

**Excerpts from:**

**The Infinitude of the Sentient Singularity:**

**Speedin' Bullet**

**by JACK GRANT**

**Warning: Contains adult themes and explicit material.**

This extensive literary work contains any and all 'triggers' seems the tome is one relating to horror in all its forms. Anyone in fear of triggering a phobia or a traumatic memory definitely should not be reading horror content.

This novel also contains some lighter moments, including humour, good cheer, friendship and laughter; in light of this, the book should be avoided by any and all 'miserable gits' everywhere.

N.B.

These excerpts taken from the novel:

*Speedin' Bullet;*

are part of a larger work:

'The Infinitude Of The Sentient Singularity - Screamin' Skull Trilogy'

In the carefully chosen excerpts there are a few select omissions  
to avoid 'spoilers'.

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## *Preface*

A number of stories and themes described in this book are based upon true otherworldly encounters as experienced by the author. However, names and locations have been altered. Remember, that to some degree, we are all psychic, for this ability is inborn and far more common than the mainstream would ever dare to admit.

There is nothing supernatural nor paranormal; in fact, expanded awareness is both quite natural *and* normal. Suspend your disbelief and delete the 'super-' along with the 'para-'. If I had a penny for every time I saw or spoke to a spirit entity (ghost) then I believe I'm very likely to be nudging nearer towards a tenner!

Beyond the fleshy confines of mortality  
In unrestricted realities that abound  
The war to realise realm reduction rages on

Within time and space which cannot exist  
An infinity bristling bright with expression does persist  
To perceive the true power and glory of the 'one'

The magnificence which is ...  
*the Sentient Singularity*

# *Speedin' Bullet [Excerpts]*

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# *Speedin' Bullet:*

## *Excerpt from Chapter One*

The rays from a powerful sun beamed down upon the open ground. The dry red mudflats baked in the searing heat. The atmosphere surrounding the rusty wreck of a compound gave rise to an all-pervading shimmering heat haze. This evaporated the moisture, every last drop, which mingled with the dry air, spiralling away in flurries, any hope of relief.

The old, square cut, tin plated sign hanging above the gaping entrance creaked while swaying slightly from the attached antiquated chains. Painted over the rusty surface, roughly written in chipped and dirty white lettering were the words, 'SPEEDIN BULLET TOR – MENT'. Maybe this is how the signwriters meant it to read, or perhaps some letters had been lost to corrosion, ignorance or a combination of both. Next to the letters, a fading image faintly showing a ghostly off-white skull and crossbones served to remind the unwary of all the past woes that the sign once represented.

Old rusting engineless buses were now only adequate in purpose and design to form an oblong corral. These vehicles were the very walls of the enclosure. They formed the perimeter surrounding the old red dirt thoroughfare which measured roughly sixty yards wide and a hundred in length of hard, dry baked earth. The area contained a sparse junk yard, littered with old engine parts, rusting dented petrol cans, along with a few upturned oxidised oil drums. A moderate mound of metallic bric-a-brac and smashed headlamps constituted the centrepiece.

A thin trail of smoke drifted out into the air, emanating from one particular smashed-in bus window. The shoddy shadow of a tattered old man puffed away in quiet contemplation. Stale and stained, the paper cigarette glowed red at the tip every time the old Native Ozz '*Riginal*' took a deep draw. He stared at the arid desert outback intently concentrating on a point far out into the distance. Strewn across the landscape were a smattering of parched, spiny old shrubs trying to cling to life with their roots embedded in the dry desperation of the earth.

A few black flies buzzed past the old man's face. Impulsively flicking at the air, he distractedly waved them away, breaking him from his temporary trance. With the contemplative ruminations now at an end he returned his attention to the bus interior. Upon the last of a wheezy spent breath akin to a weary sigh, he gazed at the seats up front and communicated a casual comment.

"They comin' missus, be here soon enough."

The ghost of a dust storm erupted upon the horizon from where his attention had been focused. The disturbance could not sustain much energy and it quickly faded, dissipating into the atmosphere. He took another draw on his much reduced, grubby cigarette end. Another lungful of grey billowing smoke made him cough and hack a little.

“They on time at least,” the fragility of an old woman’s voice answered from further up the aisle of broken seats, nearer the front of the bus. “Come every year. Same time, same place. They getting thinner now tho’, very thin in the air.”

The aged Native Ozz lady continued to while away the blazing day as she settled back in a threadbare weather worn double seat. An old board set on upturned oil cans provided her with a makeshift table where she had placed her steaming jam-jar of herbal tea. She lifted the chipped glass container to her lips and cautiously took a little sip. Her face bore witness to the fact that she had endured many a hot arid year with the lady’s complexion having become naturally marred by the telling lines and wrinkles of age. Though she possessed frizzy, flowing locks, the dark colour of her hair had become streaked with grey. Clinging to her bony frame in sweat-drenched patches, a tatty black dress dotted with blue flowery patterns provided a loosely draped covering. The thin material appeared frayed, ragged and torn in a number of places, though stitched and mended with contrasting white thread. A pair of old sandals loosely hung on to her feet with the straps now replaced by twine, wrapped for support around her ankles. She wiggled her toes while she took another sip of tea. Yawning a little whilst stretching out her arms, the lady’s old bones cracked somewhat. When her shoulders sagged, she effected a slight wince of discomfort.

“No use pretendin’,” she said while gesturing with one arm towards the smashed window opposite her and the wilderness that lay beyond, “This dream-time’s almost over. Our folks all gone home exceptin’ for you an’ me.”

“I know,” replied her old friend from the back of the bus, before emitting a brief sigh. He continued, “Soon be time to make a move.” The old man took another deep draw on his practically expended cigarette, exhaling the smoke which drifted above him to hang in the air like a suffocating shroud.

“We clung on too long missus. We tried our best to help him.” A small pillar of ash fell from the stalk of his cigarette onto his black fleecy strides. He brushed the powdery grey ‘spent burn’ away with the palm of one hand before he went on to say, “But this is the last time. We gotta move on. Can’t wait forever.” Using an old rag he swabbed at a little dark spittle that had dribbled onto his grubby grey shirt.

“Do you want some tea?” the old lady asked.

“No,” he replied with a thorough shaking of his head, “Don’t like that herbal stuff. Gives me the trots.” The elderly lady chuckled at this whereafter her friend resolutely stated, “I’ll stick with mi liquor.” He took a tentative sip from a dusty green bottle, the neck rim of which had become chipped and cracked. He swallowed, resulting in a mild coughing fit.

The aged lady called out to the back of the bus, “So the hooch don’t give ya the squits then?”

He lifted the bottle in a mock toast to no one but himself before dejectedly declaring, “Not much left now.” Totally ignoring her comment he went on. “Maybe a bottle and a half. Still, won’t be needin’ it much longer now.” He took another swig.

They both remained ensconced in their seats while silently pondering, taking the occasional swig or sip from their respective drinking vessels of bottle and jar.

The bus structure and bodywork provided a modicum of shade but no real protection from the relentless heat. The perspiring lady picked up a piece of old cardboard from the makeshift table. She used the flat card to waft and fan her face whilst saying, “I got to thinkin’, I’ve been here years workin’ to get through to ‘you-know-who’, but what’s been asked o’ me, as a final last resort, well, the very idea still scares the hell outa me.” She shuffled uncomfortably in her seat.

The old man softly replied, “Evie, these things don’t matter now. What befalls you, befalls me. To hell with it!” Speaking in such a direct, though calming manner, his words did actually comfort her and not least because he had used her name without mentioning the usual ‘missus’ reference. He cleared his throat and continued, “We can have one last try before we make for the hump. I can feel our kin a-callin’, time to go home.”

A weak twist of dust swept into the dirt square compound, almost silent, like the last distant presence prolonged on a final eerie echo, murmuring in decreasing degrees a lost former glory. The haunting, diminished whisper of discontent, managed to disturb two rusty oil cans. An old smashed headlamp toppled down over a mountain of counterparts, rolling to the ground to cause a fleeting clang. The sign above the entrance stirred on the chains.

Old lady Evie looked out upon the slight disturbance.

“It’s like a sparrow fart in the breeze now Abe,” she said.

“Aye, we had better get to work,” replied her silvery haired friend.

Evie continued to fan her brow, mumbling to herself absent mindedly, “Mmm, kill ’em.” She expelled a faint sigh. “Always the same, kill ’em, kill ’em.” She swatted away a small black fly. “Kill ’em.”



## *Excerpts from Chapter Six*

Raggedy Pete kept up with the pace. He desperately pushed for extra momentum to edge in front of the two cars that flanked him. He had ‘High-five’ to his left and ‘Razorback’ to his right. Neither would give any ground. Pete struggled, desperately nudging the front end marginally ahead, managing to get a half length in front before losing the lead and swiftly dropping behind again, thus robbing the raggedy man of his short lived advantage.

Side by side they were equally matched, with Pete just beginning to wonder if they would spend the whole race locked in these positions, when a strange feeling swept over him. He had the weird flurry of a sensation in his ears, like passing through a non-existent gale, though the gale raged inside his head.

He had felt like a wimpy loser all his life. More often than not he had been treated like one; what you consciously or subconsciously transmit to the world is pretty much all you attract; even one’s own thoughts are psychically sentient. He wanted desperately to prove to his wife and kids that he could do something right, that he could succeed, even to excel at something. Winning the prize, a new life in the North is all that he desired. In truth he would trade that prize if his family were to pay him just one ounce of respect. This gave him reason enough to put that gun so willingly to his own head and pull the trigger. ‘*Better to be dead than to live dissed,*’ he thought. Of course he had, much to his own relief, also miserably failed in that endeavour too.

He had looked to his right several times since he started to feel strange, to see the face of ‘Razorback’ concentrating hard on the open range ahead, much like himself, trying to gain ground.

This time however, he noticed something different about the driver’s physical appearance. Razorback’s bearded chin had dropped. The facial features were elongated, forming into an abnormal snout. The ears on the man grew, becoming beast-like in appearance and the whole of his head had pretty much doubled in size. His long black beard seemed to be moving independently.

Experiencing the feeling of being watched, Razorback looked across at Pete. He noticed Pete’s terrified expression.

To Raggedy Pete’s clear perceptions, the long black beard wasn’t a beard at all; dangling from the man-bull’s lower jaw were scores of wriggling thin black snakes writhing and twisting in a shimmering ebony turmoil. The eyes fixed on him. Even the snakes seemed to be looking in his direction. Pete’s terrified eyes fixed on them.

Razorback took one hand off his steering wheel to motion towards practically petrified Pete who just fixedly gawped back at him. Displaying an open palm, Razorback mouthed the question, “What?” “What?”

The car next to High-five's vehicle deviated to diagonally cut in front. Reacting with lightning speed, High-five veered to his left narrowly missing a smash. Impulsively venting his anger, he shot an angry glance towards the other driver while yelling out, "You scraggy-arsed stupid frickin' moron!" Obviously this did no good since Raggedy Pete seemed transfixed, staring to his right, without actually concentrating on where his motor happened to be heading.

High-five, having just avoided disaster, didn't pay much attention to the swooshing sound in his ears, although now he understood why the other driver acted in this strange manner. He would have done the same. High-five would most definitely have looked away.

Sitting next to Raggedy Pete in the passenger seat, a garish figure with a vibrant bushy full head of hair rigidly stared straight forward in unmoving silence. Suddenly the neck snapped violently towards the passenger window and creepily smiling, the clown looked High-five in the eye. The sickening slapstick presence seemed all too similar to the ones in that old picture book which had terrified High-five when nought but a child: the red curly wig and the ever present deceitful grease paint smile disguising that which lay beneath the cosmetic layers: a teeth-baring, flesh-ripping, all-consuming hellish mouth.

A chill ran down High-five's spine just as his confused mind noticed and acknowledged the three other clowns sitting in the back of poor old Pete's car. They each held differently coloured contrasting balloons.

He instantly became aware that the three back-seat passenger clowns were riotously in the throes of hysterical laughter with their eyes tightly closed during their intense uproar. They each sported a plain white jumpsuit that matched their pallid faces, which would have been totally blank if it were not for their upturned red greasepaint smiles.

The three indistinguishable individuals respectively topped off their image with identical white conical hats, though High-five convinced himself that they weren't hats at all but vertical coned extensions of their hairless heads.

Pete, the driver, who was flat out flooring the car, did not budge in his seat, nor did he seemingly want to acknowledge the existence of the clowns. In his thoughts, High-five comforted himself.

*'Thank the gods! Better him than me. At least I'm safe from them.'*

Suddenly all four clowns turned to face in his direction. The three on the back seat kept their eyes closed, yet to High-five's creeping terror he somehow sensed that they still held him in their sights.



Razorback spied Pete in the rear view mirror. He also saw the perfect image reflected by two scantily clad, sexy young women who were sitting in the back seat of his own car. They giggled whilst sliding the flat of their palms up and down the sexy dark leg-enhancing fishnet stockings which were delicately attached to suspender belts. In addition they were wearing nothing more than feather boas around their necks; one had black, the other had pink.

The woman with the pink boa raised one of her ample bosoms and playfully kissed the well rounded dome. Her companion rubbed a hand slowly between her thighs; she exhaled a slight moan.

In the front passenger seat the bikini babe gently kissed the side of Razorback's face which served as a precursor to her discourse.

"I can't see us having sex with you if ya let him get away like that, sugar."

"Yeah," Razorback nodded his head. "I should go back and finish off that sucker." His motor executed a sharp U-turn in the desert which made the sexy ladies giggle with excitement.



## *Excerpt from Chapter Seven*

Chain-male considered himself a provider and a life line for the unfortunate wretches eking out a miserable existence in the harsh environment, at the heart of the wasteland. His people had to eat and they were glad of anything.

The monks condemned him. They rebuked him for cannibalism while almost being the same; cannibals once removed in the chain of events. This turned out to be the reason they wouldn't barter with him for the three that fell in the chicken game. They stamped numbers on the foreheads of the slain so they would be sure to identify their vehicles; a very efficient way to catalogue and steal the property of the dead. He had offered a good bargain but the holy order rejected his offer. The bodies would be taken to Monastery in the croc lands to be given a good saintly burial.

Chain-male knew better.

So now he had a vengeful plan, to win this thing and claim their prize; take the gas, the food, along with a good supply of fresh water. He would head out to the North where rumour had it, rich pickings were to be found.

He feared little, after all, was he not a warrior, a road kill merchant of the wastelands? His people were few and scattered across the desert lands. He could not afford to be squeamish nor sentimental. Life was for the living and the dead were just food. Although he did have one very definite fear, a terrible thing; as a child, he listened to the stories told around the camp fire. Terrifying tales about Icky from Wrath.

Legend told that Icky was a wrath child. Some folks knew this apparition by the name 'lazy bones'; far too idle to kill and cook so this nightmarish thing ate all its victims alive.

Icky roamed the wastes looking to fall upon the unwary, for once the wrath-child gripped on to you, the tightly clenched embrace proved impossible to break. This unholy predator would cling to the body, greedily gorging on the fat and the flesh, drinking the blood, cracking the bones, suckin' an' a-slurpin' on the innards.

The monks loved their jokes and innuendos. They named him 'Chain-male' with him obviously being a man who dressed in chains, but they didn't reckon on the true reason why he wore such protection. Travelling the great expanses could be very dangerous but if Icky from wrath ever fell upon him, the teeth in the monstrous mouth would have to chew through chain.

*'Always look for an edge, always be on your guard. Don't dismiss old folk tales told around the camp fire, they just might turn out to be true.'*

## *Excerpt from Chapter Ten*

Although Fry happened to be the youngest contender to compete, he was no less keen than his elder rivals. The monks had tried to recruit him into their ranks thinking him easily led because of his youth and imagined gullibility. Forthwith, Fry rejected their offer, seems he regarded himself as nobody's fool. No one told him what to do with 'his' life.

They had mocked him, labelling him with the moniker 'Fry-day the 13<sup>th</sup>' because he had picked the number '13' from Rattigan's lottery bag, so he was pretty much stuck with that tag. He supposed 'Fry the 13<sup>th</sup>' didn't quite have the same ring to it. He discovered from the other contenders that in '*old world*' whenever a Friday coincided with the 13<sup>th</sup> of the month, they believed it to be an ill omen. Fry didn't even pretend to understand. The rest of the competitors just knew him by the name 'Fry'. '*They didn't take the piss, so up yours, monks!*' he thought to himself.

What he had called his extended family numbered just twenty in all. He wasn't related to any of them by blood. At the age of just about five years old he had been found wandering the wastes. The guy who actually found him turned out to be the leader of this group, leastways he served as the main man, the alpha male so to speak and he named him 'Small Fry' which became shortened to Fry.

He guessed that back then, the fella who rescued him would have been closer to his own age, presently in the here and now, maybe twenty-five years old at the most. This guy went by the name of Bruno and Fry grew to love him, though not like a big brother or an uncle for he loved him in the same way that a son loves his pa. He had on occasions called him this by mistake, slip of the tongue, an absent minded glitch. When he did this, Bruno always gave him a double look, or a wink and a smile because all in all, Fry held this to be true; Bruno had become his father and Fry honoured the man in his heart with that same respectful title, bound by the bond of eternal love.

Fry travelled light from place to place in Bruno's clapped out old motor, scavenging gas whenever the opportunity arose, gathering food wherever he could, though he always felt hungry. Near starvation had driven him to this tournament with much more urgency than his motor could ever manage. He figured, still being in the flush of youth at only nineteen years old, that if anybody could make it to the North, 'he' could.

Fry himself hadn't been taught much in the way of schooling; only the basics along with the practical skills; trapping, scavenging, hot wiring and such. He did have a few tattered magazines from '*old world*' which he glanced at from time to time. '*Old world*' seemed to be a crazy place. Big, endless and frightening.

His motor lagged behind the others driving at a moderate speed. He had no worries about trailing in last though he anxiously prayed to finish within the first eight placings. Having to finish the dusty chase totally unaware of whether or not you would be allowed to continue in the tournament made this race all the more agonising. To come in ninth would be unthinkable.

While he drove onwards he became aware of a slight ringing in his ears. He didn't pay the sensation much heed seems he concentrated all of his attention on the sight up ahead. Mysteriously, there appeared to be a township sprawled out in the desert, very much like the ones in his magazine.

Driving through the streets, he noticed that this cityscape possessed quite a few shops: a grocer's, a butcher's and a hardware store next to the mall. Further along, a drab, ominous looking building stood in timeless solitude, which in Fry's clear perception, had an aura of officialdom. Close in proximity, a library building stood pride of place contrastingly situated over the road from a park.

This urban environment contained all the things that Bruno had shown him in those tatty timeworn glossy pages. Fry slammed on the brakes. Sure, he kept the race in mind, but the temptation got the better of him. '*A quick look around,*' he thought, '*what could be the harm in that?*' He had to satisfy his curiosity.

Fry had pulled up near to the open entrance of a very inviting recreational park. He stepped out of his car. The buildings all around him seemed to be new; they looked so clean, impossibly pristine in condition and yet ominously the whole place verged on a strange sense of sterility.

He sprinted up some steps finding himself at what he presumed to be the town square. Flanked by a pair of impressive white marble columns, he saw the entrance to the library. Believing this place may offer clues to his whereabouts, Fry decided to go in there. Maybe the library had more picture books that could help him figure out his location.

Inside there were rows and rows of book cases reaching from the floor to high up near the ceiling. To his eyes everything seemed to be perfect, if not immaculate, with not one book placed askew on the shelves, however, the whole area had an eerie feel to it. Perhaps the absence of people made this a soulless place without the remotest hint pertaining to human warmth.

He heard a sweeping, grating noise. He looked to his right only to fix upon a ladder in motion, sliding across the entire width of the high shelving. Standing atop the vertical rise, he saw a monk in a brown hooded robe sorting some books on an otherwise inaccessible part of the bookcase. With there being absolutely no one else to ask, Fry called out to the hooded figure, "Hey mate, where am I? What is this place?"

The monk simply desisted in his task and carefully, step by step, methodically descended the ladder. When he reached the floor he turned to young Fry. The face staring out at him beneath the hood had a strong resemblance to the Wanderin' Padre who subsequently asked, "Ya mean to tell me you don't know, child?"

Fry had seen the 'boss monk' seated in a chair atop a bus roof, but from a fair distance, so he hadn't seen his face too clearly. That being the case, he didn't instantly recognise the old 'holy man' standing before him.

"No, no, I don't," Fry answered.

While the Padre steadily walked over to one of the book shelves, he informed Fry, "Yet you have been here many times."

With that said, the old monk ran his hand along a shelf stacked with periodicals to pull out one particular magazine. The copy seemed to be in mint condition, impressing upon Fry the notion that the actual pages had been printed in that very instant. Holding the magazine in one hand, the hooded monk asked the young man, “Did you not, earlier this day, share the food of the one named ‘Pesky’?”

“Yes,” Fry confirmed with the addition of one single nod. He went on, “In his car, I was hungry, in fact absolutely starving, so when the guy offered I had no option but to accept.”

Fry noticed the sly smirk on the Padre’s face when he said, “Mmm, did he show you an ‘*old world*’ wildlife magazine, like this?”

He unfolded the magazine.

“Did you not have a discussion with him about the creatures of the deep?”

The Padre promptly presented the flat front cover, holding the ‘glossy’ out at arm’s length which obscured the image of his own face.

“These subjects are new to you. The pictures of the creatures within these pages you had never seen before, am I correct?” the Padre said while slowly lowering the publication.

“Yes ... I suppose so ...” Fry stated nervously with a creeping feeling of apprehension rising within him. His steadily increasing anxiousness prompted him to ask, “... but what’s that got to do with mm...”

The end of his sentence trailed off; he looked on dumbstruck and horrified at the sight staring back at him from beneath the Padre’s hood.



## *Excerpt from Chapter Sixteen*

Dodgy being tall and lanky reached for the last hoop and successfully hooked it. Without taking that much of a leap, after performing one graceful swing, his feet touched down on the wooden platform. Nevertheless, the blue haired contender looked and felt absolutely exhausted. Panting and gasping he fell to his knees, fighting to gain control of his breathing. Still tightly gripping both hooks in his hands, Dodgy impatiently waited for Fry. He called out words of encouragement.

“Come on mate, not much further now!”

Fry answered the best he could between anxious, nervous breaths.

“Easy ... for ... you ... to say.”

While Fry endeavoured to reach out to hook his last hoop the young man’s vision became blurred and he struggled to see. Sweat had trickled down into his eyes, momentarily blinding him. Grappling with the hook, hearing the rasping sound of metal against metal, Fry assumed that he had competently hooked it in.

The desperate adolescent was anxiously itching to wipe away the irritating saline sweat from his eyes. Before continuing he decided to rest his body by dangling with one arm from the hook already attached to the hoop. He presupposed that the other hook which he had just secured would simply hang free but in his eagerness to wipe his face, he did not link it correctly. His hook handle fell away to the rock face below. Fry had made a terrible error of judgement.

He had only wanted to clear his vision and perhaps rest the straining musculature of his torso for a fleeting moment. The fatigued muscles in his aching limb only required a brief respite before his other arm took on the burden of supporting his full body weight. Now Fry found himself stranded, limply hanging in the air, with the distance being too far to swing and jump. He gazed upward at the hook holding him there; the hoop screw had come loose, with the novice contender’s own body weight gradually pulling it free. His fate seemed to be sealed.

With one arm clinging on and securing him to the support block, Dodgy leaned forward, all that he could, towards the struggling young man.

“Fry, grab the hook!” Dodgy shouted with some urgency. He strained while holding out the implement by the handle, stretching towards Fry with every inch that he dared, hoping the young man could reach the cold steel shaft which curved at the end into a vicious hook.

“Come on mate,” Dodgy shouted, “swing for it!”

Kicking with his legs, Fry swayed back and forth to increase his momentum. This started to aggravate the fixture adjoining the solitary support hoop. Perilously close to dislodging, the screw twisted and turned. Fry could now measure his life in fleeting moments until the sudden hundred foot drop, which would send him into a death dealing descent like a screaming bag of blood and bones.

He swung his body towards Dodgy’s hook. Reaching out his arm, he grabbed it a split second before his own supportive hook came free. The steel shaft and handle, which had been Fry’s sole grappling device, hurtled towards the ground.

Fry cried out in fear while desperately holding on to Dodgy's hook. The whole of his meagre frame swayed while dangling free in the air. Dodgy strained even more to take Fry's weight. The banished warrior with the blue hair, in an intense effort of determination pulled and yanked to haul the faltering young contender upwards.

The hook pierced Fry's forearm. Dodgy attempted to lift the body weight of the clawing youth using the only object he had, the long thin shaft of the hook. The sharp curved tip began to rip a long gash within the muscle of Fry's forearm. The adrenalin in Fry's system defeated the pain but it did not stop him feeling the distressing tearing sensation of cold steel slitting a jagged line into his own flesh. The blood gushed down the young man's arm to wash over his neck and torso; Fry's lifeblood fell like crimson rain to the surface of the craggy rock below.

