

Sometimes you're just better off dead



OUR
DAUGHTER

A Witch Gnostic Heresy: Book One

ISAAC HUNTER

Isaac Hunter's

OUR DAUGHTER

Book 1
Witch Gnostic Heresies

Chapters 1-6
An Excerpt

OUR DAUGHTER



A WITCH GNOSTIC HERESY
BOOK 1

ISAAC HUNTER

OUR DAUGHTER

Witch Gnostic Heresy - Book One
Copyright © 2026 by Isaac Hunter
Second Edition 2026

All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise—without prior written permission of the author, except for brief quotations in reviews.

No part of this book may be used to train artificial intelligence, machine learning models, or similar technologies without the express written permission of the author.

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and events are either the product of the author’s imagination or used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, or real events is purely coincidental.

Published by Isaac Hunter Books
Cover created by a professional designer.

Printed in the United States of America

Other books by Isaac Hunter are available at
www.IsaacHuntertheWriter.com

Did you discover this book somewhere unexpected?

*Maybe a friend passed it along.
Maybe you found it in a small library.
Or maybe it simply crossed your path.*

If so, I'd love to know where.

www.IsaacHuntertheWriter.com/found



For my wife,

Jennifer.

And for our children:

Elly, Jeremiah, Skye, Angelynna, Willow, Andelynn,

Dawson, Dalton, Kiannah, Audrey

And for the three we have not yet met:

Isaac Christopher, Isaiah Hunter, Gracelynne

*All things leave—
not all let go.*

CHAPTER 1

KATIE SAT IN the passenger seat of their Ford Taurus, consumed with the elongated puzzle of mixed-up words and symbols in the puzzle book her mom had gotten for her at the grocery store.

There wasn't enough light to see the letters, especially the smaller print, but the letters that intertwined with the previous one or the latter were impossible puzzles anyway.

She grew frustrated.

The car shook as her mother closed the back hatch of the wagon, and the overhead lamps went out; Katie had to lean forward in order to see what she was doing. The driver's side door opened, and Terri Cadora slid in behind the wheel, grinning at the sight of her daughter engrossed in yet another puzzle.

"You could have helped me, you know," Terri said, playfully bumping her daughter's book to mess her up.

"Mom! This one is really good. See?"

Katie tipped the book in Terri's direction.

"The letters run across the page and are combined. See? They join together with the others and..."

"I'm glad you like it."

Terri laughed, as the cell phone in the center column began to vibrate wildly.

"Your phone's ringing, mom," Katie said, not bothering to look up from her book.

"Smart-Alec."

Terri snatched the phone out of the cup holder and hit the SEND button.

"Hey, Angela."

Terri listened as she fished her keys out of the front pocket of her jeans and pulled the door shut.

"You're kidding."

Katie looked up at her mother for a brief moment and then went back to working on her puzzle.

"No way," Terri said, putting the keys in the ignition, and bracing the phone between her ear and shoulder. "I can't believe he said that. What did you do?"

"As the sand through the hourglass..." Katie said, shaking her head.

Terri playfully slapped her daughter's knee with the

back of her hand and smiled, then motioned with her finger at her to be quiet.

Katie snorted as she turned on the reading light above her.

She pointed to it and looked at her mother expectantly.

Terri just nodded.

She wanted to finish the puzzle before she got home and now with her mom on the phone it would be easy to do.

Only if she could see, though.

The light here was so dim.

Terri shifted the Taurus into drive and grabbed the cell phone, holding it with one hand as she steered the car out of the parking space with the other.

Her mother chatted away on the phone as they headed back toward the Jewel Osco store, then turned left following the giant yellow arrows painted on the pavement, directing them toward the exit.

The parking lot was nearly empty.

Katie could see three vehicles parked on the side of the building, surely employees' cars.

In the larger parking area out front, there was only a scatter of trucks and compacts.

It was late.

Middle of the week.

Not a peak time for shopping.

But it was their regular shopping event. Katie would get out of school and walk the three and a half blocks to the Endegar's house, where she would have to endure the twin monsters, Shane and Alex Endegar, until her mother got off work and came to pick her up at six-thirty. Then they would drive across town, stopping at the grocery store before heading for home.

"Did you get the shift you wanted?" Terri asked, still talking with Angela as she flipped her blinker on and slowly pulled out onto West Addison, then crossed over into the inner lane.

Katie tried to ignore her mother as they drove down Seventh, past the closed McDonalds and Taco Reyes.

There were several letters in this puzzle she had never seen before.

Katie glanced up as the traffic light at the intersection changed to green, and she could feel the Taurus pick up speed as her mom hit the pedal a little too hard.

She then went back to her puzzle and had no time to react, no moment in which to brace herself.

As she looked up again, all she saw were headlights...

Then....

Blackness...

CHAPTER 2

ONE OF THE TWO figures in the hooded robes slowly reached out and turned the page of the book sitting on the pedestal before the altar. It was dark, only the faint glow of the candles in the four corners of the basement room provided enough light for the figure to make out the words on the page. The other figure stood opposite the altar, hood drawn low, face hidden in the shadows, hands hidden in the folds of their dark folds.

The first made a melodic sound, hushed at first, barely a whisper.

“Amon....”

The other echoed it back.

They said it again and again, each time, drawing more and more power to the center....

To the realm....

To the altar....

The first produced a small strip of paper with writing on it, coiled in a roll. The robed figure let it loose, the coil springing open, unraveling as the figure put it in the middle of the altar. The second struck a match, the fire blazing hot, only to quickly dwindle into a small lick of flame at the tip. The figure lit each candle that had already been placed at each point of the spiral drawn on the altar surface.

The first figure mumbled a quiet incantation.

He picked up a kris from the edge of the pedestal, the blade curved twice, the metal's edge reflecting the dim light of the candles.

The first took the hand of the second, palm up, and made a cut in the flesh.

Dark red pooled quickly.

The second figure clenched their hand into a fist over the center of the spiral, blood dripping...

Drip.

Drip.

....onto the ribbon of paper....

The first handed the blade to the second and the second did the same.

They took the hand of the first, palm up, and make a slit, blood flowing, pooling.

The first moved their hand over the altar, and squeezed it into a fist.

Drip.

Drip.

The first chanted, as the second repeated in English.

περπάτημα άνεμος

Walking Wind

τρέξιμο βροχή

Running Rain

βρει το χαμένο

Find the Missing

βρείτε τα ελλείποντα

Return the host

άδειο δοχείο

Empty Container

βρείτε το θέμα της Ένωσής μας

Find the Theme of our Union

They stared at each other as they mouthed the words.

The second produced a picture, looked at it, then showed the first.

The second laid it on the altar, the picture of a girl, young, blonde hair...pretty.

The first also produced a picture of a girl, this one

ISAAC HUNTER

also young, but with dark hair. He looked at it for a moment, then showed it to the second.

He, too, laid it on the altar on top of the first picture. They chanted again.

επιδιόρθωση

Mend

καθαρίζω

Cleanse

Ανασταίνω

Resurrect

δεσμεύουν πάλι

Bind Again

As they spoke, the items in the center of the altar ignited into flame.

The two hooded figures watched as the fire burned the pictures, the coil, and the blood, the images melting, the two distinct faces merging together before being altogether consumed.

There, in the darkness, among the shadows...

It began.

CHAPTER 3

EVERYTHING SEEMED TO STOP...

Seized.

For long moments, snapshots of memory, as the sound of shattering glass burst the air around her.

First black, then a hazed, smoky gray mist swirled, enveloping her - it's tendrils cocooning her tightly against something....

It was cold.

Whatever it was.

Cold and wet.

There was a pain in her leg.

Her right leg.

She could feel something wet on both hands and tried to wiggle her fingers.

ISAAC HUNTER

They were moving, at least, she thought they were moving.

There was no way to tell for sure.

Nothing was for sure.

Blood was in her mouth.

The sweet taste of it was creeping down the back of her throat.

Where was it coming from?

Something was wrong.

Oh God.

Mom...

Mom?

Where are you?

She couldn't speak.

Not the words anyway.

She could think it - think the words. But they wouldn't come out.

She couldn't hear herself.

Speak!

Katie tried to swallow, but her throat knotted up cutting off her airway. She choked and gasped, but all she could hear was a guttered rush of air. The taste of blood was renewed.

Oh God, mom!

Please say something.

Mom!

All she could do was scream in her mind. Scream it as loud as she could.

But there were no words.

She could feel her body shivering.

It was so cold, creeping in from her fingers to her arms, to her chest, soaking in deep.

Her face was wet.

She could feel it on her cheek.

Was it blood?

No.

Something else.

Some sort of water maybe.

Something...

The black-gray mist holding her began to swirl up, spiraling into a funnel, extending out its girth, encompassing more and more empty space. It drilled down below her, protruding out of sight.

But she couldn't see it.

Were her eyes even open?

They felt shut.

She tried to touch her face.

Just reach up and touch your face and then you'll know if your eyes are open.

But she couldn't move.

Katie fought back tears.

The funnel of mist was now a mass of nothing - no

ISAAC HUNTER

substance, no shape, just a sea of blackness and putrid shades of light.

For the first time, Katie thought to be afraid.

What was it?

What was this - this thing?

What was happening to her?

Try to remember.

She had to remember what the last thing was she had been doing. Where had she been? Who had she been with?

Her mother.

Think of your mother.

Katie managed to swallow through the searing pain.

Terri Cadora was her mother.

She at least knew her name.

Her name.

What is your name?

Katie.

Your name is Katie.

What were you doing?

Find out what you were doing and where you last were and then you can have a better idea of what's happening.

Maybe.

Everything shifted to the left, dislodged out of place,

elongated, as if about to snap apart. It wasn't any one thing, though. It was everything.

All of it.

The thing she was using to see with, if she could even call it seeing.

It was all distorted now.

Snow.

It was snow!

Katie couldn't believe it at first.

She didn't know how exactly she knew, but whatever it was on her face, pressed against it - the cold - it wasn't water or blood; it was snow. But that meant she was outside.

How did she get outside?

Just a minute ago she had been....

Where?

God.

Where had she been?

She couldn't...

It was just - there. Just outside of her reach. Just so far that she couldn't reach it with her hand. But she wasn't reaching for it at all. Her hands were both pinned to her chest.

They were there, though.

She could feel them.

Wet and cold, but still with feeling.

But pinned by what - and why was she so exhausted?

It's coming.

What?

Katie felt her body convulse, focusing every part of her that was still conscious to that one - thing.

She was so confused.

What was she thinking?

No.

It's over there.

Just beyond the...

She strained to get it, to at least just see it; it was no...

Oh God, she was so tired. She didn't think she could even stay standing if she were able to get up anyway. She had the overwhelming urge to sleep.

Quiet.

It was here.

It started to soak into her, from the tips of her toes, slowly at first, but crawling over her, into and through her.

She felt her body slip.

For the first time, she could feel a relent from whatever had been pressing her down, or up - wherever she was, holding her to the cold, the snow.

But now the absence of pressure was pulling at her, sucking at her.

Wanting her.

Ingesting.

Katie tried to grab something - anything. She realized amid her panic that she could actually move.

She could move!

Quick!

It was getting stronger, pulling, trying to dislodge her from wherever she was. Taking her from there to who knows where. She knew it was trying to take her somewhere else, though. Katie could sense it.

She managed to turn her head just before the light washed over her.

Then...

Nothing.

CHAPTER 4

THE APPLESAUCE WAS PUTRID.

Katie quickly folded the tinfoil seal back over the top of the tiny container and returned it to the breakfast tray. She blinked rapidly, wincing as he struggled to swallow the first and only bite she'd taken.

"Not so good?"

Katie looked up and saw a man standing just outside of her room.

He came in, carrying some files in his hand, the other one tucked loosely into the front pocket of his khakis.

"It's terrible," Katie said, flashing a sickly grin.

He laughed.

"Just between you and me, I can't stand the food here, either."

Katie couldn't help but giggle.

It was his smile.

What a smile.

Infectious.

And his eyes - they were a kind of gray-green that seemed to shimmer whenever he spoke.

"My name is Larry."

"I'm Katie."

He came around the side of her bed and shook her hand way too formally.

"Are you another doctor?" Katie asked.

"No. Well, I guess so - "

"You don't know?"

Katie tried to shift her position in bed but stopped short, gasping.

"Are you in pain?" Larry asked.

Katie shook her head.

"Not really. Unless I move. Or laugh. Or breathe."

"Well, that's gotta suck."

Katie giggled a little.

"I'm the hospital pediatric psychologist," Larry said, slipping his hand back into his front pocket. "I just heard about your situation a little bit ago and thought I would come up here and see how you were doing. I heard you had a pretty rough time last night."

She gave him a sheepish shrug.

"So, are they treating you okay here?" Larry asked.
"I've heard the nurses can be a little..."

He looked out the door and then put his hand up to his mouth and whispered.

"You know - a little Hitlerish."

Katie bit her lip, trying to keep her grin from spreading across her face.

"At any rate, I just wanted to stop by and meet you and let you know who I am."

He flashed a smile at her and tapped the portable nightstand with two knuckles.

"If you want to talk to someone - about anything - the nurses know my number, they can text me and I'll come running."

Katie didn't respond.

"Even if it's just to talk about how crappy the food is."

Her smile came out in full bloom.

"We'd have a lot to talk about then," Katie said, still feigning a little sheepishness.

Larry chuckled.

"I guess we would. Maybe we should put you in charge of the kitchen and get something done about it."

"Pizza for everyone!" she said, waving a hand, but then wincing a little from the sharp pain.

"Now that sounds like a hospital I'd want to stay at."

ISAAC HUNTER

Larry turned and headed for the door.

"You take it easy and I'll be in later this afternoon to check in on you, how does that sound?"

"That's fine," Katie said, still grinning uncontrollably.
"Don't forget the pizza."

Larry laughed as he walked out of Katie's room.

CHAPTER 5

THE HARD DRIVE on the desktop computer made a high-pitched whirring sound, then seemed to engage as Larry saved the file he was working on and exited the program where he stored all his patient information. He stopped what he was doing for a moment, debating, then shuffled the mouse arrow over to the corner of the screen and fired up the browser. It took a few seconds to load, then a search window opened up. He started to type, then looked at the paperwork on his desk, scanning for her last name.

Katie Cadora.

He finished typing, pressed ENTER, and the hard drive screeched at him again, then displayed his results.

Two from the top was a newspaper article.

He slowly shook his head as he read about her accident three days before.

Katie and her mother had been driving on West Addison in Irving Park, apparently heading home, when a truck had blown threw the light at the intersection, smashing into their car just in front of the driver's side door.

Larry wheeled the roller on his mouse, scrolling down the page.

The driver had been under the influence.

Terri Cadora, Katie's mother, had died on impact.

The article said the child in the passenger seat had suffered non-life-threatening injuries and was currently recovering at Kindred Chicago Central Hospital.

The phone next to the computer monitor rang and Larry snatched up the receiver.

"This is Dr. Flanagan."

He leaned back in his chair.

"Hey, it's me."

"Hello, lovely," Larry said, grinning into the phone.

"What are you doing?"

"Nothing much. Shenanigans misses you."

"He does?"

He moved the mouse pointer up to the left corner of the screen and killed the browser window.

"What about my beautiful wife? Does she miss me, too?"

"Of course."

There was an awkward pause.

"When do you think you'll be home?"

"Probably by six o'clock?"

He glanced up at the clock on the wall. It was already five after four.

"That late?"

"I'm sorry, Moreen," he said. "I've got a new patient. A young girl in a car accident. Her mother died and she has no other family."

"That's terrible."

"I know," Larry said, closing the manila folder that contained all of Katie's information. "I want to visit with her again before I leave."

"Okay," Moreen said, another long pause.

"It shouldn't take long, honey. I'll be home as soon as I can."

"It's fine. I just - "

Moreen trailed off.

"Are you okay?"

"Yeah. I'm fine. I'll see you when you get home."

"Okay, honey. I love you."

The phone went dead.

CHAPTER 6

SNOW FELL GENTLY to the ground, quickly covering the hood and roof of their Taurus.

The driver's side of the car was smashed in, the entire left side bent almost a ninety-degree angle at the frame. There was shattered glass everywhere and steam rose from the punctured radiator of the pickup truck that had plowed through the intersection. It had hit them just as Katie had looked away from the green traffic light and back to her puzzle book.

She bent down, looking in through the passenger side window.

The overhead light was no longer on.

She could make out her mother's limp body slumped over in the driver's seat, her head resting on the steering wheel, her face covered by her long, brown hair.

It was matted up, soaked with blood on the right side.

The only thing Katie could figure out was her mother's head had gone through the driver's side window.

On impact...

They had said she had died on impact.

Katie felt her body tremble from the cold outside.

She looked around, at herself, but couldn't see anything.

She was invisible....or something.

She couldn't even see her hands in front of her face. She was also way too high, suddenly floating above the carnage of the accident, while she was kneeling, looking into the car at the same time. She couldn't see the man in the truck; the hood was up blocking her view of the windshield. Katie was able to drift over to the right, circling the car to the passenger side, which had been jammed into an embankment of snow.

She looked around the scene, trying to piece the accident together in her mind like a puzzle. The truck must have hit them just as they were entering the intersection, sending them careening out of control, across two lanes, churning up the snow and slush that had not yet been plowed, piling it up as they went. The car had finally stopped at the corner, next to the large power box that relayed the controls for the intersection. She could

see her window had also shattered and her side of the car had filled up with dirty snow.

That's why it had been so cold.

Why she had felt snow on her face.

In her dream.

She was dreaming now.

How could she know that?

Katie?

Her name.

She felt a hand gently touch her shoulder.

She jerked wildly around and tried to scream, but nothing came out.

There was just the sound of the radiator hissing.

She could see the snow gently falling on top of their car.

Her mother's face was covered by her blood-soaked hair.

"Katie. Katie - "

She shook violently and the pain in her leg leaped out at her, sending her recoiling back onto the bed.

"Easy there," Larry said, holding her by the shoulders, trying to keep her as still as possible.

Katie tried to suck as much air into her lungs as she possibly could. Her mouth was dry; she could feel tiny blisters forming on her lips that hurt when she licked them with her tongue.

The light was so bright in the room, she could barely keep her eyes open.

"Could you turn off the lights?" Katie asked, taking another deep, but unsated breath.

"Sure. Sure."

Larry let go of her and quickly tapped the light switch off.

"Is that better?"

"Sorry," Katie said, laying her head back on her pillow, keeping her eyes closed as she tried to retain some sort of strength.

"Bad dreams?"

She shook her head.

Larry grabbed the chair in the corner slid it up near the side of her bed and sat down.

She managed to open her eyes, thankful the searing light was now gone and tried to adjust to the blurriness as best she could.

He was looking at her again.

With those eyes.

Such captivating eyes.

"Thanks for - "

Katie coughed.

Larry jumped back onto his feet and snatched her water bottle from the rolling table beside her bed.

"Here. Have something to drink."

Katie took the bottle from him and took several sips.
She could feel the cool of the ice inside.

It reminded her of the snow.

The accident...

Her mother was really...

She looked away as a single tear managed to escape,
streaking the side of her cheek.

Dawn quickly brushed it away with the back of her
hand.

"You know - "

Larry slowly sat back down.

"It's okay to feel what you're feeling. You've been
through quite a lot."

"Yeah," Katie said, trying not to make eye contact
with him.

"It's going to take some time. We'll sort it all out,
though. There's going to be some adjustment, but - "

"I can't see her face."

Katie glanced up at him, hoping he would have an
answer to what she was facing, and explain how she felt.

"Don't worry about that right now," Larry said. "It's
not necessary to do everything all at once. In time, if you
need to, you will be able to see her. For right now, just
try and focus on today, on this moment, and then once it
passes, try focusing on the next. That's all we can really
do anyway, right?"

"I guess so."

Katie took a deep breath, trying to get herself together.

"What if I never remember her?"

Katie looked down at her hands, fidgeting.

"Were you and your mom close?"

Katie just shrugged.

"It's a real shock to the system, something like this."

Larry leaned forward.

"The trauma you've had can really jumble things up inside. It'll take some time to get everything sorted out and everything back in order. Time to heal."

"I guess," Katie said.

"Is there anything you need?"

Larry got up and stuck his hands in his pockets.

"Do you want me to ask the nurse for something to help you sleep?"

Katie shook her head.

"Are you sure?"

Larry smiled at her.

"You might be having nightmares for a while still. They can be pretty uncomfortable."

"I'm okay," Katie said.

"Okay, then. I'll check on you in the morning."

"Are you going home?" Katie asked.

"Yeah," Larry said, heading for the door. "I've got to go home and feed my dog."

"You have a dog?"

Katie perked up in bed, managing a feeble attempt at a grin.

"Shenanigans."

"That's a strange name."

"Not if he's always up to no good," Larry said. "That's why I named him Shenanigans - when he was just a puppy."

Katie giggled.

"Tell Shenanigans I said to be good."

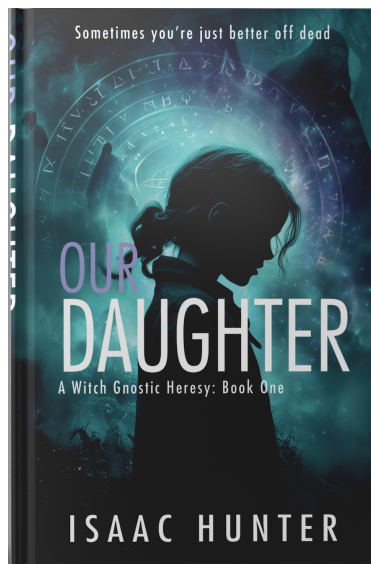
"I will do that," Larry said. "Get some rest and I'll see you in the morning."

"Okay."

As Larry walked out, Katie glanced over at the large window that covered most of the outer wall of her hospital room and, at some point during their conversation, it started to snow.

Ready for More?

You've reached the end of this free preview.
Read the complete novel today.



Scan to Get Your Copy

<https://isaahunterthewriter.com/product/our-daughter/>

