

PART TWO: King Hardcastle

By: Delores Danforth

Exclusive to The Pre-Millennial

In my time with the Branch KABLAMians, I have come to discover that there is very little actually off limits for discussion. The open conversations revolving around sex and sexuality are the type that would even render the most liberated of European countries speechless. But one topic that they are *not* exactly forthcoming about is their history. In particular, they don't speak about their original leader.

The current whereabouts of King Hardcastle (Yes, that was his legal name... I looked it up) are unknown. Some within the KABLAMian sect believe him to have died following a particularly long marathon sex session with his assumed bride, Cerise. Others claim he is still alive, saying they've received correspondence from him. However, when asked, they never do produce the communiques, citing privacy in their instructions.

How King Hardcastle came to be a non-factor amongst this rebranded KABLAMians, and what that might mean for current sexpiritual figurehead, Derek Adonis, is a question that requires some digging, and perhaps an audience with his widow/estranged wife.

Voice: "I did say "Ahem," madam."

Delores Danforth awoke inside her provided private quarters inside the KABLAMian compound. Of course, as private as the room was supposed to be, it was still a part of the Branch KABLAMian property and, as such, subjected to the same standards and practices as the rest. Jeff-Rey, Derek Adonis' longtime assistant and associate, had a master key. So as Delores opened her eyes, and the first sight being a strange man above her, she did what any reasonable individual would do...she plunged her hand under her pillow with a scream. Jeff-Rey only rolls his eyes.

Jeff-Rey: "Ms. Danforth, I assure you I intend no harm. Besides, we had already confiscated your firearm, your pepper spray, your mace, and your extra-jagged protruding ring."

Delores: "So you're in the business of lurking in women's rooms now?"

Delores was incensed, reaching for her housecoat to cover her body. Jeff-Rey, to his credit, keeps his back to her with spare towels draped over his folded arms.

Jeff-Rey: "This isn't me "lurking"... this is simply room service."

Delores: "Well, you can leave me alone. This place is a dead-end... all I've heard about in the last two weeks is sex and kinks and the practical application of anal bead which is something I didn't think *anyone* thought about but apparently gets a LOT of airplay out here."

Jeff-Rey: "Well, they do make for great pipe cleaners because of their..."

Delores: "JEFF-REY!"

Jeff-Rey pauses briefly at the interruption. After a tense staredown, however...

Jeff-Rey: "...bendiness."

Delores: "What are you even doing here?"

Jeff-Rey: "I could ask you the same question."

Delores: "I'm an investigative reporter seeking the truth regarding alleged cult activity... which, by the way, there is a **lot** out here. You're just following the man who's paid your bills for the last decade into a situation that you're not emotionally or intellectually equipped for!"

Delores clasps her hands across her mouth. Jeff-Rey, stung by the words that Delores uttered, simply casts the fresh towels down onto the bed.

Delores: "I'm sorry... I didn't mean..."

Jeff-Rey: "Freshen up. We leave in 30."

Delores: "What do you..."

Jeff-Rey: "Minutes, Ms. Danforth. We still use conventional time out here."

Delores shakes her head.

Delores: "No, I get that... but 30 minutes to what?"

Jeff-Rey: "We're having an audience with Cerise."

The reporter's eyes widened. She had heard about the legend of Cerise Hardcastle, beleaguered wife of original founder of the Branch KABLAMians, King Hardcastle.

Delores: "She's here?"

Jeff-Rey: "Never left... when her husband was exiled, she was given a choice: Follow him or bend the knees."

Delores: "Isn't it "bend the knee"?"

It takes everything inside Jeff-Rey for him not to connect the dots (KABLAM!) for her. But all it took was a look from him for Delores to understand what he was saying.

Delores: "Oh... knees. Right."

Jeff-Rey: "Hurry up... we now have 28 minutes."

Jeff-Rey, without offering another word, leaves Delores' quarters...

ONE HOUR LATER

Following the gathering in the foyer, eight massive men carry a casket up to the ornate gold door with the word "HARDCASTLE" etched above it. Following this casket is Sweet Sangria and Mimi Mimosa, along with Delores Danforth taking up the rear (no KABLAM here, perverts). Sangria and Mimi use the large knocker (oh come on!) to bang on the door. Slowly, it creaks open.

Sangria: "Okay, everyone. Remember Hardcastle protocol. Shoes off out here, and only speak when spoken to. This is *not* a social visit. And for the love of God, King is gone... do *not* bring him up. Any questions?"

Delores raises her hand, pen held within.

Delores: "Yes, I..."

Sangria: "That was rhetorical, Ms. Danforth."

Reluctantly and disappointedly, she lowers her hand. Sangria and Mimi walk ahead first, followed by the eight carrying the casket and the reporter in the rear (I'm shaking my head at your dirty minds). As they walk in, they see the woman who can only be assumed to be Cerise Hardcastle clad only in a housecoat. She turns towards them, smiling warmly, as the eight "pallbearers" set the casket down.

Cerise: "What is this?"

Mimi walks over to the casket, opening the lid for Derek Adonis to sit up. He stretches his arms out.

Adonis: "Whew! I've come to enjoy the closed quarters, but that still doesn't leave a lot of room for stretching."

Cerise sits back.

Cerise: “Mr. Adonis... to what do I owe the pleasure?”

Adonis: “Cerise... it’s been too long!”

He reaches his arms out for an embrace, but doesn’t leave his seat inside the casket. Waving his arms towards himself, he calls her over to him.

Cerise: “Indeed it has.”

The pair embrace, Adonis still remaining seated.

Cerise: “And what of this...”

She motions to the casket. Derek shrugs his shoulders.

Adonis: “I lost a casket match.”

Cerise: “You know that you could probably get out immediately. Have you stayed in there ever since?”

Adonis: “What? Of *course* not.”

Derek pauses to think about it.

Adonis: “I get out to clean and make.”

Cerise: “Well, at least you’re embracing good hygiene.”

Adonis: “Plus there’s the free travel from the beefcake brigade, and let me tell you... this thing fits two people, which makes for a *very* uniquely intimate setting IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN!”

He means exactly what you think.

Cerise: “Well, I admire your dedication to the art. But again, idle chatter isn’t your strong suit. To what do I owe this pleasure?”

Adonis: “We... / wanted to check on you. Your absence at KABLAMfest was noted, and we’re going to be hosting this New Year’s Eve shindig and just wanted to make sure we’re cool.”

Cerise: “Yes, Derek. We’re “cool”.”

Adonis: "Oh thank God!"

He breathes a heavy sigh of relief.

Adonis: "I know since your husband fled that you've kept to yourself mostly, but I wanted to assure you that you will *always* be a part of this community."

Cerise smiles warmly, although the look Sangria returns is one showing the shivers down her spine.

Cerise: "Yes... since King fled."

Adonis picks up nothing suspicious from her affirmation, although it chills Sangria further.

Adonis: "Do you miss him?"

Cerise shakes her head.

Cerise: "No... you're my King now."

Everyone in the room gets a chill, except for Adonis, who smiles.

Adonis: "Cool."

Adonis nods, motioning to the casket.

Adonis: "So... you wanna...?"

Yes, he means what you think he means. Cerise ponders.

Cerise: "In there?"

Adonis: "It's nice and cozy."

Cerise: "Haven't your workplace officials been asking where it is? I'm sure they'll need it again."

Adonis: "After what I've been doing in here, it'll be cheaper for them to make a new one... KABLAM!"

There it is... the magic word to draw this scene to a close...

The following match promotional video is brought to you by Derek Adonis Extra KABLAM Extra Slick lubricative gel... the only lubrication that can be used to bring explosions in the bedroom and on the demolition site! Note that DAEKESLG should only be used for its intended purposes, and should not come into contact with open flames or be exposed to greater friction than it can handle.

The scene rises up inside the bedroom of Man-Mountain, the Ruler of KABLAMia, Derek Adonis. Atop the bed rests the casket Adonis was cast into on night one of SCW's Fatal Fortunes Breakdown, a box that Adonis has taken ownership of. The top half of the casket is open with Derek sitting upright, a plate of chicken wings in front of him resting on the other half of the casket. Seeing the camera on, he quickly shoves the plate aside and wipes his mouth with a nearby cloth.

“Oh, I didn’t see you there! You need to tell me next time you’re going to peer into my bedroom, you sneaky perverts... heh heh... KABLAM!”

Adonis, admittedly, blew the KABLAM load a little early.

“As you can see, we have been hard at work preparing for the holidays here in KABLAMia. One of our newest traditions is to have yours truly, Man-Mountain, dress up in a fake beard and let all the good girls around here sit on my lap. It’s really getting popular around here. Of course there is an age limit... everything here is good and legal because Daddy Don’t Diddle! Christ, *why* is that not on a t-shirt. I’ll have to remember to do that later...”

Adonis reaches beside him, taking a pen and paper.

“Daddy... don’t... diddle... t-shirt...”

After accentuating his writing with a period, he sets both aside.

“There. But there is another holiday tradition that I personally loved once upon a time... I’m thinking five and six years ago, where I spent consecutive New Year’s celebrations as the SCW Champion of Television. It was kind of a special time, when the universe gave us what we wanted, that one pure gift that brings smiles to the faces of everyone around the world. It reminded people that dreams *can* be achieved, and that it doesn’t matter if you don’t fit into whatever mold other people *think* you need for success.”

Adonis looks at a script that was concealed on the lid of the casket.

“Not sure why we’re acting like I’m not a standard Champion, but whatever. The point is that tradition was so beloved that I’m bringing it back! That’s right! December 21, the Winter Solstice, Man-Mountain peaks... KABLAM... and the Championship of Television returns to the summit!

And that's not to take anything away from that sexy little burrito, La Pequeña Luz. I would never *dream* of doing such a thing. But Luzzy gonna learn that there are three certainties in life: Death, taxes, and Man-Mountain riiiiiiising to the occasion, over-coming the odds, and the climax of another New Year's extraKABLAMza as the SCW Champion of Television! KABLAM!"

With an exuberant flailing upwards of Adonis' arms, the recording ends.