

**-TRACK 1-**  
**RECONCILIATORY MATTERS**

Miles Hargrove peered at the old man through a curtain of cigarette smoke. The lights in the community room were turned down at the aging rock star's request, but he still wore sunglasses, and Miles realized he could see the cameraman's reflection in them.

"Jody," the producer said, snapping his fingers. "Can we get a different angle?"

Aidan Cross sat back in his seat while the producer sought a better shot. He sucked down the first cigarette in two long drags and chuckled when the thought occurred to him: *Maybe this is what Keith Richards felt like.*

Keith was dead, though. Had been for years. He'd shuffled off to that long-lost Valhalla to spend eternity drinking wine off the tits of beautiful women.

Aidan had never met Keith Richards, but he liked to think they would've gotten along. Not that it mattered now.

The producer, Miles, turned back to his interview subject. "Apologies, Mr. Cross. The low lighting is causing some difficulties. We should be ready in just a few moments."

"No worries," Aidan mumbled. "It's your dime, kid."

Miles Hargrove offered a smile that reminded Aidan of their old manager, Reggie Allen. Reggie used to smile like that all the time before his face was torn off. Old Reggie's smile was never quite the same after that.

Jody repositioned the camera and gave Miles the okay with his thumb and forefinger. The producer sat up and leaned forward. He gave Aidan another liar's smile.

"We're just about ready to start," he said, "and before we do, Mr. Cross, I just want to say that I've been a big fan of yours for a long time. I used to play a little guitar back in college, and your songs were always a favorite with the ladies. The Yellow Kings were my favorite band back then."

Aidan sat back in his chair and lit another cigarette. For a moment his face was set alight from the spark, illuminating the scars that stretched across his haggard face. He spoke with a voice full of gravel and ash. "What changed?"

The smile fell away from the producer's face. "Pardon?"

"We were your favorite *back then*. What changed?"

"Well, after all that happened... I—"

Aidan Cross raised his hand and smirked. "Relax, Mr. Hargrove. Are we rolling?"

Miles nodded. "We are. Feel free to start any time."

The old rock star leaned forward, planting his bony arms on the table and clasping his hands as if in prayer. Long, lazy tendrils of smoke rose from the cigarette's cherry, shrouding the room in a dull haze. The way the light filtered through that smoggy cloud gave Aidan an inhuman glow. Jody had done his best to capture the old man's good side, but the years had been unkind, and in this light, he could not tell where the wrinkles stopped and the scars began.

"You know, Mr. Hargrove—"

"Miles. You can call me Miles."

"—Miles, then. I only agreed to this interview for one reason."

"And what reason is that?"

Aidan reached up and pulled the sunglasses down the bridge of his nose. Miles blinked, fighting back the urge to look away from the puckered scars lining the old man's eyes. The stories about what happened that night did those scars no justice; they were hideous things, cavernous in Aidan's sagging flesh, each groove the width of a fingernail that traced a map of agony down his cheeks.

Miles Hargrove swallowed back what little saliva he could muster. “It must have been horrible, what happened to you.”

“I’ve spent the last thirty years trying to reconcile that night, Miles. I haven’t had a choice—every time I look in the mirror I’m reminded of what we did. It was supposed to be the best night of our lives, but now I’m all that’s left...” His lower lip quivered erratically. He pushed the shades back up to his eyes.

“Why don’t you start at the beginning, Aidan?”

Aidan sighed and shook his head. “It started with the gypsy, the woman calling herself Camilla, although I don’t think that was her real name. She was our undoing. I’d like to think I saw it coming, but in those days I was just as lost in her mystique as Johnny. Christ, I’ve not thought about him in a decade.” He screwed up his face, fighting back the pulling tides of emotion, and smoked the cigarette down to its filter in a single drag. “These days I prefer not to.”