



Codex Born (preview)

By Jim C. Hines



Codex Born

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Codex Born

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Chapter 1

People say love changes a person. They have no idea.

Frank Dearing was the first man I ever met. He made me whole. He provided me with purpose and identity. And he gave me a name. “Greenwood” might not be the most original moniker for a dryad, but it was mine.

Nidhi Shah gave me strength and a larger purpose. Through her, my life grew from a single farmhouse to a larger world of people, plants, and magic.

Then there was Isaac Vainio. I thought his greatest gift to me would be a sense of freedom, however limited. But through him, through his curiosity and his often deranged need to poke the universe and ask “What does this button do?”, I found something more.

I spent fifty years confined by my nature. Isaac helped me to discover hope.

As a libromancer and a researcher, this was one of the moments I lived for. I loved that this brilliant, untrained fourteen-year-old girl had just shattered an entire body of magical theory.

I hated the fact that I couldn't figure out how she had done it.

Jeneta Aboderin slouched in a white plastic lawn chair on the old deck behind my house. Plastic sunglasses with pink-slashed zebra stripe frames hid her eyes as she read from an electronic tablet. “You're not concentrating, Isaac,” she said without looking up.

Her words blended the faint Nigerian and British accents she had acquired from her mother and father, with a generous helping of teenaged

annoyance at me, the thick-headed librarian who couldn't pull magic from a simple poem.

"Am, too." Not my most brilliant comeback, but I was off my game today. I was concentrating so hard my forehead would be permanently creased. I just wasn't *feeling* the words. I glanced down at my own brand-new e-reader, a thin rectangle the size of a trade paperback, with a gleaming glass screen and a case of rounded black plastic. The buttons were recessed into the edges, and the whole thing looked like it had come straight off the set of *Star Trek*.

I was afraid I was going to drop the damn thing.

"Try again," Jeneta said.

I scrolled up through Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, back to the beginning of a poem I had read fourteen times so far this afternoon. I had memorized it the second time, but reading the words helped me to touch the book's magic. At least in theory. "Maybe if I started with something simpler, like creating moonlight?"

She snorted. "Look Down, Fair Moon' isn't about moonlight."

"Are you sure? It's right here in the title." I tilted the screen toward her and pointed. "Maybe I've got a defective reader."

I imagined her eyes rolling behind her glasses. She yanked the reader out of my hands, and her fingers tapped a staccato beat on the screen. "Check out this one. 'Dream Deferred,' by Langston Hughes." Slender brown fingers sank into the poem, emerging moments later with a raisin held between them. "You think Hughes was going on about raisins? It's a metaphor."

She left the "duh" at the end unstated. Shaking her head, she popped the metaphor into her mouth and said, "He packs every syllable with hope and fear and desperation, until the words are ready to explode. How can you not feel that?"

Her exasperation at my obvious thick-headedness didn't bother me. I was more interested in how easily she had produced that raisin from an electronic device. Johannes Gutenberg himself, the man who *invented* librionancy, had said it couldn't be done.

Gutenberg had built his printing press more than five hundred years ago based on his theories about magical resonance. He had believed that physically identical books would hold the collective belief and imagination of the readers, and that a man with sufficient magical gifts could tap into that belief, using it as a focus for his own power.

Growing up, Gutenberg had been a third-rate practitioner at best. He had mastered only the most basic of spells, and even then needed help

to cast them properly. Libromancy had transformed him overnight into one of the most powerful men in history.

Electronic books lacked the physical resonance of print. The words were nothing but a collection of zeroes and ones translated into a transient image on whatever screen you used to read them. We had always assumed that e-readers would be useless for libromancy, that the variety of reading devices and the impermanence of the files would prevent anyone from tapping into that collective belief. Porter researchers wrote dire predictions about the dilution of our magic as more readers moved from print to electronic, whittling away at our pool of belief.

And then Jeneta Aboderin had accidentally loosed a three-foot long-nosed vine snake from her smartphone in the middle of algebra class. That event had left a hundred Porter researchers fighting for time with Jeneta and the chance to try to figure out exactly how the hell she had done it.

After all, part of the mission of Die Zwelf Portenære, the secret organization Gutenberg had overseen for all these centuries, was to learn as much as we could about magic's potential. More importantly, if I could master this trick, I wouldn't have to lug thirty pounds of books with me every time I went into the field.

The Porters, as they were known to those not comfortable with Middle High German, also worked to hide the existence of magic from the world, and to combat an ever-changing list of potential magical threats.

The other Porter researchers were probably cursing my name and trying to understand how Jeneta had ended up working with me in Copper River, Michigan. I was the newest member of our research branch, having been promoted a mere two months earlier, and none of my work had anything to do with electronics or e-books.

Jeneta plucked another raisin from the e-reader and handed it to the large spider soaking up the sunlight on the deck railing. Smudge and Jeneta had taken to each other at once. Smudge lazily extended his forelegs to take the raisin from her fingers. A droplet of red fire appeared between his legs, and he stuffed the burning snack into his mouth.

"I had another dream last night," Jeneta said quietly, not looking away from the fire-spider.

I reached over and took my reader back. "No more raisins. You know the rules. You're on a twenty-four hour magic ban after the nightmares." I did my best to keep my tone comforting, but to my ears, I came off more like a cross between a school counselor and a babysitter

trying too hard to be cool. This was why the Porters had trained therapists on staff. “What were you doing yesterday?”

“I dunno. I just...after campfire, I needed a break. There’s been a lot going on, you know? Three weeks ago I was in summer school, trying to make sense of geometric proofs. Now I’m doing magic.”

Her mouth softened into the first unguarded smile I had seen from her all afternoon. “I went down to the docks to think. I got to watching the minnows swimming around. After a while, I tried reading to them.”

“You read to the minnows?”

“Shut up. It was amazing. At first I was just going through a collection by Sonia Sanchez. I was reading ‘Personal Letter Number 3,’ and I noticed the minnows were moving to the beat of the words, even though I’d been reading to myself. When I started reciting the poems out loud, they went nuts. Like they were dancing.”

I checked to make sure my digital recorder was getting this. Pulling raisins from poetry was one thing. I’d been swiping toys from science fiction and fantasy novels for years. Using the emotion of a poem to influence others, even minnows, was a whole other school of magic. “Could you do it again? Not today, but in a controlled environment where I could observe? I could set you up with some of Smudge’s feeder crickets.”

“Probably. I didn’t do it on purpose, though. It just happened. They felt what I felt. Sanchez makes me want to move.”

“How long did it last?”

“An hour. Maybe two. I lost track of time.” She tossed her thin braids back over her shoulders. “When are you going to give me a straight answer about these dreams?”

“I told you they’re not just dreams.”

Jeneta groaned melodramatically. “Please don’t give me the boundaries lecture again.” Her voice turned deeper, a passable imitation of me, though she mangled my accent. “The more magic you use, the weaker your boundaries become, and the easier it is for the magic of your books to infiltrate your thoughts. Let me tell you about this time at Mackinac Island—”

“I wasn’t going to talk about Mackinac Island,” I lied. “I was about to say I know what you’re going through.”

She stopped playing with Smudge. “You’ve had them too?”

“A few months back. I was down in Detroit, and I tried to—” I caught myself. Jeneta was as inquisitive as any other libromancer. If I told her I had been able to reach through a book to spy on another

libriomancer, she'd be trying it herself before the week was out, no matter how dangerous the consequences. "It doesn't matter what I did. I charred the crap out of the book, and someone...something came after me. Like magic was an ocean, and I had stirred an Old One from the depths. It tried to drag me down, to tear me apart."

"To devour everything that made you *you*."

I pretended not to notice the tremor in her hands. "Exactly. Mindless rage and hunger."

"How did you stop the dreams?"

"By going into a coma." I stared at the garden beyond the deck, walled by rosebushes so colorful they seemed unreal. "I told you, they're not dreams. I was awake when it came after me. Lena brought me to Nicola Pallas' place. She managed to pull me back."

Even the Regional Master of the Porters had been hard-pressed to save my sanity that time.

"They warned me about possession," she said. "How characters and poems could start talking to me, trying to lure me in."

Overuse of a book's magic thinned the metaphorical walls between that book and the real world. Every case of possession varied depending on the books involved, but they all ended with an incurably insane libriomancer. "What we saw isn't possession, either."

"So what is it?" she demanded.

"We don't know." Since before the founding of the Porters, something had lived within magic itself. Something that fought to break through to our world and consume it. None of us knew exactly what it was or where it had come from. Or how to stop it.

This was the other, secret purpose of Die Zwelf Portenære, The Twelve Doorkeepers. A select few among the Porters devoted themselves to understanding our enemy and learning how to keep it from entering the world.

My encounter earlier this year had earned me a place among that group. Gutenberg had assigned me to identify our enemies, to answer questions that had baffled the Porters since their founding. That was why strings had been pulled to get Jeneta a fully-paid trip to summer camp in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, along with an "Advanced Youth Opportunity" internship working with me at the Copper River Public Library.

"You don't know," she repeated flatly. "I mean, I'm glad I'm not hallucinating or going crazy, but you're telling me there are magical monsters trying to eat my mind, and nobody knows what they are?"

“Pretty much, yeah.”

“Damn.” She thought for a moment. “How would these devourers even evolve?”

Typical libriomancer response. Something weird wants to kill us? Cool! Where did it come from, and how does it work? And, depending on the inclinations of the libriomancer, how can I catch one and take it apart?

“I don’t think they did.” I had multiple theories, based in part on research done by previous Porters over the years and reports on the aftermath of the handful of recorded encounters. There were many conflicting explanations, all but impossible to test. “I think we created them.”

“You mean the Porters?”

“Not necessarily, but people, humans.” I sprawled back in my chair. “It’s a hunch. They could be three-headed psychic aliens from another dimension or the astral projections of dinosaurs from millions of years ago. But there was...not a connection, but a sense of recognition. Like passing a stranger on the street and, just for a second, before your brain catches up, feeling like you knew them when you were younger.”

She lowered her sunglasses and raised her eyebrow in a motion so smooth she had to have practiced it in the mirror. “You believe in aliens?”

“I’m dating a dryad, and you pulled a snake out of your phone. You’re going to draw the line at aliens?”

“If you try to tell me aliens built the pyramids, I am so out of here.”

“Don’t be ridiculous.” I waited a beat, then added, “The pyramids were built by mummified elves.”

I wouldn’t have thought it possible, but her eyebrow climbed even higher. “Mummified elves?”

I was a lousy liar, but for once I managed to keep a straight face. “A friend of mine fought one of the things once. Damn thing was like a nightmare straight out of a Keebler commercial.”

“I think you’re right.”

“Of course I am. Elven magic is nasty stuff.”

From the look she shot me, the only thing in the world worse than devourers was an adult trying to be funny. “About the devourers. They hated me too much. It was personal.”

“What happened when you woke up?”

“I snuck out to the showers. The water’s always too cold, but I didn’t care.”

“Like you’d scrape your own skin off to feel clean again,” I said, remembering my own dreams after Detroit.

“Yeah.” She plucked a weed growing through the boards at the edge of the deck and poked it at Smudge. Smudge crouched, then jumped forward to set the end on fire. “Try reading the Whitman poem again. ‘Pour softly down night’s nimbus floods.’ Visualize it.”

I picked up my e-reader, letting her change the subject. Though she tried to hide it, I could see she was fighting tears. I pulled up the poem, read it yet again, and imagined clouds lit from within as they drifted slowly over the full moon. It was a cool, damp night. The poem stressed the contrast between the sky’s beauty and the horror of the Civil War dead strewn over the battlefield.

“Bathe this scene,” Jeneta sounded different when she read. More confident. Powerful. “‘Pour down your unstinted nimbus, sacred moon.’ Twice he uses images of water, of cleansing and baptism. The washing away of sin. Why?”

She sounded like a teacher. I wondered if she was channeling her mother. I touched my fingers to the screen. “He was pleading.”

“Exactly.” This was familiar ground for her, much safer than whatever had invaded her mind. “Wash this ugliness from our souls and memories. Wash this horror from our world. Forgive us. Redeem us. ‘On the dead, on their backs, with their arms toss’d wide.’ Why are they on their backs, Isaac?”

“They’re looking to the sky, to God.”

“That’s the heart of the poem. Grief. Shame. Hope. That’s your connection. Touch those feelings, and you can use this poem to bring an entire crowd to tears.”

I tried again, imagining the emotions and reaching for their echo within the e-reader, but as before, I felt nothing.

“Maybe Whitman’s not your thing.” She tapped her own screen, scrolled through a long list of books, and shoved it into my hands.

“Shel Silverstein?”

She tilted her head to glare at me over her sunglasses. “If you diss Silverstein, I will hurt you. I’m talking chainsaws, machetes, and a fire-spider in a very uncomfortable place. Smudge has my back on this. Right?”

Smudge turned toward me and rubbed his forelegs together.

“Traitor.” I skimmed the poem. “Whatif?”

“You never get the whatifs? Never worry about your house burning down or Smudge getting eaten by an owl?”

My cellphone buzzed before I could answer. I grinned like an idiot when I saw who it was. Sticking with the theme of the afternoon, I adopted my most somber poetry-reading voice and said, “I think that I shall never see a poem as lovely as a tree.”

“Why thank you,” said Lena Greenwood. “Spending time with Jeneta has been good for you. And how is the world’s sexiest librarian doing today?”

“He spends too much time thinking and not enough time feeling,” Jeneta said loudly.

I stuck out my tongue and turned down the volume on the phone.

Lena chuckled, but there was an edge to her usual playfulness. Her laughter cut off too quickly, and she didn’t come back with a joke about finding ways of getting me to stop thinking.

“What’s wrong?” I asked.

“Nidhi got a call from Chicago. They’re sending her to Tamarack. I’m about to head over to pick her up.”

“Another feral werewolf?” The Upper Peninsula had three of the largest werewolf packs in the world, but it had been eight years since the last known attack against a human. The pack did a very good job keeping its members in line.

“Wendigo. One of the weres found him dead last night.”

I sat up straighter. “How did he die?”

“We’re not sure yet, but the weres said whoever dumped the body smelled human.”

“Damn.” This wouldn’t be the first time a mundane had killed a magical creature. It didn’t happen often, and it rarely ended well for the human. If this had been an accident or an act of self-defense, that was one thing, but a wendigo was hard to kill even if you knew what you were up against. That suggested either a rogue magic-user or else someone who had stumbled onto the existence of magic and decided to play monster-slayer. Either way, we needed to find whoever had done this. Gossip traveled fast, and every intelligent nonhuman in the U.P. would be on edge by the end of the week. If the Porters didn’t resolve this quickly, it would only escalate. “Let me drop Jeneta off, and I’ll meet you at the old schoolhouse in Tamarack.”

“I’ll see you there. Love you.”

“Love you too.”

As soon as I hung up, Jeneta said, “I can help.”

“No.”

“I heard her say it was a wendigo. I’ve read about them, but I never—”

“Nein. Non. Nyet. Naa. Gaawiin.” I gathered Smudge onto the palm of my hand and transferred him to my left shoulder.

Jeneta cocked her head. “What was that last one?”

“Ojibwe.” I looked pointedly at her e-reader until she sighed and stuffed it into her worn camouflage backpack. “Nothing in the papers your parents signed gives us permission to drag you into a murder investigation. Especially when there could be more wendigos in the area. Do you know how much paperwork I’ll have to do if my intern gets eaten by a cannibalistic monster?”

“My parents didn’t sign anything about me teaching magic to old people, either,” she shot back.

“I’m only twenty-six, and shut up.” I waved her inside. “Give me a minute to grab my books. Besides, it’s not like I haven’t been teaching you, too.”

“Whatever, grandpa.” She shouldered her backpack, then hesitated. When she spoke again, she sounded younger. “Be careful.”

“I’ll do my best.”

And then she was her normal self again, head held high as she strode through the house. “Hey, since you won’t let me come with you, the least you should do is let me drive the convertible.”

I grinned. “Let me dig up my Ojibwe dictionary. I need to look up how to say ‘No way in hell.’”

Smudge crouched by the corner of the windshield and watched the pine trees rush past. Walls of jagged rock rose and fell to either side of the road as we cut through the hills.

Old railroad tracks and an abandoned depot marked Tamarack’s eastern boundary, roughly thirty miles out from Copper River. Back at the start of the twentieth century, both towns had been booming. Booming for the U.P., at least. When the silver mine here in Tamarack shut down in nineteen thirty-four, the town had been home to more than two thousand people. These days, the place made Copper River look like the big city. The population was closer to two hundred, a sizable minority of whom were members of the local werewolf pack.

This part of the state was pockmarked with mining ghost towns. Tamarack wasn’t dead yet, but it had much of the same atmosphere. Old street signs marked overgrown side streets that hadn’t seen maintenance

in decades. Many of the houses on the edge of town looked ready to collapse in the next strong breeze. An entire block had been overrun by apple trees. I spotted a pair of teenagers smoking cigarettes and watching us from a two-story house, balanced on the roof beside a gaping hole where a maple had smashed through the rafters.

At the heart of town, a gas station with a single pump, a small grocery and hunting supply store, and a Baptist church shared the intersection with the town's lone traffic light. I turned off the main road and drove another half-mile to the schoolhouse. A yellow pickup truck was parked in the lot, and I spotted an older-looking man leaning against the tailgate, chewing a toothpick. I relaxed slightly when I spied Lena's black and green Honda motorcycle behind the truck. A pair of matching helmets hung from the back.

I held a hand to Smudge so he could climb onto my shoulder, then popped the trunk. I retrieved a copper-riveted satchel of oiled brown leather that looked like something Indiana Jones might carry. Which, if I was honest, was the main reason I had bought it. The strap dug a groove into my shoulder, weighed down by every book I had been able to stuff inside.

"Isaac Vainio. You took your sweet old time getting here."

I slammed the trunk and turned to greet the werewolf. "Jeff DeYoung. Was it you who found the body, then?"

"Nah, that was Helen." He spat the toothpick onto the blacktop. "You're looking pretty good. We heard about that mess in Detroit earlier this summer. They say old man Gutenberg himself had to help chase those vampires back into their holes."

"They don't know the half of it," I said. Jeff had one of the thickest Yooper accents of anyone I knew, transforming every "the" into "da," and "those" into "doze."

"And you can't share the other half, right?" He clapped me on my shoulder—the one without the fire-spider—then pulled me into a quick hug and inhaled sharply. I didn't want to know how much he learned about me in that one sniff. I did the same, breathing in the faint sweat-and-tobacco smell of his hair and jacket.

"I'm afraid not." He looked much as he had the last time I saw him, a year or so back. The same worn-out orange hunting jacket hung loosely over his eye-gougingly bright green and gold Hawaiian shirt. Jeff was a stick of a man, all wrinkled skin and age spots. Gold-framed bifocals dug into his bulbous nose. He and his wife Helen were the first werewolves I had ever met. They had left the wild to settle down in

Tamarack, and while they still chased the occasional rabbit, most of their meat these days came from a store.

“Helen took Doctor Shah and the dryad back about fifteen minutes ago,” said Jeff. “They smell like you. How long have you all been sleeping together?”

“We’re not *all* sleeping together,” I said quickly. I had to consciously set aside my normal caution in talking about our relationship. Jeff could smell through the lies, and he was one of the few people who wouldn’t bat an eye at my romantic situation. “I’ve been with Lena for about two months. And Lena is also with Doctor Shah.”

“But not you and the doctor? Huh. Seems like that would be easier, logistically speaking.”

“Logistics aren’t everything.” I swatted a mosquito on my left index finger. The little bloodsuckers usually stayed away from Smudge, which was another reason I liked to keep him around, but a hot, wet summer had left us with a thicker crop of mosquitoes than usual, and they were hungry. “We haven’t got all of the kinks worked out yet.”

Jeff smirked. “You never struck me as a man of many kinks. Sounds like this girl’s been good for you.”

Typical werewolf mindset. In the words of a former friend, “Weres will jump into bed with anything on two legs and a few with four.” An exaggeration, but one with plenty of underlying truth.

Nobody knew where the first *Lykanthropos naturalis* had come from, though the dominant theory involved a magical experiment gone wrong sometime in the fifth or sixth century. Others believed lycanthropy had been a deliberate curse, punishment for some unknown but unforgivable crime.

These days, creatures who had evolved or come into existence “naturally” were outnumbered by those born from books. I doubted even Gutenberg could have foreseen that consequence of his new school of magic. The first book-born creature I ever encountered was a sparkler, a middle-aged woman with thinning hair who had accidentally reached into a popular vampire novel and managed to infect herself with the vampire’s venom.

The Porters carefully catalogued each new vampire species, but the werewolves offered more of a challenge. Unlike most vampires, werewolves could interbreed. As a result, instead of a hundred or more distinct species, you got a single race with a broad spectrum of abilities. Some could shapeshift at will; others were slaves to the moon. One

werewolf might be severely allergic to silver, and his brother merely suffered from lactose intolerance.

As a general rule, it was safe to assume they were faster and stronger, with sharper senses than any human. And of course, depending on his genetics, Jeff might have anywhere from two to eight nipples under that shirt. Not that I had ever gotten up the nerve to ask. He would have been happy to show me, I'm sure. Werewolves were notoriously open about physical matters.

"Being with Lena has been... educational," I admitted.

Jeff laughed, but thankfully didn't press me for details. We hiked through the woods behind the school, following an old trail around a marsh until we reached an overgrown road. Knee-high weeds were well on their way to reclaiming the broken gray pavement. From there, we walked uphill for roughly ten minutes, passing old driveways and gutted, too-regular pits in the earth where houses had once stood.

"I thought you were done with field work," Jeff commented. Despite his age, he wasn't even winded.

"Gutenberg and Pallas moved me to research." I wiped my forehead and the back of my neck, then swatted another mosquito who was trying to bite through my jeans. "But we're short-staffed in the Midwest right now, and I did a couple of papers on wendigos during my training."

A chain link fence at the top of the hill blocked a steep dropoff. Lena Greenwood, Nidhi Shah, and Helen DeYoung stood staring down at something on the other side of the fence. Nidhi was snapping pictures with a digital camera.

"You take the scenic route or something?" Helen asked without looking.

"Why, you miss me?" Jeff joined them at the fence, pausing briefly to give his wife's backside a quick squeeze before peering down.

"It's ugly." Lena broke away from the others to greet me with a kiss. As always, the feel of her body pressing against mine set off a cascade of physical and emotional responses: desire, excitement, amazement that she had chosen me, conflict over the circumstances of that choice, and awkwardness at knowing her other lover was standing six feet away, deliberately not watching.

Short and heavysset, with large eyes and dark lips, Lena didn't look like someone who could go toe-to-toe with a pissed off vampire and walk away without a scratch. Her skin was the rich brown of oiled oak. A single black braid hung to the middle of her back. Cutoff jeans

emphasized the curves of her hips. She was barefoot, her toes curling into the dirt with each step. A pair of curved wooden swords—Japanese bokken—were thrust through her belt.

If I were to pick a single word for what attracted me to Lena, it would be her passion. Not merely physical, but for everything she did. She threw herself into life with no reservations, never holding back. She possessed a fearlessness few humans ever matched.

Nidhi Shah coughed softly. “We were getting ready to try to retrieve the body.”

Judging from her outfit, Nidhi had come straight from her office. She wore a teal shirt with iridescent buttons, black slacks, and Converse high-tops. The sneakers were her formal black pair. When it came to footwear, Nidhi refused to let fashion trump comfort and practicality.

She was in her mid-thirties, older in appearance than Lena by a good five years. Her hair was pinned back, revealing a blue tattoo on her temple. The Gujarati characters for *balance*, a spell placed by the Porters to help her in her duties, were the only magical thing about her.

I stepped toward the fence. “Do we know who it was?”

Helen shook her head. One hand rested on the semi-automatic pistol holstered on her left hip, her only visible sign of nervousness. “I don’t recognize the scent of either the victim or the man who dumped him.”

“You’re sure it was a man?” asked Nidhi.

“You can’t smell the body spray?” Jeff snorted. “Lucky you.”

“The wendigo was killed about a half-mile into the woods,” said Helen. “Whoever it was used a four-wheeler to get the body here. He drove east after that, but we lost him once he reached the road.”

The upper bar of the fence was dented toward the ground. Dark streaks of blood striped the rusted aluminum. About twenty feet down, hanging from the broken branches of a white spruce growing out of the near-vertical rock, hung the wendigo.

Imagination was part of what made me a good libromancer: the ability to visualize the story, to make it so real in my mind that I could literally reach out and touch it.

Imagination could be a curse as well. I would be seeing the remains of that poor creature in my dreams for months to come. The broken limbs, the pain and fear frozen on its face, the bits of white fur, matted with blood.

I turned away. Ignoring Jeff and Helen’s worried whispers, I crossed the road and rested both hands against a fat birch. I sucked air

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into my lungs as my mind played out one scenario after another to explain the injuries the wendigo had suffered.

How the hell had a human being done this? The average wendigo could kill and devour a man in minutes.

Which made the man who had deliberately and methodically butchered this creature far more dangerous than any monster.

Codex Born, coming August 6, 2013.

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