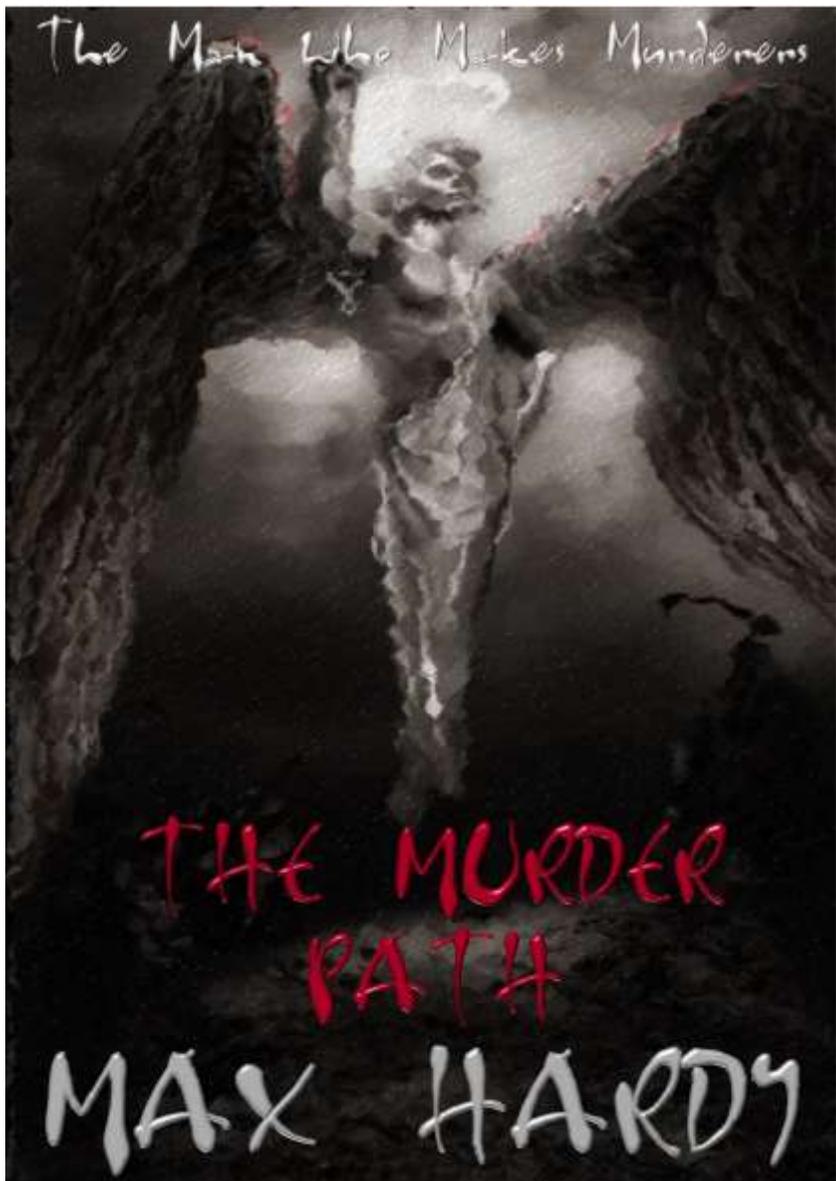


The Man Who Makes Murderers



THE MURDER
PATH

MAX HARDY

By Max Hardy

Novels

Angels Bleed

Her Moons Denouement

The Murder Path

Poetry Collections

Soul Whispers

My Dark Disease

The Alchemy Of Swaying Hips

THE MURDER
PATH

MAX HARDY

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For

James 'Hardy' Brown, my Dad

And

Russell Gee, my best friend,

and the first person to call me 'Max'.

You both left us way too early.



Chapter 1

The hinges of the heavy, solid oak door squealed as it was pushed forcefully open, the grating din reverberating around the white tiled walls and floor of an empty corridor that it opened into. The din was augmented by a piercing scream that quickly rose in intensity above the squealing hinges, amplified tenfold by the acoustics of the corridor. The scream emanated from a single, naked, blood spattered woman who agitatedly bounced off the door she was pushing open as it hit the wall, and stuttered in a half run, half hop down the pristine white corridor, leaving a trail of bloody footprints in her wake.

Her head was shaking frantically as she screamed, her arms flailing in arcs, her fists clenched white tight and pummelling her own temples over and over again. She was slim, lithe and toned, with a sea of fiery auburn hair billowing behind her as she ran. Blood was smeared over her wide, panicked emerald eyes and agape lips. Blood was spattered across her pert breasts and tight stomach. Blood had been massaged into the tattoo of a snake, from the head of it near her belly button, to the body of it coming out of her vulva. She smacked into another oak door at the far end of the corridor and fell to the floor in a quivering heap, pulling her legs tight into her torso foetally. She continued to bang the palms of her shaking, bloody hands off her temples as she stared in terror back down the corridor. The screams abated, to be replaced by a low, guttural inaudible mumbling.

'Was it the susurrations of the lungs?'

The voice, deep and gravelly, yet calm and assured came from the room behind the door she had thrust open. It was followed by the steady measured footfalls of black brogues that carried the man into the corridor. He was over six foot tall with a broad, muscly frame, dressed in a tailored three piece silver Armani suit, sporting a scarlet pencil tie. His hair was totally white and greased back over his head in a quiff, framing a wrinkleless, angular handsome face, with piercing green eyes that stared humorously down the corridor toward the woman.

In his right hand was a stainless steel scalpel, a line of blood on its edge that was forming a drop at the tip. He lifted his hand and placed the tip of the scalpel against the tiled wall as he walked, tracing a bloodline as another searing squeal emanated from the contact.

'Or was it the palpitations of the heart?'

The squealing continued as he dragged the scalpel along the wall, as he assuredly walked up to the quivering woman who was still looking frantically down the corridor through him, until he knelt down in front of her and removed the scalpel from the wall and rested it on her mumbling lips.

'I think it was the eyes.' he started, moving the tip of the scalpel up her cheek, allowing it to break the skin as he raised it to her eyelid, letting it scythe a few lashes before resting the blunt side of the blade on her eyeball. She didn't flinch at the contact, simply continued to quiver and mumble, continued to bang her palms off her temples and continued to stare straight through him to the open door at the far end of the corridor.

'What are the voices telling you Eve? Are they telling you that it is wrong? Are they telling you it is evil? Or are they telling you to succumb to the temptation?'

Her mumbles grew audible at the questions. 'Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not kill.' she repeated over and over again.

He smiled as he heard the words, nodding gently as he removed the scalpel from her eyeball and raised his hands to take hold of hers, stopping them from battering her temples, sliding the scalpel into her left palm deftly as her did. He held her wrists firm and leant in closer, bringing his eyes to within a millimetre of hers.

'That is how you think as a human. Think Eve. You aren't a human. You are a God. There is no fear, there is no good, there is no evil, there is no 'Thou shalt not'. There is only what you want to do. It was the eyes, wasn't it?' he finished as he stood up, raising Eve to her feet as well.

She obliged and stood without resistance, her eyes refocusing from down the corridor to look into his calm and gentle gaze. She breathed out heavily, the quivering of her lips lessening, the shivering of her naked body abating as a semblance of control overtook her demeanour.

'It was the eyes.' Eve answered in a broken whisper. 'He was just so ecstatic at the prospect of the pain. It freaked me, it just freaked me out.'

'That's alright. It's your first time. It is only natural at this stage that your mind will go back to the morality that has been instilled into it. That's why we practice. That's why we learn in a controlled manner. So you can learn to control. Are you ready to go back in?'

She took a deep breath and looked from his questioning eyes, to his hands gently securing her wrists, to the bloody scalpel clenched firmly in her palm. Her body straightened on the rise of the inhale, the last vestiges of nervousness and panic shed as she stood tall and majestic, a palpable aura of authority oozing from every pore of her being.

'I am ready.' she answered firmly, rolling her wrists to free them from his grasp. She smiled, seductively slinked past him and headed off down the corridor back towards the open room, her naked hips sashaying with attitude as she walked, her feet still leaving bloody prints.

'Excellent. Now, what have you learned today about the physical anatomy?' the man asked, admiring her lascivious figure as he fell in behind her, dodging her footprints.

'How far you can break it, and still keep someone alive.'

'And how far can you break it?'

'As long as you keep five things intact, everything else can be broken.'

'Well done. And what have you learned about the mental condition?'

Eve laughed as she approached the open oak doorway and then answered. 'I have learned that the human mind can handle any kind of pain you throw at it. I have learned that the more you throw at it, the more it wants. I have learned that I am not quite a God. I am more than a human, but not quite a God.'

'Not quite, but nearly. You now need to choose a trophy, and then you will become a God.' the man answered as he followed her into the room and stood beside her where she had stopped to admire her creation.

The room stank of faeces, urine and the overpowering copper taste of blood that imbued every particle of the cloying air. Once crisp, freshly painted white walls were now spattered with dozens of blood trails which glistened in the shafts of sunlight that flowed through the slightly open blinds in the large bay window opposite where they stood. In the centre on the room, the solid oak floorboards were covered in a spreading pool of congealing blood.

From the ceiling above the congealing pool of blood hung a meat hook on a thick metal chain. Impaled on the meat hook, through his anus, with the tip of the hook poking out of the end of his penis, hung the ravages of a man. Steel manacles clasped his feet to the ceiling either side of the meat hook. His whole body was unnaturally contorted and stretched, to a point that his hands were palm down and nailed to the floor. His legs had been broken at the knees, with the skin serrated to allow them to stretch double their natural length. The same had been done to the arms. Loose flaps of skin exposed the glistening sinew and muscle below the surface which had been slashed and elongated. Bits of broken bone poked out at random angles all the way along the butchered limbs. A square of skin from just above the belly button to just below the larynx had been cut away from his chest and lay discarded to one side on the floor. His ribcage was fully exposed and from behind it could be seen the murmuring of his shallow breathing lungs, behind which beat his purple heart. Trails of blood trickled down his upturned face to plop ungraciously onto the floor below his head. He wore an upside down smile, his eyes glazed and dilated, but alive enough to watch Eve as she observed him.

'I want you to pierce my eyes with that scalpel. I want to feel them burn in my skull. I want to squeal as the pain sears through my brain. Then I want you to thrust it into my heart so I can experience the end of life as it ebbs from my broken body.' the upturned man slurred through bloody lips.

'What if it wasn't a scalpel? What if it was something blunt and coarse? What if I gouged them out instead?'

His eyes brightened briefly, a lewd tongue running over his dry lips at the same instant. 'Oh that sounds just divine. What do you have in mind?'

Eve approached his body and stood unashamedly naked directly in front of him, his line of sight straight toward her shaven, pulsing vulva.

She tentatively stretched out a hand and ran a finger over the first rib at the top of the left side of his ribcage, behind which his heart beat. She let the finger slide through and touch the beating organ, a shudder visible over her body.

'Is it exciting you? Is it making you wet?' the upturned man slurred.

Eve didn't answer and let her fingers count up the ribs, letting them slide through and touch the warm lungs below. She counted up to seven and her hand stopped moving.

'I will take back what created me, and use it to end you.' she said, letting her fingers inveigle their way around the wet, glistening rib. She yanked, breaking the rib away from its cage. The upturned man howled, his whole body convulsing involuntarily under the rage of the pain, the chains that contained him clanging, before the howl turned to anticipatory groans.

'My eyes, take my eyes!' he moaned, his body still shaking in pain.

Even crouched down and lowered the broken end of the rib, with its shards and splinters of bone, toward his left eye, letting it rest on the shining iris. The upturned man blinked furiously while at the same time trying to force his face into the rib.

'Do it!' he screamed. Eve pushed, and he howled again, then she twisted the rib into his eyeball, until the crunch of rib against the bone of the socket filtered into the agony of his cries. She pulled the rib out, the eyeball popping with it, before doing the same with his right eye.

The upturned man was convulsing once more, his whole body trembling, his lips quivering as he tried to speak through excruciating pain. 'My heart, take my heart and let me bleed into my own oblivion, let me ride into my tomorrow on the wave of this ecstasy.' he managed to eke out between screams.

Eve paused momentarily, a look of doubt dancing over her otherwise majestic features.

'Remember Eve, there is no 'Thou shalt not', there is only what you want to do!' the man behind her encouraged firmly, noticing her hesitation.

She nodded imperceptibly and pushed her shoulders back as she stood once more, watching the upturned man writhe and scream in front of her. Eve raised the broken rib and slid it between two ribs in front of his heart and looked down to his deranged, damaged face with its dangling eyeballs dancing on a forehead furrowed in agony. His lips moved silently, the voice gone from his lungs, whispering simply, 'Kill Me.'

Eve thrust the rib into his palpitating heart, a spurt of blood instantly shooting out of it and splashing into her euphoric face. The upturned man screamed once more as with his last few breaths, his heart pulsed and shot more streams of blood over Eve until he stopped breathing, his heart stopped beating and his whole body sagged limp in front of her.

The man stepped up behind her quivering body and circled a hand around the front of her face, letting it rest on the fresh blood that spattered it. He gently stroked his fingers over one cheek and let them rest on her lips as she allowed one of them to snake into her mouth, her tongue voraciously sucking at the blood on the tip of it.

'Your first kill Eve. You first step along the murder path. How does it feel?'

'It feels like I am no longer human. It feels like I am invincible. It feels like I am immortal. It feels like how a God must feel. But it's not just the first step along the murder path, is it?'

'No. It's your first step back into the Fallen Angels. It's your first step back into a world that made you, so I could mould you. It's your first step on the path to finding out about their plans. It's your first step on the path to finding and killing John Saul, before John Saul finds and kills us.'

'The Murder Path' will be released

On Friday 28th August 2015

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