

Mind's Darkest
Corners
Book 1

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S. Sairama
& Raymond Schmidt

“First off, I would like to congratulate the following students for their unwavering dedication to the school and their studies!”

As Principal Mikesman announces the school’s most dedicated members, I sit in the back waiting for my name to be called as usual, even though my attention has hardly been on my studies lately. Why should I be mentioned? I have been “side-tracked”. Lately, all I have been thinking of is the collection of weapons I have in my basement. There are two that I still need, and I know where to find both of them. The only problem is, they won’t be easy to get as they are the most powerful weapons ever created.

On the previous note - and let’s put this simply for people such as the school’s jock, John Mikesman, Principal Mikesman’s son - I know everything they teach in college because I have been through college about forty times already, though, admittedly, for different qualifications.

My first major was languages; I now speak two-hundred different languages. I am able to go around the world and talk to almost anyone, and I don’t have to just stand there and nod my head to act like I understand, or sit in the background while a translator talks for me, not knowing what they really are saying, or if they were just talking about the latest season of *that* soap opera.

My second major, after becoming a doctor of languages, was engineering. I decided to go back several years later and rub the fact that they were wrong, and I was right the whole time, in my professors’ faces.

My third major became archeology, but I got a master’s in that. You may be thinking, *Why would an Immortalis be interested in studying history?* Simple answer: I was bored and there were things I wasn’t able to know because I was somewhere else in the world when they happened.

Today, I am getting my master's (once this long drawn-out assembly is over) in medical science. This is so I can help out a human in need and learn more about the medicines of today. So yes, I am a genius in human terms, but in actuality, I am just above average intelligence in the Immortalis realm.

The only reason I go to school every summer, (and it takes me several years to complete each degree as I only go during the summer) is because I literally have all the time in the world.

The thing is, I am an Immortalis. Not immortal, but Immortalis. An Immortalis is a "lesser" Immortal.

What is the difference? one might think. The difference is that Immortals cannot die. Even if their heart is cut out and their heads are separated gruesomely (which is hard to do) from their bodies. You can try and try, but much like the mythical Titan god Cronos, who was chopped up into tiny bits and scattered all over Tartarus, they still "live", and if you put them back together then they reawaken from their nice little kitty nap.

Immortalis, on the other hand, can die, depending on what species they are; Fay, Water Nymph, Dryad, Centaur, and so on. Most Immortalis can die by having their heart removed, their heads decapitated, or both. For others, there are other ways. One thing for sure is: an Immortalis cannot die of old age. Or a true one, that is.

There was one type of Immortalis that could die of old age, and of old age only, though they are long extinct as they could not reproduce.

"Syrus Sairiama!" called Principal Mikesman. I get up off my old butt (though it looks as if I am only in my late twenties) and walk over to Mikesman. He presents me with my awards, then my degree, and after that I stand next to the rest of the geeks (not saying that I am one).

The sooner this assembly is done, the sooner I can get home to my waterside condo and get some shut eye, I think to myself.

I forgot to tell you that Immortalis have trust issues, most of the time with one another. The majority of them trust me even less than the usual.

I happen to have a reputation in the hidden world for killing those Immortalis who are in my way - though most of the rumors are so not true - so lately I have had been up for days fighting for my life.

Just last night there was a harpy attack at my house, and it destroyed my dock area while searching for me. I wasn't there because I was watching a movie with a friend of mine at the Cinema 12. When I got home, it was still there tearing things up, and that made me mad, so I had a lovely grilled harpy sandwich for supper last night. It does get tiresome.

Another thing, humans, also known as the mundane or the mortals, do not know about the hidden world, which consists of all the Immortals and Immortalis that live amongst them.

Though humans are the dominant species on the planet, there is a good amount of Immortalis; for every one Immortalis there are five hundred mortals.

Now, I know it does not sound too good, but these days, most Immortalis thank their lucky stars there are not that many left. Like I said, we don't normally trust each other, because we usually look out for ourselves more than each other. Unless, of course, you are a werewolf in a pack, and then there are some exceptions. To tell you the truth, werewolves are one of the more populous Immortalis species. I can't really remember the predominant species though – once in a while I *do* forget things.

I remember, it was only the other day, when I was

contemplating this very subject that I decided to go for another degree: physiology.

After all, I mused to myself, I am pretty sure there are no enemies in this small village.

I had been lounging in a small, off-the-beaten track spot called Antique, a province of the Philippines located in the Western Visayas region. I had been to the capital San Jose, located in the western portion of Panay Island, bordering Aklan, Capiz, and Lloilo to the east many years ago, and as I discovered when I got there, Antique faces west toward the Sulu sea. You say you have never heard of it? Neither had I until I just happened to run across an article on it when I was looking for Antique's archeological data. The place used to be known as Hanta, which was named after the large fire ants found on the island. I enjoy incorporating several ventures simultaneously, so I thought that it would be neat to conduct some biological research while I was there.

The Spanish renamed it when they arrived and recorded it as "Hantique" in the French manner. Later the initial *h* was dropped, and the name officially became "An-ti-kway." Once you know how it is pronounced, it brings back some old memories. It was the name of a song in the late twentieth century. Funny how that keeps popping back up, but like a wise man said, "There is nothing new under the sun."

Another interesting thing that caught my attention while I was there, was the fact that I was able to be on a search crew. We were just looking for nice artifacts so I could finish my archeological studies, when we happened to stumble upon an undiscovered cave. Not fun when the cave turns out to hide creatures like the Chupacabra, which is also known as the Mexican goat eater.