

PART ONE



LITTLE GAMES

You will soon hear of me with my funny little games. I saved some of the proper red stuff in a ginger beer bottle over the last job to write with but it went thick like glue and I cant use it. Red ink is fit enough I hope.

—Jack the Ripper

LONDON: EAST END

It was strange and novel to have a human body again. To feel the wind stirring his hair and the cold particles of snow stinging his face as he made his way along the cobblestones. To swing his arms and measure the new length of his stride.

It was just after dawn, and the streets were mostly deserted. Every now and again he caught sight of a costermonger pushing his cart through the snowy street, or a charwoman in her apron and shawl hurrying to the drudgery of her work.

As he skirted a heap of snow, he stumbled and frowned to himself. His body was so weak. He needed strength desperately. He could not go on without it.

A dark shadow passed in front of him. An old man in worker's coveralls, cap pulled down low over his head, slipping into an alley off the main thoroughfare. As he watched, the man settled himself on a crate, leaning back against the brick wall. Reaching into his threadbare jacket, the man drew forth a bottle of gin and unscrewed it.

He stepped soundlessly into the alley. The walls rose on both sides,

Chain of Iron

cutting off the weak sunlight. The man looked up at him out of bleary eyes. "Wot d'ye want?"

The adamas knife flashed in the dim light. It plunged into the man's chest again and again. Blood rose, a fine spray of red particles dyeing the filthy snow scarlet.

The killer sat back on his heels, breathing in. The energy of the man's death, the only useful thing the mortal creature had to offer, flowed into him through the knife. He rose and smiled up at the milky white sky. Already he was feeling better. Stronger.

Soon he would be strong enough to take on his true enemies. As he turned to leave the alley, he whispered their names under his breath.

James Herondale.

Cordelia Carstairs.