

**A TERRIFIC TALE OF ANCIENT TERROR!**

By  
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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

PAPA PAUL HENDRICKSON .....30-50  
 Well dressed.  
 He breathes notions and  
 they are brought into being.

HEIDI K. HENDRICKSON.....From Birth through  
 Adolescence. Remains in a  
 crib, behind bars, for most  
 of her life. Played by an  
 Actor of any age.

SARAH/SEKHMET/CATRINA/CATHERINE/CAT...The Egyptian Lion Goddess.  
 A Single Woman on a date.  
 A Protector of Children.  
 A Lady who prostitutes.  
 Often, has the head of a Lion  
 and the Body of a Woman.

## PLACE

The Hendrickson Household, which contains a Giant Baby's Cage, uh,  
 crib.  
 The Streets Outside, where Stray Cats roam.

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

The Baby HEIDI who appears in the second scene could be played by the  
 actor who plays HEIDI. It could also be a doll.

A line with an asterisk(\*) is spoken simultaneously with the one  
 above it.

When PAPA speaks in italics, his voice and breath are willing those  
 things into existence. He may also do this at other times.

*Until he extends his circle of compassion to include all living things, man will not himself find peace.*

**-Albert Schweitzer**

AT RISE:

SEKHMET, head of a lion, body of a woman, stands.  
Her eyes glow.  
She opens her mouth and screams out a continuous stream of flame.

Spotlight on PAPA and HEIDI.  
They are engulfed in her flame.  
PAPA holds HEIDI close, arms protecting her, as he prays.

PAPA

Terrible One.

Wrathful One.

One Who is Overcome By Hatred.

One who unleashes the attacking lions.

Evil Eye Incarnate.

Devouring Mouth of Eternity.

Creature of Many Faces.

Goddess of Pestilence.

Wench of all Wars.

Destroyer by Fire.

Destructor by Plague.

Lady of the Bloodbath.

Mistress of the Tomb.

Mother of the Dead.

Wanderer in the Waste.

Escape Artist of Yesterdays.

She who reduceth to silence.

She who reduceth to nothing.

She whom all of existence fears.

Rise flame!

Rise high to turn your blue sky

And rains to burning embers.

Come storm!

Come fire!

Direct Not on Your Family.

Waste not on your enemy.

Do not wander, Demon.

Do not escape.

and the firestorm shall reduce you to silence.

To nothing.

Blackout.

Lights up.  
PAPA runs about the stage.

PAPA  
I am making a nice  
    (he breathes out the word)  
*house.*

The outline of a house appears.

PAPA  
A nice  
    (he breathes out)  
*HOME.*

A couch, comfy and cushy appears.

PAPA  
Good, hardwood  
    (breathes out)  
*floors.*

The floor appears.

PAPA  
Shined till you see yourself in the ground beneath your feet.

The floor shines. He looks down  
at his reflection and recoils.  
He breathes out.

PAPA  
*Walls,*  
    (they appear)  
painted pleasant pastel colors  
    (he breathes and color appears on the walls)  
Soothing, calm, so you know you can rest your head.  
Rest your bones.  
Rest.  
Forever.

He falls asleep on the ground.  
A loud crying, like a kitten's  
mew is heard from all around.  
PAPA jumps up and quickly breathes  
out.

PAPA

*Shelves*

(they appear)

with *books,*

(they appear)

salacious stories of fiction and of fact. *Knick knacks*

(they appear)

I hear that's what they're called, little pointless dwarves and gnomes and animals made of hardened clay.

PAPA takes a deep breath, then blows out.

PAPA

Refrigerator stocked with only the most nutritious meal preparation options.

Refrigerator appears. He opens the door; items come tumbling out. PAPA grabs them up, shoves them back in and squeezes the door shut. Whew.

He then blows with all his might.

PAPA

*Bedroom.*

(it appears, he blows again)

*Her bedroom.*

A man's idea of girly items appears - Stuffed animals and embroidered pillows and chastity belts.

SARAH appears at the entrance to the house, BABY HEIDI in hand.

HEIDI suckles at SARAH's breast.

PAPA looks lovingly at them.

PAPA

You

are

the

Inspirer of Men.

Satisfier of Desires.

Giver of Ecstasies.

Opener of Ways.

Beautiful eye

Beautiful face

Beautiful One.

Sublime One.

PAPA

(cont'd)

Sparkling One.

Victorious One.

Only One.

One who was before.

One who enlightens.

One who empowers.

One who comes after.

Beloved of the Father.

Beloved of the Husband.

Beloved One.

Beloved.

Lov-ed.

Loved.

He embraces SARAH.

PAPA

I

love

you.

Wife.

Sarah.

SARAH

You too.

They are a nuzzling, happy family.

PAPA

Wait.

She's too small for a bed.

He blows, the bedroom disappears.

PAPA

She needs a

(blows)

*crib.*

A Giant Crib appears.

PAPA

She needs

bars to keep her

PAPA

(cont'd)

safe, so she won't bang her head, bump her elbow, scrape her knee,

SARAH

Shhhh.

PAPA

destroy herself

She pets his head.

SARAH

She's fine.

PAPA

and leave forever, leave me alone, all alone

Pet and soothe.

SARAH

Paul--

PAPA shakes her violently.

PAPA

LEAVE ME ALONE.

ALONE!

ALL ALLOOOOOOONNNNNNNNEEE!!

Light shift.

SARAH and HEIDI in spotlight.

SARAH

I'm sorry.

HEIDI

Waaaa!

SARAH

I can't carry you with me.

(beat)

Shhhh.

SARAH rocks HEIDI to silence.

She licks HEIDI's tears away.

Light shift.

SARAH throws HEIDI in the air.

PAPA dives and catches her.  
SARAH exits the house.  
PAPA reaches for her.  
Forever.  
The crib is suddenly aflame.  
PAPA blows, trying to put it out.  
Again.  
Again.  
Again.  
The flame is unstoppable.  
PAPA gives up.

PAPA  
So she won't do that.  
    (beat, looks about at his creation)  
I have made a nice house.  
A nice HOME.

PAPA holds HEIDI.  
The Giant Crib burns.

Lights up.  
 The giant crib.  
 It is burnt around the edges.  
 HEIDI lies in the crib,  
 hands in the air, crying.

PAPA, in spotlight, is rifling  
 through the shelves, knocking  
 books everywhere.  
 Picks up "THE HOW TO BOOK ON HOME  
 WEATHERPROOFING" and  
 tosses it aside. Then, "SAFETY  
 SECRETS AND INSURANCE INSIGHTS";  
 tosses it aside. "THE DO-IT-  
 YOURSELF DUCT TAPE BIBLE"  
 Seriously considers it. Tosses it  
 aside. Finally, he picks up "A  
 PARENT'S GUIDE TO KITTEN CARE."  
 Considers.  
 HEIDI'S cries grow louder.  
 PAPA reads.

PAPA

The newborn kitten is unable to respond in an adult manner.  
 She will be silent much of the time, with an occasional squeal or  
 mew.

HEIDI cries.  
 PAPA flips the page. Reads.

PAPA

This is a period of constant discovery.  
 Your job, as a good parent, is to offer a safe place for your little  
 one. Sometimes, a fun story, told in a soothing manner, will make  
 your baby feel at home.  
 And don't worry, she doesn't understand a word you're saying.  
 The tone is what's important.

PAPA sticks book in front coat  
 pocket.  
 He rifles through shelf once more.  
 Ah ha, there it is!  
 "A TERRIFIC TALE OF ANCIENT  
 TERROR!" Puts it in inside pocket.  
 He reaches into the refrigerator,  
 removes and carefully arranges  
 a tray of saucers, labeled "MILK!"  
 He then meticulously places tubing  
 and latex gloves on the tray.

Enters crib.  
 Locks the door behind him.  
 Puts key on chain around neck.  
 Sets tray down methodically.

Sits, putting HEIDI in his lap.  
 He reads "A TERRIFIC TALE..."  
 in soothing tones.

PAPA

People no longer believed in the Gods.  
 They had lost faith in anything but their own lust,  
 their own desire,  
 their own.  
 And Ra, the God of the Midday sun, saw it all and vowed revenge.  
 First, he burned hot, so hot that the earth was scorched and  
 starvation filled the land.

HEIDI calms and coos.

PAPA

(cont'd)

Starvation takes a while though.  
 And so, his daughter Sekhmet, the Lioness of Flame,  
 the Tigress of Decimation,  
 the bringer of pain  
 the God Damn bitch beast of barbarism  
 (deep breath)  
 was born of his anger,  
 of his despair.

SEKHMET appears in spotlight,  
 being birthed.  
 HEIDI looks to her.

SEKHMET

(her cat's eyes glow)

I see  
 war and pestilence and slavery and grief and loss and joy ripped away  
 and anger and hardship and blindness.  
 I see the birth of civilization and it's eminent destruction. I see  
 creatures rising up from the primordial oceans and walking on six and  
 four and two feet and binding those feet to bend to someone's will  
 because they were bound and they were bound and they were bound and  
 I don't want to see  
 anymore!

Two giant claws shoot from her  
 hands and she rips apart a  
 carcass.

SEKHMET  
They say I am  
    (beat)  
\*vengeance.

PAPA  
    (reading the story)  
\*vengeance

SEKHMET  
They say I am  
\*selfish.

PAPA  
\*selfish

SEKHMET  
They say I am  
\*brutal.

PAPA  
\*brutal

SEKHMET  
They say I am  
\*unforgiving.

PAPA  
\*unforgiving.

SEKHMET  
I am none of those things  
and  
every  
single  
one.  
I am a warrior.

PAPA  
\*warrior.

SEKHMET  
I fight.

She bites into the carcass, blood  
dripping down her chin.

SEKHMET  
 The \*blood of thousands of men.  
     (licks her chops)  
 Tastes like tomorrow's ending.

PAPA  
 \*blood  
 \*blood  
 \*blood

Another huge bite.

PAPA  
     (carried away, right in HEIDI's face)  
 \*Wa ha ha ha!

SEKHMET  
     (right in HEIDI's face)  
 \*Wa ha ha ha!

HEIDI wails.

HEIDI  
 Waaaaaaa!

PAPA  
 Shhhh.

He puts book inside pocket.  
 And grabs the "MILK!" tray.

HEIDI  
 Waaaaaaa!!

PAPA  
 I said shhhh.

He puts on latex gloves and sticks  
 tubing in milk saucers.

HEIDI  
 Waaaaaaa!

PAPA  
     (grabbing her suddenly)  
 Shut your stupid mewface, ungrateful little lynx.

She falls silent.  
 He opens his shirt.  
 He has six prosthetic nipples.  
 Attaches the tubing to the  
 nipples.  
 Milk flows.  
 He pulls her into his chest.  
 A long pause.

She starts to suckle.

PAPA

I agreed to warm nights in a warm bed with cold sheets and hot skin.

I agreed to holding close, closer than I have ever held.

I agreed to mornings.

I agreed to secrets, sharing them, I mean.

I agreed to laughter, to cackling, to guffaws even when the jokes aren't funny.

I agreed to drying tears. Yours.

I agreed.

And now, nothing but memories.

Memories of a neglectful past.

(beat)

That's it, weeblewobble.

He pets her head.

She continues sucking.

SEKHMET continues eating.

Light shift.

PAPA lays HEIDI's head down, as she sleeps.

PAPA

Shhhhh.

SEKHMET reaches for HEIDI as if to pet her.

SEKHMET

Shhhh.

PAPA grabs SEKHMET's hand and leads her out of the crib.

Locks the door.

They exit the "house."

PAPA

(breathing out)

Dinner.

Table with two "MILK!" saucers appears.

PAPA puts tubing in saucers.

SEKHMET takes off her Lion head.

Flips her hair.

She is CATRINA.

PAPA

Paul.

CATRINA

Catrina.

They sit opposite each other  
and both sip their drinks.  
Long pause.  
Finally, CATRINA leans in.

CATRINA  
Pleasure, Paul.

She leans closer, with intent.  
Light shift.  
Two individual spotlights,  
looking out.

PAPA  
I am turning away from you so you will not ask me questions about my  
wife or my daughter or my past or my future.

CATRINA  
I am leaning close and leaning in, so my feminine scent will make  
your nasal passages open to my intentions.

PAPA  
I am leaning close because in spite of trepidation, fear, remorse,  
the memory of hurt, I am a sucker for Chanel No 5 and pussy.

CATRINA  
Now that you are here, in my ear, my neck, I whisper along your lips,  
a question,  
    (turns to him)  
"are you married",  
    (back to facing out)  
because well, there's something in your eyes, your smile or lack  
thereof that tells me so.

PAPA  
And I hold for just a second because you taste like tomorrow and I am  
tired of today.

CATRINA  
And I hold for just a second because if I move my answers will go  
unquestioned - I mean that the other way around.

PAPA  
And I answer  
    (to her)  
"yes, I am married"  
    (out)  
because, well it's not a lie and the whole truth brings doubts about  
me and pity for my lonely plight.

CATRINA

And I don't pull away just yet because there is something irresistible about that which can't fully be mine.

PAPA

And I answer

(to her)

"yes, I am married"

(out)

because there is something frightening about that which *can* fully be mine.

CATRINA

And I wait for him to raise the bumps on his tongue and give me something I've known before but I wouldn't mind having again.

PAPA

And I answer

(to her)

"YES I AM MARRIED"

because no one will leave my earth scorched and my heart scorched and my mind burned to a bloody crisp ever again.

Silence.

CATRINA

And I pull away because I know it is done.

PAPA

And I grab her arms and shake her because a gal's gotta know that daddy's vengeance has no place on the Earth I called into being.

CAT

And I say nothing because I learned to say nothing in just these situations

PAPA

And I say I'm sorry, because although I'm not, words carry meaning and carry far. Besides she's quiet.

And something's gotta be said when there's emptiness.

Light shift.

CATRINA suddenly stands.

CATRINA

I think it's time for me to go.

PAPA

Go.

PAPA  
Wait.

She starts to exit.

PAPA  
Don't move.

He picks up the SEKHMET mask.

PAPA  
Go!

He places it over her head.

PAPA  
Gone.

A pause.  
She exits.

PAPA  
Newborn kittens are blind.  
It takes a while for them to see.  
Newborn kittens' ears are pinned close to their heads.  
They cannot hear.  
Newborn kittens are pink.  
They have no protection.

PAPA watches her leave.  
He reaches for her.  
HEIDI is in the crib, now sitting upright. She plays.  
PAPA trudges into the house and sits, reading "Kitten Care".

PAPA  
Your eyes are open.  
Your ears are pointing upwards.  
Your hair has grown in.

PAPA watches HEIDI stand.

PAPA  
I've waited too long  
to teach you  
    (flips the page)  
to use the litter box.

PAPA flips through the book, reads a page.

HEIDI shits in the  
corner of her crib.  
PAPA unlocks and enters.  
Locks it behind him.  
Returns key to neck chain.  
He breathes out.

PAPA  
*Bathroom.*

A toilet and tub appear in the  
crib.

PAPA  
Sit.

HEIDI looks at the toilet,  
uncertain. Shakes her head and  
continues shitting in the corner.

PAPA removes "A TERRIFIC TALE..."  
from inside pocket.  
Reads.

PAPA  
Sekhmet, the Flaming Lips of Hellish Detritus, stalks the Earth,  
laying waste to the entire human population.

SEKHMET approaches HEIDI, smoke  
coming from her nostrils, a bloody  
limb in her hands.  
HEIDI whimpers.

PAPA  
Meanwhile, her husband Ptah, the Creator King, who brings the world  
into being just by breathing its name, sets about mending that which  
she has broken.

(breathes out)

*Out.*

SEKHMET is thrown backward,  
propelled by PAPA's word.

PAPA  
Now, sit.

HEIDI goes to the toilet, starts  
to sit.  
SEKHMET speaks, interrupting her  
action.

SEKHMET  
You are a Goddess.

HEIDI  
What?

PAPA  
I said,  
                  (breathes out)  
*sit.*  
with your bottom.

He pats her butt.

SEKHMET  
Claim your birthright.

HEIDI  
My what?

PAPA  
Your buttocks.

Pats again.

SEKHMET  
You are a warrior.  
You fight.

HEIDI  
I don't want to.

PAPA  
Your ass!

He hits her ass hard.

SEKHMET  
You fight.

HEIDI  
I don't want to!

PAPA hits her again.  
Harder.

SEKHMET  
Fight!

HEIDI  
No.

PAPA  
Yes.

PAPA hits again.

SEKHMET  
Rip!

HEIDI  
No!

PAPA  
Yes!

Again and Again.

SEKHMET  
Tear!

HEIDI  
No!

PAPA  
Yes!

Again, Again, Again.

SEKHMET  
Burn!

HEIDI  
No!

PAPA  
Yes!

He throws her onto the toilet.  
She hits her head.  
CONK! Blood.

Silence.  
PAPA slowly approaches.  
He blows on her injury.

PAPA  
    (as he's blowing)  
There is no wound.  
Nothing happened.  
All is well.

PAPA keeps blowing.

SEKHMET  
Feed!

HEIDI  
Yes!

HEIDI throws herself at PAPA.  
She tackles him.  
A tantrum.  
Pounding his chest.  
Hitting his face.  
They roll about the floor.

SEKHMET  
Wa ha ha ha!

Finally, PAPA pins HEIDI.

PAPA  
Shhhh.  
    (beat, looking at her body)  
You have hurt yourself.  
Cuts and bruises everywhere.

He blows gently on her wounds.  
The blowing grows.  
Slower.  
Longer  
Passionate.  
All over her body.

SEKHMET  
Get up, kitten!  
Get up and wander the wasteland.