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By Clive Barker



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Tortured Souls: The Legend of Primordium By Clive Barker

Tortured Souls is one of the most vividly imagined, tightly compressed novellas ever written by the incomparable Clive Barker. At once violent and erotic, brutal and strangely beautiful, it takes us into the heart of the legendary “first city” known as Primordium, the site of political upheaval, passionate encounters, and astonishing acts of transformation.

Lurking at the edges of this extravagant tale is the ancient entity known as “Agonistes,” who accepts the pleas of selected “Supplicants,” transforming them, through a combination of art, magic, and pain, into avatars of violence and revenge.

The story begins when a freelance assassin named Zarles Krieger commits a routine murder-for-hire. This act will lead him to two life-altering encounters, one with the daughter of his victim, the other with Agonistes himself. This conjunction of the human and the inhuman stands at the center of this instantly absorbing creation.

With great authority and equally great economy, Tortured Souls expands to become a portrait of Primordium itself, with its hierarchies, its hidden mysteries, its shifting power structure, and—most significantly—its indelible cast of characters. A perfectly controlled example of what Barker calls “the fantastique,” Tortured Souls is something truly special, a story whose imaginative reach and sheer narrative power are evident on every page.



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