



Author Stant Litore

2014 Media Kit

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Discover the Latest Chapter in the Bestselling *Zombie Bible* Series – and the Author Everyone’s Talking About



With his popular and critically acclaimed *Zombie Bible* series, bestselling author Stant Litore has created a rich and well-crafted literary sensation that’s been growing in acclaim and readers since the launch of his first title, *Death Has Come Up into Our Windows*. Each ensuing release – from *What Our Eyes Have Witnessed*, to *Strangers in the Land*, has only deepened readers’ fascination with Litore’s literary and beautiful exploration of

the hungry dead against the age-old settings of the Bible itself.

Now Litore raises the stakes with his most exciting new *Zombie Bible* release yet – *No Lasting Burial*.

Available on April 8, 2014 in paperback from **47North**, as well as on Kindle eBook and Audible, *No Lasting Burial* offers Litore’s most evocative and gripping work yet – suspenseful and pulse-pounding, yet also profound, moving, and fascinating.

The premise of *No Lasting Burial* is electrifyingly simple: What if Jesus of Nazareth had faced both the hungry living and the hungrier dead?

Originally released as a Kindle serial, *No Lasting Burial* catapults Litore’s highly successful *Zombie Bible* series into the New Testament, retelling the story of Jesus of Nazareth in a vivid and visceral re-interpretation of the Gospel of Luke and the legend of the Harrowing of Hell. The hungry dead will rise and walk, and readers may never look at these ancient stories in quite the same way again.



Discover the author whose works have reached **#2 on Amazon’s Horror Bestseller list** – and were spotlighted in March 2014 by **NPR** as among the Year’s Best New Sci-Fi!

Review it Today!

Electronic review copies of *No Lasting Burial* are available for a limited time for qualified reviewers via NetGalley.com. Please contact Justin Golenbock at golenboc@amazon.com to request a NetGalley copy for review.

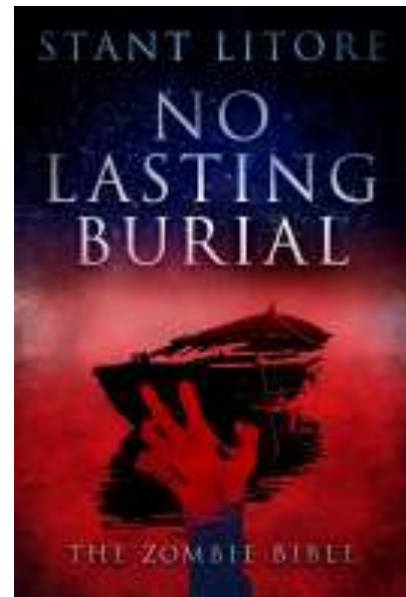
With any questions, or for other review queries, please contact publicist **Angela Mitchell** at news@paranoidpr.com or query author **Stant Litore** directly at zombiebible@gmail.com.

***No Lasting Burial* (1-Sheet)**

Release Date: April 8, 2014
Print Length: 368 pages
Publisher: 47North
Language: English
ASIN: B00FQK16DO
Genre: Weird Fiction, Literary Horror

Pricing:

Paperback: \$14.95
Audiobook: \$14.99
Kindle/eBook: \$3.99



Stant Litore's Author Page (Amazon.com):

http://www.amazon.com/Stant-Litore/e/B006AC98GY/ref=ntt_athr_dp_pel_1



Purchase Links:

***No Lasting Burial*, Amazon.com**

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00FQK16DO>

***No Lasting Burial*, Audible.com**

<http://www.audible.com/pd/B00J5SEULS>

***No Lasting Burial*, Barnes and Noble**

<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/no-lasting-burial-stant-litore/1118176823>

Synopsis

What if Jesus of Nazareth had faced both the hungry living and the hungry dead?

A man wanders out of the desert one day and finds a village in ruins after a night of the walking dead. The survivors have thrown the snarling corpses into the Sea of Galilee, only to starve as the ghoulish sea stops producing fish.

Yeshua has heard their hunger. He hears the suffering of the living and the dead, like moaning in his ears. Desperate to respond, he calls back the fish.

Just one thing: The dead are called up, too.

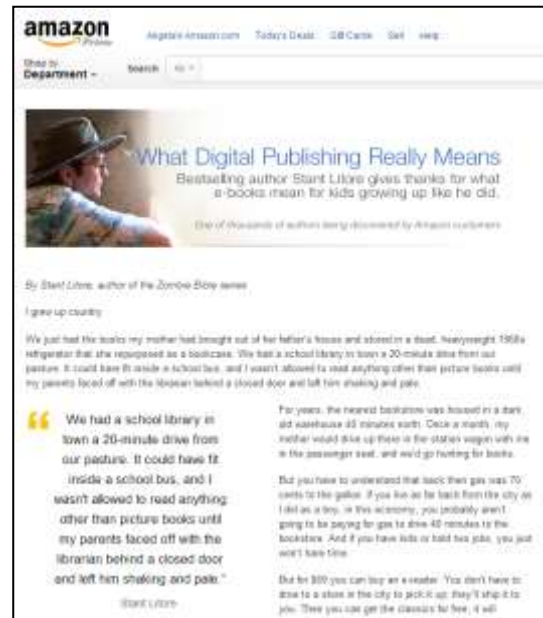
No Lasting Burial ushers readers into a vivid and visceral re-interpretation of the Gospel of Luke and the legend of the Harrowing of Hell. The hungry dead will rise and walk, and readers may never look at these stories the same way again.

Notable Achievements

Stant Litore's achievements herald him as an author to watch in 2014:

Sales/Bestseller List Milestones:

- *Death Has Come Up into Our Windows* reached #2 in Horror on the Amazon Kindle Bestseller List, for two straight weeks
- Over 5,000 copies of *Death Has Come Up into Our Windows* sold in December 2011
- *Strangers in the Land* reached #8 in Horror on the Amazon Kindle Bestseller List



Critical Milestones:

- *No Lasting Burial* was chosen by NPR as among "The Year's Best New Sci-Fi" (March, 2014)
- *No Lasting Burial* was selected by K. Tempest Bradford as a potential first-round nomination pick for the John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer (2014)
- *Strangers in the Land* was featured in *Weird Fiction Review* in May 2013
- Before *What Our Eyes Have Witnessed* was acquired by 47North, it was the runner-up (2nd place) in the 2012 eFestival of Words Best of the Independent eBook Awards.
- Guest Author at 2013 *Real Myth and Mithril Symposium*, Grey Havens Group, Colorado
- Featured Author Success Story on Amazon.com homepage, November 2013 ("[What Digital Publishing Really Means](#)")



Portrait by Danielle Tunstall; frontispiece from *What Our Eyes Have Witnessed*

Other Published Works by Stant Litore



DEATH HAS COME UP INTO OUR WINDOWS (ZOMBIE BIBLE, BOOK 1)

Publication Date: August 14, 2012

Print Length: 111 pages

Page Numbers Source ISBN: 1469237571

Publisher: 47North

Sold by: Amazon Digital Services, Inc.

Language: English

ASIN: B007FJHDBI

SYNOPSIS: *Death Has Come Up into Our Windows* reimagines an Old Testament story as a prophet's last stand against hunger... and the hungry dead.



WHAT OUR EYES HAVE WITNESSED (THE ZOMBIE BIBLE BOOK 2)

Publication Date: August 14, 2012

Print Length: 233 pages

Page Numbers Source ISBN: 1469237784

Publisher: 47North (August 14, 2012)

Sold by: Amazon Digital Services, Inc.

Language: English

SYNOPSIS: *What Our Eyes Have Witnessed* offers a haunting tale of the early church and the decline of Rome...but not as you've ever seen it before.



STRANGERS IN THE LAND (THE ZOMBIE BIBLE, BOOK 3)

Publication Date: October 16, 2012

Print Length: 439 pages

Publisher: 47North (October 16, 2012)

Sold by: Amazon Digital Services, Inc.

Language: English

ASIN: B007EUOP3W

SYNOPSIS: In this bloody retelling of the Biblical Book of Judges, four must stand against the dead – a slave girl, a warrior, a winemaker, and an aging prophetess.



THE DARK NEED (DEAD MAN SERIES #20)

Publication Date: September 24, 2013

Print Length: 68 pages

Publisher: 47North (September 24, 2013)

Sold by: Amazon Digital Services, Inc.

Language: English

ASIN: B00EF8Z32S

SYNOPSIS: A man risen from the dead pursues a serial killer who, vampire-like, drains the blood and memories from those he kills. During the hunt, the Dead Man encounters a young woman who is also passionate about finding the killer, but can he trust her?

Critical Acclaim for Stant Litore

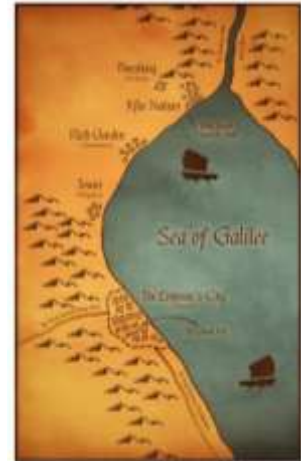
ADVANCE CRITICAL PRAISE FOR *NO LASTING BURIAL*:

Stant Litore's *No Lasting Burial* (#4 in the *Zombie Bible* series) should not have engaged me as deeply as it did. The atmospheric setting is what did it — and I'm intrigued by the idea of reinterpreting the Gospel of Luke as a zombie tale.

- **K. Tempest Bradford, NPR**

Stant Litore's *No Lasting Burial* is an amazing book on many levels...The book reads like a run-away express train. It is a tremendously gripping tale, perfect for setting your teeth on edge and reading with manic energy far into the night. I found *No Lasting Burial* both intensely troubling and sharply beautiful. I highly anticipate the opportunity to reread it.

- **Timothy Widman, Wandering Paths**



His writing, on its own, is just fantastic. He weaves lyrical prose that is truly spellbinding. Litore succeeds.....beyond what I expected. Beyond what I dreamed was possible to be contained in a novel in the horror genre, or any genre for that matter.

Check it out. Even if you don't think you'll like a zombie book. Even if you are an ardent atheist and avoid anything with "bible" in the title. You will not be disappointed.

- **Amanda Amaya, The Eclectic Bookworm**



- *Average Amazon Customer ratings*

CRITICAL PRAISE FOR *THE ZOMBIE BIBLE* SERIES:

STRANGERS IN THE LAND

"Saying *Strangers in the Land* is a zombie book is like saying that *Pride and Prejudice* is a romance novel instead of one of the most brilliant stories I've ever read. Is *Strangers in the Land* that good? YES...After I started reading this book, I realized the folly of my ways for not just innately KNOWING how good this book is. I wish Amazon could beam that information straight into my brain, because I took so much away from this book. It'll stay with me for a very, very long time."

- **Lizzy Ford, Guerrilla Wordfare**

"To say I loved this book would be an understatement. I could not put it down and felt my heart pounding against my ribcage as the characters raced across the land in an attempt to catch up with the hordes of unseeing and insatiable dead...I have no hesitation in giving *Strangers in the Land* five out of five stars and will certainly be reading the rest of the series in order to feed my insatiable hunger for more of Litore's historical mashups."

- **Mandy Southgate, The Seattle Post-Intelligencer (SeattlePI.com)**

Critical Acclaim (Continued)



"One of those books I was clutching and just couldn't stop turning the pages. It's a dark, evil world the characters are stuck in - one of near unimaginable loss and suffering. At moments you feel like there is no hope for humanity, that this evil plague will be the end of the world as we know it. There is no safe place. You'll find yourself thinking what if? What if this was to happen now? Imagine fighting the zombies without modern day weapons or transportation. Talk about a nightmare! (cringe!) This well-written book will stay in your head for days."

- ***Confessions of a Psychotic Housewife***

"Captivating and well-researched...Beyond the rich historical background and the desperate fight for survival, *Strangers in the Land* is a story about otherness, what it means to be a 'stranger'... Far from being 'just another zombie book', it is a remarkably clear look at what it means to impose a system of inequality among a culture."

- **Jess d'Arbonne, Examiner.com**

WHAT OUR EYES HAVE WITNESSED

"Stant rebuilds the zombie mythology from the ground up."

- **Rob Kroese, author of *Mercury Falls***

"I still can't get over the beautiful horror of Litore's writing."

- **Jennifer Bielman, Reading and Writing Urban Fantasy**

"What Litore has done shows the path of where some of us creators are going; I call it the de-sanitisation of the gospel: a visceral, messy, human take on a message of a visceral and tangible hope."

- **Siku, author of *The Manga Bible***

DEATH HAS COME UP INTO OUR WINDOWS

"[*Death Has Come Up into Our Windows*] is the first in what is currently a trilogy of historical zombie-fiction novels ...retells the story of the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah, but replaces the leprosy victims and some of the heathen armies with the walking dead. The result is something heartbreaking and wonderful."

- **Conflictium.com**

THE DARK NEED

"Very clever, dark short story. Why can't I ever have adventures like this?"

- **Devlin Scott, Absinthe & Ink**

Stant Litore – Author’s Bio & Photos

SHORT BIO:

STANT LITORE is the author of the acclaimed *Zombie Bible* series, as well as the novella *The Dark Need* (part of the *Dead Man* series). He has an intense love of ancient languages, a fierce admiration for his ancestors, and a fascination with religion and history. He has a PhD in English, and he doesn’t consider his writing a vocation so much as an act of survival. Litore lives in Colorado with his wife and two daughters and is at work on his next book.



Learn more about Stant Litore at his website StantLitore.com, on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/stant.litore>, or by following him on Twitter at [@TheZombieBible](https://twitter.com/TheZombieBible). To discuss the launch of *No Lasting Burial*, Litore is available for interviews now.

Stant Litore – Author Photos



Courtesy of Stant Litore



Official Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – April 8, 2014

Contact: Angela Mitchell (Paranoid PR)

news@paranoidpr.com

Jesus of Nazareth Joins Popular ‘Zombie Bible’ Saga in ‘*No Lasting Burial*’

*Latest installment in the bestselling ‘Zombie Bible’ series now
available in paperback from 47North*

DENVER, CO. What if Jesus of Nazareth had faced both the hungry living and the hungrier dead? That’s the riveting scenario envisioned by bestselling author **Stant Litore** in his rich and exciting new novel ***No Lasting Burial***. The latest chapter in Litore’s acclaimed literary horror saga *The Zombie Bible*, *No Lasting Burial* will be released on April 8, 2014 from publisher **47North** in paperback, e-book, and audiobook.

Immediately gripping from its opening pages, *No Lasting Burial* begins as a man wanders out of the desert and finds a village in ruins after a night of the walking dead. The survivors have thrown the snarling corpses into the Sea of Galilee, only to starve as the ghoul-haunted sea stops producing fish. But Yeshua has heard their hunger, and desperate to help, he calls back the fish. Just one problem: The dead are called up, too.

This eagerly awaited novel takes Litore’s exhilarating, beautiful and highly successful *Zombie Bible* series into the New Testament, retelling the story of Jesus of Nazareth in a stylish, vivid and often moving re-interpretation of the Gospel of Luke and the legend of the Harrowing of Hell. The hungry dead will rise and walk, and readers may never look at these ancient stories in quite the same way again.

"*No Lasting Burial* offers literary horror in the vein of the original, black-and-white *Night of the Living Dead*," **Stant Litore** comments. "Imagine sitting at a fire on a winter night and a man is warming his hands and telling you stories from the Bible, except the storyteller is Poe. And you’ll have some idea of what this series is like."

The launch of *No Lasting Burial* is a major event in Horror, Sci Fi and and Strange Fiction, as Litore’s previous *Zombie Bible* titles reached **#2 on Amazon’s Horror Bestseller list** – and were spotlighted in March 2014 by **NPR** as among the Year’s Best New Sci-Fi! *No Lasting Burial* is available for purchase now, through such national retailers as **Amazon.com** and **Barnes and Noble**. The purchase price for the paperback version is \$14.95, with pricing for the audiobook at \$14.99. The book was initially released in episodes as a Kindle serial, and all episodes of the novel are now available in one full Kindle version of the book, specially priced at \$3.99.

About *The Zombie Bible* Series

Find out how our ancestors faced the ravenous dead! The *Zombie Bible* retells biblical stories in beautifully crafted and beautiful prose as episodes in humanity's long struggle with hunger... and with the hungry dead. In these pages, prophets, messiahs, holy women, and the Praetorian Guard face the walking ghouls and the greater terrors of human cruelty. Litore's unforgettable saga began with *Death Has Come Up into Our Windows*, and was followed by *What Our Eyes Have Witnessed*, *Strangers in the Land*, and now, the latest chapter, *No Lasting Burial*.

About Stant Litore

Stant Litore is the author of *The Zombie Bible* series, as well as the novella *The Dark Need* (part of the *Dead Man* series). He has an intense love of ancient languages, a fierce admiration for his ancestors, and a fascination with religion. He doesn't consider his writing a vocation; he considers it an act of survival. Litore lives in Colorado with his wife and two daughters and is at work on his next book. Learn more about Stant Litore at his website StantLitore.com, on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/stant.litore>, or by following him on Twitter at [@TheZombieBible](https://twitter.com/TheZombieBible). To discuss the launch of *No Lasting Burial*, Litore is available for interviews now.

About 47North

47North, whose name is based on the latitude coordinates for Seattle, offers a wide array of new novels and cult favorites for avid readers of science fiction, fantasy, and horror.

Review Copies

Electronic review copies of *No Lasting Burial* are available NOW for qualified reviewers at NetGalley.com. Please contact **Justin Golenbock** at golenboc@amazon.com or amazonpublishing-pr@amazon.com.

Meanwhile, to schedule an interview, or for more information on Stant Litore, contact publicist **Angela Mitchell** at news@paranoidpr.com or query Stant Litore directly at zombiebible@gmail.com.

###

Contact Info

If you're doing a feature on authors, zombies, or new fantasy or horror releases, Stant Litore is an intelligent and entertaining guest, and is available for interviews about *No Lasting Burial* and The Zombie Bible series now.

Inquire about interviews or media availability today!



General Publicity & Media Queries:

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Review Requests:

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Direct Author Queries:

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NO LASTING BURIAL

**BASED LOOSELY ON THE EVENTS OF LUKE 4-5
AND ON THE LEGEND OF THE HARROWING OF HELL
FIRST CENTURY AD**

THE ZOMBIE BIBLE
FIRST BOOK OF YESHUA

STANT LITORE

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PART 1

AD 26—Present Day.
Kfar Nahum, in the Roman Province of Galilee.

OUR FATHERS' SEA

SHIMON TOOK precautions. He asked the town's *nagar* to reinforce the door of his house with strong pine. And every evening at sundown, Shimon gave his crippled brother a curt nod and made sure that his mother bolted the door behind him with heavy planks of wood; through the door, he could hear her breathing hard with the effort. Then he walked out through the storm-battered houses of the fishers and hurried down the grassy tideline to the boats, to join Yohanna and Yakob, his uncle's sons, in readying the boat that had been his father's for their night's long battle with the sea.

The fish they brought back, a few dancing in wide nets, were just enough to keep them all alive—never enough for them to buy another boat or gather any wealth. The sea had been plentiful once, so much so that the fathers had told them that their fathers had been able to walk across the water from one shore to the next

in calm weather without getting more than the soles of their feet wet—the fish had been so thick, they had just walked on their backs. The sea had been that full of the blessings of God.

But Shimon knew, with an ache of grief and old guilt as he pulled the oars and they went out to sea—Shimon knew the dead had poisoned the water. In the old stories, the lurching dead had blighted farm and field. Men and women who had been strong and hale sickened and perished. Perhaps it was the same with the fish. Sometimes in his dreams, while he shivered in his threadbare blanket, he thought he heard the emptiness of the sea, a kind of silent cry, like the cry the womb makes in a young woman who longs for a child and has none. The sea, once so full, longed for fish.

And some nights, out on the sea, they would haul up one of their too-empty nets and feel some weight in it, and looking down they would see rising out of the deep one of the dead tangled in the net, its face lifted toward them, eyes pale and white like those of a dead fish. Already reaching a hand toward the surface, its jaw opening.

Shimon hadn't slept well in years.

Often, as he lay in his bedding in the morning hours while Rahel and his brother moved quietly about the house, he would wake, shaking, remembering. He recalled the eyes most. It was never the lurching walk or the low moaning from a dead throat that stirred him from his sleep; it was the eyes, for wherever Shimon hid in the dream country, those eyes were waiting there for him. He might be dreaming of having a great house of sunbaked clay, cool inside with many carpets—like the houses that men of the Law had, in Yerushalayim far away. He would dream of holding a great banquet there, and many men would come in clothes so fine that Shimon's eyes ached seeing them. But always, when Shimon looked up from his food, he found his banquet guests staring back at him with those dead eyes. Those terrible eyes, in all their faces.

Or he might be dreaming of a woman, her body soft and scented beneath him. He would slide into her as smoothly as he might slip into the sea, and feel her clasp him, feel her arms about him, holding him to her; feel her breasts and her thighs against his body, damp with sweat. Yet as he began to move in her, she would not moan or cry out, and he would glance down at her face and see her looking up at him with those same eyes. Those eyes that held no life.

And he'd wake, his sweat cold on his face and back. He'd bite his lip and lie without tears, gazing at the open sky over the atrium where he and his family slept in the summer—or at the ceiling over his head in his cramped little side room if it were winter. In those months, the cold light from the atrium revealed the stone slabs of the roof laid over stout wooden beams, but though that wall between him and the vast unanswerable sky was familiar, it brought him no comfort. Shelter for the body, never for the heart.

Tonight Yakob rowed them quietly out into the dusk, and Shimon and Yohanna stood in the boat casting the nets again, the ropes cold and wet in Shimon's numb hands, a damp that he could feel even through his thick fishing gloves. The nets were woven flax and weighted, and one had to hurl them out over the water; it took a lot of strength and precision to cast one, and it could take two grown men to pull up a net if it was full—but the nets had not come up full in a long time.

The boat creaked beneath them; it was old. In his father's time, that boat would have been recognized anywhere on the Sea of Galilee. Now its sand-red paint was almost entirely gone; the boat had been skinned white by the water, like driftwood and sea wrack. Shimon and the others toiled on it like survivors scrambling for food in a ruin, as though they were three brothers who were the

last remnant of their town. But the true brother of Shimon's own blood sat broken at home in a broken house, his absence a bitter core in Shimon's heart. Above the shore behind him, *all* the houses of Kfar Nahum were broken, each house a wounded body, burned and scarred and in some cases empty and boarded up, so many structures of memory and stone maimed years ago by men, living and dead, who had taken out their anguish, their rage, their grief and hopelessness on the bodies of others.

They knew their work, these three. Yohanna had the best eyes, and he watched the water. Yakob could endure at the oars the longest. And Shimon could sense the smallest shift in the wind; he knew when to let the sail fly or when to furl it up tight against the sudden rages of the *shedim* howling over the water.

"Maybe today," Yohanna said, as he always did at the casting of the nets. He was a man who liked to hope. Shimon might have resented that, but Yohanna's hands on the nets were strong, and in any case Shimon found it difficult to stir the ashes of his anger these nights. He felt emptied out, like his father's house. He swung one of the nets, feeling the pull of its weight in the sinews of his arm. As it came around he lifted it high and cast it out into the wet dark, letting the rope pay out through his gloved hands, the cold sound of the water swallowing it. Shimon began the count.

"Maybe today." Yohanna glanced at Shimon's face, and his own fell. He added in a low voice, "There are blessings left in this sea. We just haven't found them yet. We have to keep trying. Until the *navi* heals the land."

Shimon ignored Yohanna's optimism, as he always did, and Yakob changed the subject, as *he* always did. His hard eyes softened as he looked at his brother. "Tell us again about your *navi*," he said. Yohanna had been one of the town's self-chosen exiles, leaving two years past to seek out the wild caves in the cliffs above the Tumbling Water, where Yohanna ha Matbil, the baptist, whom

some men called *navi*, or prophet, lived in defiance of the moaning *shedim*, forsaking town and city, living on locusts and camel's milk and leading men and women down into the water to wash away their evil.

Shimon's count reached twenty and he tightened his grasp on the rope, stopping its slide. He sat quickly on one of the boat's two benches—the one nearest the stern—and knotted the rope around one of the iron hooks set between his feet. The original hooks had long since needed replacing, and it had cost him severely. The iron came from Threshing, and the men and women of Threshing wanted nothing to do with those surviving families who wrestled their hunger in the emptied houses of Kfar Nahum.

Yohanna cast his own net and told his story as he knotted the rope. Shimon took up another net and swung it out into the night as he listened.

“He brings everyone up from the water with his own hands; he won't let any of his followers do that. He will look into the eyes of a man he's lifted from the river, and say things that I still hear in my heart though my mind doesn't understand. He would look in your eyes and say, *Prepare yourself, God is very near*. Or he would say, *We are all kin. All tossed together by God into this world*.”

“We are all kin,” Yakob repeated quietly.

“I asked him about that,” Yohanna said. “One night when the stars were out and all the baptized slept in their tents by the riverbank. I went to him and I said, *Rabboni, my teacher, my master*. I said, *Who are my kin?* And he just looked at me as though I should know the answer without asking. He is like that. He doesn't talk much, Yohanna ha Matbil—unlike me, though we have the same name. He hardly ever says anything, really, and so he teaches us all to listen.”

“We are not all kin.” Shimon's voice was gravelly, as he hadn't used it yet that night, and it startled him to find himself speaking now. “The Romans are not my kin. Those Greek-loving Hebrews

in Threshing and Tower, they are not my kin.” Something flickered inside him, then settled, and he sat back on the row bench, silent and heavy. The others didn’t answer or challenge his silence, and after a few moments he ceased to be a man and became a part of the boat again.

Then there was only the silence and the sea and the starlight. A few times, the men pulled up the nets for a look, and the few small, lean musht they caught soon lay glistening in the bottom of the boat. Perhaps enough to feed the three of them and their families for one meal. When the nets were back down, they slit the fish open and gutted them and then wrapped them in sheaves of lake-weed that they kept in a bin behind Shimon’s bench, a bin filled with water to keep them fresh. Shimon watched the wrapped fish for a while, numbly; then he lifted his eyes and watched the dark surface of the lake, that watery mirror of his own heart. There was no wind tonight; years before, when Shimon hadn’t yet learned despair, he would have been thankful for that. The wind was to be feared; demons rode it, the *shedim* that wandered in the desert places until witches called them out of the dark or until the wind picked them up and swept them into the towns and the stone houses of the People. Sometimes one heard them howling and keening in the rocks high on the hill of tombs, and if a man did not live a good life and keep the words of the Law often on his lips, if he opened his mouth too often to speak blasphemies or untruths, the wind might blow a demon into his mouth. The demon would inhabit his body as a man inhabits a house, but would damage the house it dwelled in, casting the man to the earth in fits or tormenting his mind and making him shriek and curse at people who weren’t there. Zebadyah the priest claimed that these same demons inhabited the corpses of the unburied dead and the unclean and half-eaten, that

it was these *shedim* that drove those corpses stumbling to their feet and made them pursue and feed on their living kin.

So when there was a cold wind over the water—as there often was, chopping the surface of the sea and cutting even through his water-coat—Shimon shivered amid his numbness and his grief, and drew his coat more closely about his body, as though by keeping covered, he could keep the demons from slipping inside him. And when the night's catch brought up a few fish, he was always careful when he gutted them to take out the heart and wrap it in a bit of lake-weed, tucking it into his coat. Before sleeping for the day in the empty house that had been his father's, he would hand the heart to his mother, who lay it on the coals of the smaller firepit in their atrium, the one they didn't use for cooking. The smoke from the fish's heart would keep even the most malicious of the *shedim* away, for their fathers had taught that the fish were God's gift to the People, to make them strong and virile and prosperous.

But now it was rare to smell the heart-smoke of the fish, and Shimon feared that each wind brought more *shedim* into the town, and that even the water itself had become a house for the demons, a dark mirror of the air that was their usual home. Somewhere down under that dark, placid surface were many pale corpses, some buried perhaps in the sediment, some drifting in the water. A soft glow on the far edge of the sea signaled the coming dawn, yet Shimon felt cold.

“Do you never think of what waits beneath our boat?” he asked suddenly.

The others turned to look at him.

After a few moments, Yohanna cleared his throat. “Fish, I hope. Somewhere.” He was pale.

“I never stop thinking of it,” Shimon said. He kept staring at that still, deceitful surface. “You think you can forget everything in this silence over the water. You think you can leave your dead beneath the waves. But there is no lasting burial.”

They took up their oars and rowed slowly, letting the nets trail behind in the water, in no hurry to return to their surviving kin with news of another night lost. Shimon sat in the middle of his despair like a hard gray stone. But then he glanced up from his oar and saw a single white seabird, the morning's first. It skimmed low over the sea with a swiftness that was holy. His gaze followed the bird's long glide, and for a few moments the sight of it made his numbness almost pleasant, the way that the last slide into sleep is pleasant, when a man loses all feeling but that soft weight of drowsiness.

Even as the bird lifted into the sky, the sun burst over the water behind them like the sounding of a shofar, lighting the bird's wings and the water beneath it, and blazing against the white walls of Beth Tsaida, the fishers' houses by the tideline below Kfar Nahum town. Those were houses of stone built to withstand the strong winds from the sea. Houses built to last; only the people inhabiting them had not.

As if in answer to the sun's arrival, an eerie cry sounded over the water. A high, wavering cry, a wail. Shimon stiffened; for a moment he didn't know what creature was uttering that scream, though he thought there were words in it.

"What was that?" Yohanna gasped.

"A man," Yakob said, looking over his shoulder. "There's a man on the shore."

Shimon glanced where Yakob gestured, even as the cry died away, leaving his heart beating fast. They were close enough to the shore now that if Shimon had held up his arm and tried to cover the man with his hand, he would have needed to use nearly his entire palm.

He squinted against the sun's glare on the water. One of the boat people, maybe, though the man was standing with his feet in

the sea. Why one of the vagrants would walk out into the breakers and risk the touch of the waterlogged dead, Shimon couldn't imagine. The man wore a wool robe the color of sand, though it was torn, dirtied. There were bruises on his face and arms. A vagrant, maybe one of those men with a demon that made him shriek in the night until the fishers of Kfar Nahum drove him away.

Yet that cry, that terrible cry.

Shimon could not slow the thumping of his heart. The oars slipped in and out of the water, and the boat moved smoothly toward the shore and the man.

The man on the shore lifted his hands to his mouth and called out again, and the cry carried loud and far. Yakob cursed and made the sign against the evil eye. That high wail as though he were the God of their fathers in the desert, calling the People to Har Sinai, the mountain that touched the clouds. Shimon made out one word in old Hebrew, strangely ululated: the word for *fish*.

"God, I wish he'd stop that," Yakob whispered, pale.

The very air seemed to quiver as the cry went on, and on. Then the boat lurched hard to the larboard, tilting, nearly tossing Shimon into the sea. He grasped the bench and his feet scabbled against the side of the boat as the gunwale nearly touched the surface. The boat—they were tipping! With a bellow, Shimon threw himself across and up against the highside. Yakob and Yohanna did so, too, shouting over the cry from the shore.

"Did we strike something?"

"I don't know!"

"Right the boat!" Shimon roared. He knew from the boat's tilt that the keel was coming dangerously near the surface, and he heard water lapping over the low gunwale as the boat fought for balance. Glancing down, he saw dark water coming over the gunwale and the nets trailing in the sea, and gasped.

There the nets were, some way below the surface, and he could see that they were full, in fact perilously full, of teeming,

squirming fish. Musht and barbels and sardines caught in the tight weave of the nets. The fish were blue-silver and they flashed in the dawn, like pieces of living iron. Their thousand mouths opened and closed helplessly, their eyes dark and glassy as if with shock at their sudden birth and capture, as if tossed in one slippery instant from God's hand into the waiting nets.

"*Fish*," Yakob whispered. "*Fish*."

"*Fish*," Yohanna whispered.

Then Shimon was whispering it, too. The word fell from their mouths like a sigh of awe, like an invitation to wake from an evil dream. *Fish* . . . *fish* . . . Their sigh went out over the water until that word and the slosh of the waves against the boat and the slapping of the wet scales of fish against each other's bodies and against the straining nets became one sound, one hope.