

REHAB RAP

Written by Debbie Croysdale

A celebrity rapper joins an elite rehab to kick drugs but becomes enslaved in a dark cult where the addicts begin to disappear and a special needs fruit picker becomes his only ally.

FIRST TEN PAGES

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FADE IN - Dead magnolia space, windowless, iron bed and office chair. A bulb hangs from ceiling on old wire emitting dingy half light. Young woman lies on her side, arms tied behind, knees bent and ankles bound. Mouth gagged by grey tape she lies on bare mattress in soiled clothes. Door creaks open, she curls into embryo position, trembling violently. Her chest heaves, breathing distorted, face reddening.

MAN'S VOICE (UNSEEN)

A trussed up turkey, shame it's not
thanksgiving but not long now.

CLICK Light's turned off, darkness, door slams as he leaves. A scuttling sound frantically races around the skirting boards, along the floor and up the bed post. Two illumined dots stare down at her, the beady eyes of a black desert rat.

INTERIOR - EVENING High end nightclub, bar, blue neon sign flashes "Cocktails." Crammed venue, people stand and sit. Lead singer's interval, his band bunch up left as he faces audience centre stage. A crowd of well heeled city dwellers, Goths, and Original Style Street Rappers. He walks stage edge, tosses microphone, throwing out arms he blows kisses.

ZEBEDEE KING Ethnic mixed race, tall, clean shaven, shaggy hair, ear studs, black gloves, casual colorful clothes.

ZEBEDEE

Eclectic folks! Eclectic!

THE CROWD

Ze be dee... Ze be dee... Ze be dee

EXT - EARLY EVENING - HIGH STREET CITY

A man strides along in a hurry, bumping into a woman shopper who jolts from the impact. She stills herself to pick up her groceries, staring up at him open mouthed but he does not stop to apologize and carries on walking instead.

MAXWELL 35 Stocky, tall, blonde, blue city suit with waistcoat and cravat, crocodile skin winkle pickers.

He checks his watch, rushes off main drag onto a back street, pausing at the rear of a Chinese restaurant. He lights a cigarette, frowns and checks his mobile. Suddenly a vagrant appears from behind a tall dumpster that faces the kerb.

VAGRANT Fifties, pitted brown skin, tangled white hair, long winter coat, clutching a thrown away tray of Peking duck.

VAGRANT

Can you spare any change mister?

Maxwell covers his nose, puts away phone and shakes his head trying to ignore him but the vagrant moves in closer.

MAXWELL

You think you can just invade my space? Like I'm public property?

Maxwell suddenly kicks him in the knees so the tramp falls backwards to hit the dumpster. Leaning against the metal tub he gasps for breath, badly winded he clutches his own throat.

VAGRANT

Okay, okay I'll go away.

He tries to run but Maxwell kicks his ankles so he bends forward, keeling over to lie face down and taste the concrete. He struggles to turn on his side, spitting out dust, hands clutching his face to shield any punches.

Sorry. I'm sorry mister.

MAXWELL

Apology not accepted.

Maxwell boots him in the stomach several times, one last kick his body becomes still and lifeless. Maxwell quickly leaves up an ally onto a road of crowded Mexican eateries. Customers spill onto the kerb as summer heat makes steam rise from road drains. He smiles, wiping his face with his handkerchief.

INTERIOR- EVENING - DRESSING ROOM

Zebedee sits grimly at mirror, reaching in mini fridge to pull out two tins. He pops them open, gaseous larger spurts over his clothes and he yells out for assistance.

ZEBEDEE

Get the fuck in here.

AMY Petite blonde, 30, brown overall, black vanity case on shoulder. She rushes in and rubs his shirt down with towel then grabs a tin of hair spray, teasing his hair into place.

AMY

Try keeping still while I get this stray wisp back where it should be.

ZEBEDEE

Don't bother, I'm not doing second
act tonight.

Her hands on his shoulders, she summons courage to answer.

AMY

Go back on now then, they're
calling. One last rap.

ZEBEDEE

They got their two cents already.

They lock eyes in mirror, his reflection shoots her daggers.

AMY

But you always encore?

ZEBEDEE

Not tonight. Not now. I'm done.

AMY

But why? What's wrong Zebedee?

He throws his tins across room, they smash onto wall.

ZEBEDEE

I said no twice already. Your here
to work not here to ask questions.

AMY

And you not here to bail out like
some spoilt brat superstar.

ZEBEDEE

And who are you exactly?
My fuckin therapist?

He spits out his words and she turns away to leave.

AMY

Rapping's its own world. Aint no
room for stuck up attitude so grab
some gratitude, there's fans out
there waitin just for you.

She wipes sticky hair spray off her hands, onto her overall.
He swivels around to face her as she stands by door.

ZEBEDEE

Hey gotta a song there. Attitude.
Gratitude. Attitude. Gratitude.

He begins to sing loudly in Rapper Rhyme.

Get rid Da attitude. Grab some
gratitude. You ain't no bad dude.
So don't act sad dude.

He stops singing as she grabs the handle and opens door.

Get angry more often and you might
just make it as a song writer
instead of only back scene skivvy.

AMY

It ain't about big boys takin piss
but connecting people, bringing
world together. With you ten years
Zebedee but don't know you no more
and you made me forget my combs.

She rushes back, picking her combs up off dresser. He points
to his face, still covered in studio make up.

ZEBEDEE

Get this shit off my face.

She ignores him and runs out so he goes to lock the door and
gets two packets from wardrobe safe. He sits staring at them
unable to decide which to open first, then makes a line of
coke on the dresser. Minutes later he stares at the weed
where fresh leaves spill out of white paper reefers.

INT - EARLY EVENING - CREEPY BASEMENT BAR

Maxwell sits at the end of bar in dim lit cellar, a tatty
attempt at speakeasy style that more resembles a vintage junk
shop. A dysfunctional fan wafts tepid air over the counter,
towards the only bartender. Maxwell's alone his back to
crowd, supping bottle of larger.

MAXWELL

They should close this place down.

BARMAN Tall, wiry, bearded Hispanic, pony tail.

BARMAN

This art man, an eclectic mix here.
And when The Palace shuts, all
those music fans pile in, even had
"The" Zebedee King in. Not everyone
digs a landscape that's sterile.

MAXWELL

You said it. Sterile not.

SKUNK enters. Thirties, white, muscles, bald head, tee shirt with skull photo, sawn off denims, flip flops, hell's Angel tattoo back of head. He perches on stool next to Maxwell.

SKUNK

I waited but you didn't show.

MAXWELL

You got streets mixed up and you look like a wife beater.

SKUNK

Sorry you imagined me different. Roasting out there and been hanging around for no reason. Bartender, over here, two bottles of the same.

MAXWELL

Lucky I jumped on a tram. So?

SKUNK

Fuck it, similar street names, same city, who notices S end of words? And it's sorted, done and I want extra for acting fast, other mark dying sudden road pile up.

MAXWELL

Was me who had to butter up the buyer, persuade him, someone else.

SKUNK

Couldn't have we done this off radar? Public meet since when? And aren't you hot in that suit?

MAXWELL

We got time pressure and I don't trust anyone else choose. My clothes not your business, think I move from shit hole to shit hole like you? I'm playing Saratoga casino at ten. And don't worry we'll never meet again.

He hands Skunk an envelope and walks away up the spiral staircase out onto street. A Latino girl in a floral dress sits at bar, he turns to face her.

SKUNK

Hi Darling.

INT - BACK TO DRESSING ROOM - A mobile rings in dresser. Zebedee opens the drawer to pull out four handsets, placing them neatly in a pile. Caller identity glows PAMELA.

ZEBEDEE

Hi darling! Be sure to bring sexy little number Saturday, the teeny weeny white lace bikini. Back on stage in two, gotta go Pam.

He switches off as another handset rings and begins to shout.

ZEBEDEE (CONT'D)

Lines breaking hardly hear you. Bad signal, cops might catch me talkin, gotta go, bottleneck 85 junction. Bye Ann.

He turns off, another rings, phones dangle from each hand.

Sue, I'm stuck rehearsal. Yeah can't wait but Trent's just pulled a face, ya know management? Mobile free zone, that shit. See ya soon!

He chucks them all in drawer, picking up fourth mobile to turn the power off before it can ring out.

You can wait.

He glares at the bunch of phones and slams the drawer shut.

Too many, too little time. Should go hands free, voice activated. Fucking remote contact, double up.

He reaches in pocket for fifth phone to dial last caller.

ZEBEDEE (CONT'D)

Tanya my place? No after show party. Solomon wants me first thing he got some middle age crisis.

Zebedee ignores knock at door. A young man gingerly pokes his head through. DAVE LINDEN Nerdy intern, skinny, smooth skin, red hair, round metal glasses hang half way down his face. He forces a smile.

DAVE

I've arranged a special meal for new band member. All sorted for Friday night, seven at Carlo's so here's the menu for perusal.

Dave grins, hovering by the door, holding up the menu.

Well? Can I pop it on your desk?
Team building and socialization.

Zebedee shakes his head profusely.

But?

ZEBEDEE

But what? Bonding evening for new guitarist? Pizza place all across town? What planet are you on? Road's on the show. Me. Not the other fucking way around. Drag me away from last of seasons groupies?

Dave blushes furiously and leaves.

INTERIOR - MORNING - CHIEF EXECUTIVE PRODUCER'S OFFICE

Sky rise, brilliant white, and minimalist. Photographs of major music artists cover walls. Floor to ceiling, wall to wall windows, resembling a huge fish tank suspended over New York skyline. Rising August heat outside forms a mist that tricks the eye, so the tops of buildings appear to wobble.

MR SOLOMON Fifty, fat, bald, designer suit, decked in gold. Mr Solomon sits at desk, Zebedee's a distance away, nose pressed to the glass, looking at world beneath.

MR SOLOMON

You must stop upsetting people, we need people with class. And.

He stops talking to mop his face with hanky, air con blows icy cool, indicating an organic reason for his temperature.

Been two complaints about you in a week, this season riddled. Don't want human fucking resources on my back. Look at me, I'm speaking.

ZEBEDEE

Killer view, you people live like kings up here. Fuckin awesome dude.

Mr Solomon crooks his finger, ushering Zebedee to sit but he doesn't move and stays rigidly searching the City-scape.

ZEBEDEE (CONT'D)

My job's to sing, where in my contract does it say appease cunts? I pull crowds, what more you want?

MR SOLOMON

Pretend be nice, people skills cost nothing, rapping pulls different crowds. Become elite, whole new audience to early days. Play the game we got new blood in the mix.

ZEBEDEE.

I put money in, you take it out. Why this deep shit thinking? Just let me get on with it, I rap, you bank, ain't no rocket science.

MR SOLOMON

You know industry's based on contacts, why make them run to their uptown buddies saying we're a bunch of bastards? Influence them in ways that work for us will you?

ZEBEDEE

Okay but I'm much more, way more than **just an influencer**.

INT - EARLY MORNING Marble black and white bathroom, high end hotel. New York Times perches side of the bath. Maxwell stands and stares into gold edged mirror, speaking on mobile.

MAXWELL

I'm more than **just an influencer**, I'm only major player. Sure, you can find fleeting cheap surprises dark web but this only yours alone. I am going to show you something you have never, ever, seen before. We agree? Cool, stage three when receive funds. Speak tomorrow.

He tosses phone and walks over to pick up a bottle of aftershave to dab on himself as he smiles at his reflection.

First lesson in suspense asshole.

He goes to bedside and picks up land line.

Room service? Send me up a whistle
pig and a house pizza. No I don't
want full English or continental.

KNOCK. Young waiter enters, white suit, gloves, neat crop
hair. He puts tray on table, Maxwell lies on the bed.

WAITER

Your drink Sir and house pizza, is
there anything else you require?

MAXWELL

Come over here.

WAITER

Yes Sir? What can I help you with?

MAXWELL

I suppose you're waiting for a tip?

WAITER

Actually I was just leaving Sir.

MAXWELL

What do you do for fun?

WAITER

Usual stuff, friends, bar, movies.

MAXWELL

Girlfriend? Boyfriend?

WAITER

Couple. Still playing the field.

MAXWELL

Couple what, girls or boys?

The boy smiles in jest and turns away but Maxwell quickly
stands up opposite him, brushing his shoulder with one hand.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

There's a hair on your shoulder.

Maxwell holds an imaginary hair in the air and blows it away.

WAITER

Thank you Sir.

Maxwell goes to fetch his wallet from jacket in wardrobe.

MAXWELL

Here you are.

Maxwell clenches his fist as waiter tries to grab money.

You haven't answered my question?

WAITER

Girlfriends? Sally and Karen.

Maxwell lets go of the money and waiter leaves quickly.

MAXWELL

Shame. That.

INT - MORNING -BACK IN EXECUTIVE PRODUCER'S OFFICE

ZEBEDEE

Is lecture cos of a high strung
Yale kid? Not my problem real
world's come as a shock to a music
major, sides he's here to learn.

Zebedee picks up an awards ceremony figurine to admire.

MR SOLOMON

Fresh eyes know how next generation
think, feel but he's icing on cake.

He gets a file, Zebedee stares at gold ring on his finger,
open roar of lions mouth and teeth ten sparkling diamonds.

MR SOLOMON (CONT'D)

It's all here on record. So read.

ZEBEDEE

Not sure I dig where this is going.

Mr Solomon loosens tie, face angry red, bangs fist on table.

ZEBEDEE (CONT'D)

Are you spontaneously combusting?
Saw a programme on it last week.

MR SOLOMON

Complaints and thank God its not
sexual harassment or we'd have law
suits instead of tribunal warning.

PLEASE REQUEST FURTHER READ