

VERITAS FANTÁSTICA

The Chimera and the Sinner  
Part 1

Paul Andreas Wunderlich

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# Introduction to Veritas Fantástica and to The Chimera and the Sinner

Welcome to the series Veritas Fantástica. In this series, there shall be published all sorts of fantasy and science fiction stories, ranging from The Chimera and the Sinner, to other similar creations. The stories published will be both in the English and in the Spanish language. For example, another story published under Veritas Fantástica is “El Bastardo y la Medusa”, a story written in Spanish.

In this case, you are reading the first episode of The Chimera and the Sinner. Many more stories similar to this one will come, so if you happen to enjoy this one, be rest assured that your thirst for more fantasy and science fiction stories will be quenched.

Enjoy.

Paul Andreas Wunderlich.

# The Chimera and the Sinner

## Part 1

There was once in a distant world a land called Abfalbath, ruled by a cruel king who governed all. He not only governed by a strong hammer-hand, but also by inflicting fear and pain onto his people. He tortured all and none could escape his aimless wrath.

The lesser of his tortures was provoking hunger in his people and depriving them of water. About the greater of his tortures I dare not tell you, as they are most uncanny and could bring you ill dreams of fate.

Lugner the Trailmaker was his name, but he now went by Lugner the Sinner. He was banished from the Kingdom of Abfalbath, for he had sinned against his King. But how, you might wonder? You shall, in due time, realize how Lugner the Sinner's fate evolved to be.

Having been banished from the Kingdom of Abfalbath, Lugner roamed the Lands of Nothingness. They were called so because there was nothing to be seen in these lands, lest it be trees and wild animals; of these The Lands of Nothingness harbored many. Wandering these lands was his ultimate punishment, since the men from Abfalbath well knew that no one ever survived the harshness of these lands. They said to him during the process of his exile: "The animals will slay you, Sinner. They will feed upon your flesh and they will excrete you in their waste. You will become nothing more than the land's fertilizer."

"Oh no, that's not all!" said another guard, "The things that roam those lands include creatures like dragons and wraiths! He could be made into soup by the night-dwelling trolls! He is bound to a fate full of disgrace! Mind you, Sinner, never to return! And if you do, make sure it is in pieces."

By the faces the guards made while walking him towards the gates, and the by things they continued to say, Lugner concluded that there the creatures of the wilderness would kill him. His heart sunk at the thought of winding up in a dragon's stomach, impaled by a wyvern's fang, or turned into stone by the Medusa's stare.

Lugner had delved in the Lands of Nothingness for over a year now. He could not remember the time in its exactitude, though he always remembered the day when he was banished; that memory appeared to be timeless. He could remember vividly of how he was savagely dragged from from his family's warmth: the thing he regretted the most was having been unable to say a proper goodbye.

He remembered that moment with feverish clarity: His family and he were having tea and biscuits when the guards forced themselves into his house to take him away. The Captain who led the company, a fat man with a disgusting pie-shaped face, walked up to him while he was seized by the soldiers and said to him, "You, Lugner the Trailmaker, have been named from now on the Sinner, by the King himself. You are from this moment and forever onward banished from

Abfalbath. You may never return, lest it is in pieces. Do you mind? Excuse me, but I'm so hungry. Is it fine with you if I take a biscuit and a sip from your tea?"

The face of this Captain Lugner would never forget. The fat man would someday pay for his disrespect, or so Lugner promised himself. That promise was not so powerful, however, as the one he made himself to take his revenge upon the King. You may well understand that lurking in a land full of nothing but trees and animals made him forget most of the things he once knew; other than his memories of banishment, only his anger towards the King ever surfaced in his mind's eye.

After many days and nights in the Lands of Nothingness, Lugner learned the skillful avoidance of peril. He succeeded in learning the arts of survival after many near deaths, and was now savvy in the ways of the wild.

In one occasion he fought a Minotaur. It was an old Minotaur, one that had been cast away from its tribe, for now another dominant male was in possession of the females. The new male had exiled him after defeating him in a duel for power. The Minotaur tried to chop off Lugner's head with an old axe. By some unknown chance the axe bit his collarbone instead, and given the absence of sharpness in its blade, it merely chipped off a piece of bone. Lugner, having already survived an attack by a puma, was now prepared with more than mere self-defense tactics. He took the claws of the puma after skinning the animal, and with them he had built a powerful maul, with the claws protruding from its head. With that weapon, he managed to slay the Minotaur without difficulty, shattering the monster's skull into pieces.

In another occasion he confronted a mighty wraith while finding shelter from rain in a cave. The wraith was roaming around within the cavern, which it called home long ago before the Sinner laid foot in it. The wraith was not happy to have an unknown visitor and tried to kill him with its insubstantial touch. But Lugner was intelligent, and with fire in hand he managed to pin down the spirit, killing him with smoke and many blows from his maul. On that occasion he had to dispose of his weapon, given that the wraith had poisoned it with its wretched soul. It was not a problem for Lugner, however, for he had learned to move on after being faced by adversity many times before.

After mastering the ways of the wild, Lugner devoted himself to feeding the fire wells of his anger. With each passing day he swore vengeance against the King. The poison in his mind grew ever deeper, he so wished to resolve his pain; the one produced while imagining the King seated on his throne, laughing at his banishment. He had left everything behind, including wife and child, who were stolen from him for good. What became of them, he never knew. He wished he knew what became of them. At the very least he would like to have the notion if they were alive or dead. For all he knew, they could be dying in a dungeon or tortured by some despicable magician.

The suffering from missing his loved ones overthrew his anger. The poison of vengeance seeped through his soul like a coagulated cloud would conquer a mountain. With every passing minute he imagined having the King's head served to him on a silver platter, where he could spear him continuously with a fork and laugh in his face whenever he pleased. This he imagined so well he could smell and feel the blood running down his hands.

He grew evil from the inside as a consequence of lusting for such violence. The poison from his rage was far beyond the reach of the fingers of his consciousness, for he never felt it expanding, but it did, and continuously, diffusing throughout his body. The poison was slow to take its effect; he could not feel it when it came into play. When he took a potent dose of the

venom from his anger and desire for vengeance, it quenched his lusting at first, as do most things that eventually become the destroyers of men. But slowly, after taking a steady dose of it, his entire being started to corrode from the inside.

Lugner strolled along the forest with a fearless stance, but a keen eye could catch subtle signs of hesitation and nervousness in his movements. He feared no beast that could slay him easily with a single bite; he feared death by becoming prey no more. He now understood the cycle of life, and with that understanding the implication that he would become food, eventually. What he truly feared was the beast that lay dormant within him, which manifested itself as a dark presence in his mind. He knew he carried in his heart a weapon. He feared that he would eventually unleash it against the King, and his fear came from not knowing what he was capable of doing. Yet even in his fear he was already savoring the moment in his mind.

He feared this dark presence as such, but feared mostly its voice, since in loneliness it spoke softly to him, seducing him to undertake many cruel acts: he had taken many innocent lives by now, mostly animal lives, but lives nonetheless; with utter cruelty. In one of his acts of cruelty, he chopped a stag's four legs off and bound the wounds with cloths to prevent its death by bleeding. He left the legless body of the stag suffering on the ground, then watched as wild dogs sniffed it out and ripped it apart into food.

The voice from the dark presence spoke to him, day by day, corrupting his very essence: "Lugner, be not hasty in seeking vengeance. We must first evolve into a beast of significant power, then we must retaliate with all our force. Yes, Lugner, be not hasty. Be patient. Grow keen of senses, swift of movement; deceitful like a fox, misleading like the smoke. Become yourself."

Lugner tried to ignore this ill-natured voice. But with the passing days it grew ever stronger, and he found it more difficult to ignore. The voice ringed with a reverberating echo on all the possible places it could within his mind. He tried to repress it, but it was useless. He was growing used to the voice's unusual way of expressing itself — a loud hissing contained within a viscid murk.

One day, when Lugner was roaming the Lands of Nothingness, he perceived at a distance a beautiful white stone mountain. It glittered beautifully as sunlight bathed it with golden fingers. It shone.

Lugner had never seen such a sight, and immediately thought to himself that he must have a closer look at it. The dark presence within him sparked with life upon seeing what Lugner's eyes had caught. Thus the voice within him spoke with a seducing, yet soft-spoken tone, "Alas, Lugner, there lies a beauty yet to be discovered. Be the first to do so, and the riches that may come from such a finding may be overwhelming. Go now, and wait no more. There may lay our fate's resolution."

Lugner usually didn't heed much at the voice within him, now only during extreme periods of hunger and during endeavors of cruel intentions. When it came to life-threatening situations, Lugner thought his decisions over and over again, trying to apply the foundations of logic into his argument. But on this occasion, he found no way to dissuade the voice's reasoning: it did seem to have a point.

He strolled along the path, faintly marked by a track, towards the white Stone Mountain. He felt a rich wind curl along his face; the tingling it gave him was delicious, which made him forget about the possibility of a grave peril atop the landscape.

When he was close to the mountain, he peered from his position and saw a trail that led upwards to the summit. It seemed to be way too easy, he thought, and it seemed deserted as well.

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