



# The Book of the Damned (The Secret Books of Parady's 1)

*Tanith Lee*

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**Eroticism and gothic horror mingle in the enchanted city of Paradys, where no one remains unchanged**

*The Book of the Damned* introduces the city of Paradys, also known as Paradise, or Paradis. In fact, it is three cities, all places of luxury and decay, twisted love and chilling magic, intertwined by an unknown enchantment.

In “Stained with Crimson,” the first tale of Paradys’s inhabitants, poet Andre St Jean encounters a mysterious man who thrusts upon him a ruby ring engraved with an Egyptian beetle. Advised by friends that the ring belongs to the most beautiful woman in Paradys—the pale and ebony-eyed Antonina von Aaron—Andre attends a salon to return it to her. Instead, he becomes entangled in a vampiric game of predator and prey, gender transformation, and bloody nightmares.

Dread imbues the second tale, “Malice in Saffron.” After young Jehanine is raped by her stepfather, she runs away to Paradys to find her stepbrother Pierre. But the once devoted Pierre accuses Jehanine of lying and casts her out into the inhospitable streets. The desperate girl finds refuge in a nunnery and tries to live in God’s light. But when dusk falls, she transforms into her male alter ego, Jehan, and prowls the alleys with murderous, Devil-worshipping thugs.

“Empire of Azure,” the final exploration of Paradys’s dangerous streets, recounts the investigations of writer Anna Sanjeanne, who receives a strange note from a mysterious man: “In a week or less, I shall be dead.” On the predicted date Anna follows the stranger’s trail. A chain of clues—a shattered window, a corpse hanging from a rope, a leather-bound diary, and a portrait of an unknown woman—soon lead the young journalist toward a sinister and ancient force.

Told with lush fantastical prose and an acute aesthetic sense, *The Book of the Damned* ventures into a morbid and disquieting parallel world, exploring the recesses of identity, gender, and sexual transgression that lie within.

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