

## Father and son

The pale man opened the tomb, revealing a small, unusually thin, and long skeleton. It was his son. Its bones contrasted with the thicker skull. Two fractures zigzagged from the left temple to the jaw. The shin was broken into three unequal parts and no longer looked like they belonged together. However, the left arm was absent, never to be found.

He kneeled down, closed his eyes, and tenderly ran his fingers across the skull's surface. The well-known bumps, sharp teeth, and broad eye sockets greeted his touch. The sensation was almost intimate, as if Damian was still present, as if death was a falsehood and his memory a fabrication. Relationships weren't lost but severed, the pale man thought.

He opened his eyes to clean the bones. Beginning with the feet, he methodologically progressed upward, methodologically attending to each part till he reached the skull. Damian wanted to spend more time with him back then when he was alive, so he had vowed to meet him every Monday. It was a vow he failed to uphold. But a pledged formed within him now to honor his oath, to clean his remains every Monday.

The hole in his heart was like a gigantic rupture. Its roots reached all the way to hell and beyond. In his attempt to fill the void, he had kidnapped many children. Joshua, Luke, Darrel and many more. He had trained them to dress like Damian, to speak like Damian and to be like Damian. Each one an intricate, idiosyncratic copy of the original. The experiments had all failed, though. All that remained was to finish the last stage of his plan...