem with that man.”

“Why did you come to tell me then?”

“You have to know.”

“Okay, I’ll go alone. I’ve known this child since she was a little girl...” Jacob began to mumble as he started jogging away.

Simone, Leon’s wife, a twenty-year-old mulatto woman, was sitting outside with her husband and her in-laws. Suddenly, an irresistible drowsiness of sleep overtook her. With a long-drawn face, she dragged herself to her room and went to bed while her husband remained outside, talking.

The old wooden French style house, painted in white, had a well-polished parquet floor. It was not a mansion, but it had five bedrooms, a living room, a dining room, and two toilets. The furnishings and exquisite

amenities were from Europe. Outside, in the back, there were the kitchen and the servants' quarters. It was all passed down to Benepère by his father.

Simone's tiresome body fell onto the bed under the mosquito net. Immediately, her beautiful brown eyes shut into a profound sleep, and she was breathing heavily. Her features portrayed the gorgeous mixture of the two races as her long black curly hair laid spread on her back. In her muumuu, her one hundred and twenty-pound body revealed the firmness of a country girl.

Simone entered the dream world immediately. She saw herself standing in front of the house and Lea running towards her.

"Don't come near me," she said firmly. "You're filthy." But Lea, who looked very clean, continued to approach her with a severe frown. But out of nowhere, her grandmother, a frail little mulatto woman with long white hair, appeared and stood in front of her like a guardian angel.

"Grandma, what are you doing here?" Simone asked.

"You have to protect your unborn child from her. Don't let her touch your stomach."

"I'm not pregnant."

"How do you know?"

In the meantime, Lea stood at a distance staring at them with tight fists and the same grimacing face.

"Don't sleep! Wake up!"

Simone jumped out of bed and ran to give her husband, and the future grandparents the news of the pregnancy.

"What's the matter, Simone?"

"I am pregnant, Leon."

Marcel and Lanise looked at each other and expressed their joy

with a mile-wide smile.

“How do you know?”

“My grandmother just told me in my dream.”

He got up and kissed her.

“Congratulations, honey!”

“Oh, where’s Lea?”

“Pap, what’s Lea still doing out?” He turned to his father and asked.

“She was with her cousin,” his mother replied.

“I told her over and over again to stop walking around after dark.”

“I think something is wrong with her.”

“Why do you say that?” Leon asked.

“I dreamt of her too.”

Lea walked in the yard at the same time with her clothes torn and blood running down her legs.

“Oh God, Lea,” her mother screamed.

Her father got up and ran to her. “I told you so many times not to walk alone in the dark,” Marcel complained.

Leon walked over to her, shaking with fury. “Who did that to you?” he asked firmly.

“Sam.”

“I’ll teach him a lesson once and for all.” His father quickly grabbed his arm.

“Don’t go, son! That man is evil.”

“Why is everybody afraid of him,” he screamed. “He puts fear in the mind of everyone in the village. I am not afraid of him.” He pulled his arm out of his father’s grip and walked away.

“What are you standing here for? Go after him!” Lanise pushed her husband.

Marcel scarily began to tiptoe behind his son. He paid no attention to his father and continued to march decisively. They encountered Annabelle and Jules who were coming to warn them. “Leon, you know that Sam got her in his house,” Jules said. He was tall and muscularly heavy.

“How do you know about that?”

“Mr. Jacob and Mr. Jonas came to the house and told us that Sam blew something on her face when she was passing by and took her into his house.”

“She’s in the house. I am going to kill Sam.”

“I am sorry, cousin,” Jules said with preoccupation. “You think that’s a good idea to fight that man?”

“You’re afraid of him too, like my pap. Me, I’m not.” He turned around and left them there.

Leon arrived in front of Sam’s house and yelled, “SAM!” No one came out. “COME OUT, SAM. YOU EVIL COWARD! YOU KEEP SCARING PEOPLE IN THE VILLAGE. ME, I AM NOT AFRAID OF YOU. COME OUT NOW! I WANT THE WHOLE VILLAGE TO KNOW THAT YOU’RE NOTHING BUT A FAKE.”

“Pssst, psst!” his father kept calling from afar. Annabelle and Jules were standing next to him, watching.

“Pssst, psst!”

“Leave me alone, pap. I want that lousy fake to come out and respond for what he has done to my sister.”

Sam knew that the silence of the evening would carry Leon’s voice to the far end of the village, and the villagers would be listening, which

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meant that his reputation was at risk of being tarnished. He came out wearing a long red robe decorated with a few zodiac signs after a while, holding a staff in his right hand.

“You see... I kept calling you,” Marcel complained to his son in fear.

“Not one more word out of you, pap.”

“You want to die, boy?” Sam asked with confidence and arrogance.

“Not me, coward! You’re going to die tonight because you’re wrong. You’re at fault for abusing my sister.”

His father looked up towards the heavens and made the sign of the cross.

“Your evil powers will be neutralized tonight.”

Sam waved the staff at him and threw him on his back a few feet away. His father put his hand over his eyes. “God save him, please!”

“That’s all you’ve got, coward?” Leon got up and started coming at him with resolve. He gave Leon a quizzical look and waved the staff at him again and again. Leon contracted, pressing forward as he slid just a few inches back each time.

There were no lamp poles in the village, but the moon afforded the area with enough light for the villagers to watch the duel. His father slightly parted his fingers and looked through one eye to see if his son was still standing. When he saw him moving forward, he took his hand off and remained with his mouth ajar, watching anxiously.

Sam was extremely astounded. Unaware that Leon had powers, he made the mistake of believing that one strike of his magical staff would have been sufficient to vanquish his young opponent. Now, seeing otherwise, he worriedly took a couple of steps back. It was already too late

for him to win this fight. The wicked influence of fear was creeping upon him. He would have run, but the fear of losing his pride and having to walk through the village with his head down held him back. The villagers would mock him.

His only chance was to harness all the powers of the infernal world and hope for a victory. Unfortunately, he could not. He waved his staff again and again, but Leon kept coming. His magic would probably have been more effective on a profane but not Leon. Sam was a sorcerer, not a wizard like his opponent. Leon pulled him a few feet away from his gate to prevent him from running back inside to regain his powers. With Sam's staff, he began to give him a beating. Each time he hit him, Sam bounced like a ball, screaming, "Please! Give me a chance to make it up to your sister."

"I don't trust you. No one in the village trusts you. You're evil."

The tiny village had one main dirt road with houses widely scattered apart and surrounded by farmland. There was no church or police station. It had a small convenience store, which didn't look like one, and a makeshift school. Some of the children would come from very far to get to it.

Leon's father and cousins became hysterical, jumping up and down and applauding. A handful of people poured out on to the road to see Sam's demise. They wished for this day for a long time. Marcel moved closer when he saw the villagers come out.

"THAT'S MY SON," he yelled as if the villagers didn't know.

The crowd applauded.

Sam couldn't take the beating much longer. Leon had already put him to shame. He got up and ran into his front yard. He only wanted to

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save his skin. "YOU'RE DEAD, LEON SAINT-ANGE."

"You can't hurt anyone. You are a has-been now." Leon knew that it was a reaction to his pride.

Sam made a circle on the ground, took the skulls and placed them in the center. He quickly ran inside his house and came back with a few skeleton bones, which he also placed inside the circle.

Leon stood outside the gate, watching fearlessly and was ready for whatever was coming.

Sam made three crosses around the circle, gave his back to the road, opened his arms and whispered a couple of phrases. A group of skeletons immediately stood up, looking toward Leon, waiting for Sam's command to take action.

Marcel ran away, the villagers ran back to their houses, but Leon remained defiantly calm. He pulled a tiny one-inch silver bottle out of his pocket and poured one drop of its content on the staff, and it glowed for a second.

Sam gave the command. "By the power given to me by the master, Balzimot, I command you to attack and kill that man." He pointed at Leon.

"You and your master will be defeated tonight," Leon threatened, holding the staff with both hands.

The skeletons came at Leon, and he changed into a person that his father had never seen before, using the staff like a samurai sword and making moves like a Kung-Fu fighter. He ducked, turned and jumped, hitting three or four skeletons at the time as the staff flickered with each strike. The skeletons were disappearing in bulk.

His father and cousins were looking from a distance. One by one, the villagers were coming back out again. Jonas and Jacob wouldn't miss

this for the world.

After he had destroyed approximately twenty-five, Sam called them back. “RETREAT!”

Leon’s father and cousins started to walk back slowly, staring at Leon with jaws dropped. Marcel hit his foot on a rock and almost fell, but he continued.

Still not underestimating the skeletons' power, Leon anticipated that the rest would come at him even more ferociously. He held the staff horizontally, closed his eyes and went into a deep concentration—almost like in a trance. His third eye opened up immediately. With his eyes closed, he could see their shape in a red flare.

“GET HIM!” Sam yelled.

They charged at Leon again, and as they got closer, he just shoved the staff forward lightly, releasing a strong blast of energy that sent the skeletons whirling towards Sam like a tornado. The collision sent Sam flying against his house's wall, and he fell hard to the ground and moaned. At the same time, the skeletons vanished.

Leon’s cousins, Marcel, and the villagers were applauding. Even the Tainos, who always kept to themselves, were watching from a distance, passing comments. Sam had killed Biishou Nai, one of their own.

Leon, on the other hand, knew it wasn’t over as yet. He knew that Sam might still have one more trick up his sleeves.

Sam forced himself up to his feet and screamed, “Aaaaaaah! I will haunt you for generations.” He made a sudden pirouette and became a big boar.

“Honk, honk, honk. . .” The grunting animal ran toward Leon and jumped for his jugular. Leon dodged and simultaneously struck the boar

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with all his might, throwing him against the wall of the house one more time. He fell to the ground and retook his human shape. This time, he remained on the ground, shaking.

“Master Balzimot,” he whispered. “I command my evil spirit onto Lea Saint-Ange.” He continued to shake for a few seconds, and he passed on.

The villagers were jumping and dancing. Leon, still standing in the middle of the road, looked around and smiled. That smile was for witnessing such jubilation over the death of his opponent. He broke the staff in two, and the glowing ceased. He threw the pieces up in the air, and they vanished. Sam Mauvais was no more. Finally, the shadowy veil of fear that draped the village disappeared.

Being deficient in wisdom to understand the gravity of his act, Leon let his impulse and bad temper overshadow his senses. His opponent’s death just reenacted the rivalry.

Lea was getting in the tub to wash Sam’s smell off her body when her brother gave the boar the fatal blow with the staff. As soon as Sam commanded his evil spirit on to her, she stopped, fell on her knees and screamed, “Aaaaaaah.” The feeling of a strange force entering her body was a burden. Her lack of insight made her think that it was the effect of the rape. She began to rub her body as if she wanted to tear the evil from her skin. Two servants were inside the house. They ran over to check up on her.

“What happened, Lea?” Lanise asked.

She didn’t answer. She remained there with her head down. Her

mother stood at the door staring at her. After a while, she said as if she were possessed by a spirit, "Damn! Evil has come into my home."

One of the servants unwillingly became possessed and yelled, "Heeeyyyy!" The other one became uncomfortable and was staring at Lanise, wondering what her reaction might be. She didn't say a word. Instead, she was just staring in amazement, knowing that the spirit came because of her daughter's evil.

The woman, perhaps unable to talk, was making gestures as if she wanted to convey a message to Lanise, waving her hand to say that something was wrong, something negative. Lanise had already figured out that something evil had marred her daughter's soul but continued to look at the servant, not knowing what to say. Perhaps, she didn't want to encourage it.

Lea, in the meantime, remained there with her head down. A couple of males, former slaves, came in to take the woman outside. She shoved them and went to touch Lea. To everyone's surprise, Lea got up abruptly, screaming, "Aaaahh!" She grabbed the servant, lifted her and was about to throw her over the rest of them when the men, big and strong, acted swiftly. They pulled the woman away from Lea and ran out with her.

With all this commotion in the house, Simone didn't come inside. Aside from being afraid of Lea, she was worriedly awaiting the return of her husband, who went to fight the notorious sorcerer. She stood by the gate, anxiously waiting as she kept looking back at the house from time to time.

Millennium's Rivalry

Marcel, Jules, and Annabelle ran over to Leon.

“Congratulations, cousin! I didn’t think you could do it.” Jules shook his hand and patted him on his back. Annabelle hugged him and thanked him.

“Go! Aunt Elvire must be worried now.” They turned around and left.

Jacob, Jonas, and a few other villagers came over to shake Leon’s hand. But he didn’t want to stay and chat. “I’m sorry,” he said. “I must hurry home. Something’s wrong with my sister.” He turned around and started to run.

“Wait for me!”

He stopped. “We have to hurry, pap. Something’s wrong.”

The villagers knew that he wasn’t impolite. They kept looking at him, going away, wondering what could have happened to Lea now. They would have followed him if they could, especially Jacob and Jonas.

“You know, son, I was scared for you. We have a lot to discuss. I didn’t know you had it in you. I guess my father passed on a lot of his knowledge to you before he crossed over.” He started a conversation, trying to slow his son down.

“Grandpa always thought you were a coward, pap.”

“You know, I always knew I was.” Marcel giggled.

“The truth is, pap, with all the powers Sam had, I always knew I could beat him because he was wrong. Right will always overcome wrong. But first, I had to get rid of all my fears. Knowing that I was right, gave me the courage to do that.” They continued their little chat as they walked home.

His grandfather started training him at the age of thirteen.

Lea came outside, grinding her teeth, staring at her sister-in-law. Simone, fearing for her baby's sake, began to walk backward. Lanise came and tried to reason with her. "Lea, honey, calm down! Don't let that thing control you." She just threw her hand and smacked her mother, who fell on her butt. Her strength had compounded. Simone realized that she didn't stand a chance of surviving her attack. She turned around and fled.

"Leon!" she yelled.

"That's Simone, pap. SIMONE!" He began to run in her direction. They met and embraced.

"Lea is coming after me."

"Why?"

"I don't know. She wants to hurt me. She became crazy, Leon."

"I knew something was wrong."

Lea slowed down when she saw her brother but couldn't stop. That force was pushing her. She continued to advance fearlessly toward her brother. Leon put Simone behind him and stood ready for his sister. Lea made a sudden move to grab him. He quickly tapped her on her forehead, and she fell. He poured one drop from the tiny one-inch bottle on her forehead, and Lea became instantly unconscious. He brought her home to bed.

2

Dawn! The time that the villagers would generally start working in their fields. But the news of Sam's death turned the day into a holiday circus almost. Villagers came from near and far to see the spectacle with their eyes. Someone finally neutralized Sam Mauvais. They gathered outside his gate, staring at the corpse and passing comments. Some of the indigenous Natives from the nearby tribe were watching at a distance. A handful of whites, blacks, and mulattoes completed the racial composition of the area. No one ever thought that someone—especially not Leon—would have the power to defeat the supposedly invincible sorcerer. They didn't know who Sam was, where he came from, or what he was. They assumed he had a family somewhere.

The sun had just begun to come up, and its beautiful crystallized rays were slowly advancing as a metallic sheet over the village, waking up the spirits of the trees, making the leaves flap to grant the village the usual tropical morning breeze. Unfortunately, the sight of that horrible death marred the beauty of the morning. Nonetheless, that death was solacing.

“Look at him now! Dead. He made us all scared of him,” one of

them said.

“For every Goliath, there’s a David,” remarked another.

“Ah, Leon Saint-Ange is someone to be reckoned with, you know,” commented Jonas, smoking a dirt pipe.

“I knew him since he was a boy. He’s a good man. He is nothing like this devil, Sam,” said an old lady, pointing at the corpse.

“So, who’s going to bury him? We can’t let the body rot there. We’ve got to get in there and get the body so we can bury him,” said Jonas

“What are you, crazy? I ain’t going in there,” his friend complained. Jonas laughed. “Are you scared, Jacob?”

“Scared or no scared, I ain’t going near that evil man and his evil place. So, why don’t you go get him?” Jacob joked.

“I could be stupid, but I’m not crazy.” Everyone was laughing, turning death into a celebration. Linette, a skinny seventy-year-old woman, wearing a turban on her head, came running over. “Jacob, you best go about your business. That busybody, Anite, was that man’s friend, you know.”

“So!”

“Well, I hear that she went to Miragoâne early this morning to get the authorities.”

“So!”

“So, there could be trouble.”

“What trouble? This man was a no-good son of a demon. What trouble?”

“I heard she went to tell ’em some lie that Leon Saint-Ange came last night and kill him for no reason.”

“Look, Linette, the authorities knew what this man was. I don’t think they are going to do much. They will probably come with the judge

for the verbal process if he is not already drunk, and the case will be closed," Jonas said.

During their discussion, they saw three horses coming up the road.

"They are coming already. I best be going about my business."

"You're beginning to sound like that busybody, Anite, you know."

"Look, Jacob Melville, you best not be messing with me, you hear."

She approached him, pointing her finger in his face. She was his older sister. Her old-fashioned boisterous ways didn't bother Jacob anymore. He just smiled, took out a cigar and lit it.

The two young black officers, in khaki uniforms, slid down off their horse. They had no weapons in those days. They only carried batons. The judge tried to get off his horse and fell. The officers immediately shot a stern look at the crowd to prevent them from laughing.

"Good morning, judge," they all said in unison like school children.

"Good morn...", he replied as he tried to get on his feet. The sexagenarian judge was a bald mulatto man, hefty with a huge belly.

"What happened to him?" one of the officers asked.

"He's dead," Jonas declared.

"I know he is dead. I can see that."

"So, what is your question?"

"How did he die?"

"You know how those devil people are."

"I don't know. Tell me!"

"He had a duel with another one to see who was more powerful, and the other one won."

"That's not what happened," Anite quickly interjected.

"We know, Anite. You told us that Leon Saint-Ange killed for no

reason.”

“Is that what that lying busybody told you? She is a *loup-garou*, you know. I hear she goes out flying with him at night, looking for children to eat,” Jonas claimed.

“Really? How do they do that?” The officer had a smirk on his face.

“Are you making fun of me?”

“No, madam, I just want to know.”

“They peel off their skin, turn into a *loup-garou* and go flying,” Jacob added.

“You know very well those *loup-garous* turn kids into salt fish so that they can eat them. Go ahead. Ask that lying busybody! She’ll tell you,” Jonas contributed.

The officer turned to Anite, and she quickly yelled, “Don’t you dare ask me such a question, boy. I can be your grandmother.” Anite, a short black woman in her fifties, weighed nearly two hundred pounds and had a short haircut.

“No, madam, you look like you’re too heavy to fly.”

The crowd laughed. Jonas turned to the officer and said, “Yeah, but she is ugly enough to be a *loup-garou*.”

The officer forcibly gagged himself to avoid laughing. The other one turned his head, not to show his smiling face.

“Can I get a chair?” the judge asked, interrupting their fun.

“Judge, you got to go in there and examine the body so you can write the verbal process,” one of the officers told him.

“I am not going in therrrrr...” He yawned. “You go in and look at the body.”

Millennium's Rivalry

“Sorry, judge, but I am not.”

“Get your partner to go!”

“Me, I don’t have that much experience, judge.”

“Okay, did anybody see what happened?”

“I already told you what happened.”

“Okay, go arrest that Leon and bring him over. We’ll get a report from him at the *Commissariat*.”

Someone brought a chair to the judge, and he sat down.

“Does anybody know where he lives?”

“He lives up that road. You can’t miss his house. That’s the only house up there. I can show you,” Anite volunteered.

“No, thank you. We’ll go alone.”

“Aren’t you the dead man’s friend?” the judge asked her.

“Yes.”

“Well, why don’t you go in there?”

“Oh no! Don’t ask me to do that, judge.”

“Why not? What are you afraid of? He was your friend.”

“You don’t understand. I don’t know if that spirit is still on him, so I don’t want to take that chance.”

“In that case, leave us alone. You’ve done your part.”

The two officers weren’t even out of sight yet, and the judge began to snore. His notebook fell out of his hands. Immediately, the sound of laughter began to rise, the officers turned around quickly, and the laughter stopped abruptly.

Lea was not the same person. She withdrew to a corner, didn't eat, or speak to anyone. All the while, she kept giving dirty looks to her sister-in-law. Simone, who had no understanding of that sudden change, stayed close to her husband.

"Do you know why she changed, Leon?"

"I don't know, but I have to find out. I am sure it has something to do with last night."

"Why me?"

"I don't know yet, honey."

"The authorities are here, Leon. Look!" She pointed at them.

Leon turned and looked.

"Good morning."

"Good morning, officers."

"Is Leon here, please?"

"I am Leon." He walked towards them.

Lea got up. She wanted to hear what was going on. Their parents, who were still inside, came out on the porch, holding hands tightly while their hearts began to beat faster.

"Sir, are you aware of the death of Mr. Sam?"

"Yes."

"Did you kill him?"

"We had a duel. One of us had to die. That's the way it is."

"You're under arrest, sir. You're coming with us."

"Okay."

His mother embraced his father, buried her face in his chest, and cried. Lea didn't know that Sam had died. She got up abruptly and ran toward Simone, screaming, "Aaaaaah." Luckily, she was standing near her

husband. Leon turned around swiftly, tapped his sister on her forehead, and she fell unconscious. The officers, who didn't understand what had just happened, immediately took a couple of steps away from Leon.

"Pap, pick her up and bring her to bed, please."

"I am not staying here. I am coming with you."

"We don't know what's going on here, but you can't come, madam."

"Then, you have to arrest me too. If you don't, I'll make you."

"Well, suit yourself." They left with Leon, and his wife followed.

An array of low to medium height trees fenced the house. A small and discolored wooden gate served as obstructive security for wild animals. The narrow brownish-red roadway, leading to their home, laid in the middle of a beautiful pasture where the morning dew was still gleaming off the leaves by the rising sun.

When they arrived in the village, the small crowd began to applaud, and Leon waved at them. Anite immediately ran in front of him and said, "That's him. He's the killer."

"You'd better get away from my face before I turn you into what you truly are, you little demon."

"I am not afraid of you, Leon Saint-Ange." She stepped back.

"Yes, do that, Leon! She has been running her mouth all morning."

"Shut your mouth, Jacob."

"I told you that Leon is someone to be reckoned with," Jonas said.

"I am going to make you tell them what really happened because you lied," Leon told Anite.

"How are you going to do that?" Jacob questioned.

"Wait and see," Leon responded.

“My, my, my, ain’t that some’um? She deserves it. That daughter of a demon!” Jacob exclaimed.

“Leon, you know the law. You know the young is supposed to respect the old. Your grandfather never did anything to me because I respected him.”

“Do not talk to me about the law. If you are lying about me, knowing that Sam died for not respecting the law, you have no respect for the law, either. He did something he was not supposed to do. So, don’t talk to me about the law, and I don’t want you to mention my grandfather in your evil mouth. He was a good wizard.”

Leon started walking toward her, and she began to move backward. Everybody was watching. The officers moved to the side, and the judge stood up, took off his glasses, cleaned them and put them back on quickly as he continued to squint to see. They didn’t try to stop him.

As she was moving back, Leon held up his hand in the form of a grip, and Anite couldn’t move.

“Leon boy, don’t embarrass me in front of these profanes. Okay, okay, okay, I am going to tell the judge the truth.”

“Good.”

They were laughing at the way Anite succumbed to Leon’s powers. Leon turned to the officers and asked, “Do you still want to arrest me?”

“No. It was the...” The judge quickly gestured to the officer not to reveal that he had ordered his arrest.

“I told you that Leon Saint-Ange is someone to be reckoned with.”

“Gosh! We know already, Jonas.” Jacob was getting tired of hearing that comment.

“Isn’t he?”

Millennium's Rivalry

“Yes. We know.”

Anite told the judge what happened, and the people applauded again.

“You stand here and let this young no-good witch embarrass me,” Anite complained to the judge.

“Be careful how you refer to me.”

“I’m never going to forgive you for this.”

“I hope you’re not thinking of messing with me.”

“I didn’t say that, but I still won’t forgive you.”

“Look, Anite,” the judge interjected. “I don’t care about your demonic business. I want to know who’s going to bury this man. Does he have any family that you know of?”

“Don’t worry; he will be buried. We are a very big family, and we take care of our own.”

“That’s good enough for me.”

“That’s all! You’re leaving?” Anite asked the judge.

“What do you expect me to do? I don’t know anything about your wicked ways, and I don’t want to know.”

“What kind of judge are you? That’s not what they pay you for?”

“Officers!”

The officers attempted to make a go for her, and she ran. The crowd burst out laughing.

“You heard what she said, Jonas. I wonder how and when they are going to bury him,” Jacob asked his friend.

“Me, I don’t want to know, and I don’t want to see ’cause I’m sure it’ll be evil.”

“Why don’t you come here tonight at midnight so you can see what

they are doing?”

“You’re crazy? I’m going to be in my bed, minding my business,” Jonas announced.

“What business is that?”

“Sleep!”

“Uh, okay!” Jacob shot him a glance with a smirk of disbelief.

The judge and the officers got back on their horses to leave. Leon took his wife’s hand and started walking away. The crowd began to disperse, and suddenly, the indigenous tribal chief came walking up the road with almost the whole tribe behind him, singing their incantation, “Wowowo! Wowowo...” They were beating on their tambourine, burning tobacco and sage, and Biichou Nai’s mother was carrying, on a poll, the bloody clothes he wore the day that Sam killed him.

Everyone stopped. The judge quickly dismounted, took his glasses off again, wiped them, and put them back on. He stuck his neck out, staring as he continued to squint. The officers remained on their horse for a better view.

They came right in front of Sam’s gate, made a circle and began to dance around, jumping from one foot to the next. Biichou’s mother, still holding his clothes, was standing in the center. They stopped abruptly. The chief held his arms up and pronounced a few sacred words in the Taïno language.

Anite came running back. “Hey, what do you think you’re doing? Get away from the man’s gate! You’re supposed to have respect for the dead.”

“Arrest this woman now,” the judge yelled annoyingly.

The officers started heading toward her with their horse, and she