

Something More

By: Matthew

In a still trance, Pike gazed, transfixed by the dancing fire, his eyes trying to comprehend the unfathomable secrets hidden behind the searing flames, the fire changing direction ever so subtly but abruptly. He had a vague sense of something scorching his feet and...was that the putrid smell of burning flesh? No, it couldn't be. Not now, not here. For now, all that mattered was his sense of spellbinding tranquility, only attainable by looking into the very depths of a crackling flame, longing to know what he could not. This was the most lifeless he had ever felt, but strangely, the most aware he had been, the fire seeming to spark within him what could only be described as a sort of serenity, only much more profound. Almost involuntarily, he looked down, his eyes startled by the flames at his feet, now crawling up his leg in the manner a hunter stalks its prey; a killer to its victims. The orange fire, hungry for the flesh that would serve as fuel to the raging, had an intelligence not marked by the standard, but the kind only detectable to the spirit and soul, not to the basic mind humans' value so dearly. Startling it may have been to the eyes, however, his mental state was not altered. If anything, the fire only seemed to reignite his passion for the untamable, the wild. The flames, now licking his shirt, fringing the fragile edges and unraveling the very threads, were in no hurry to stop.

And now, after doing nothing, taking no action to cease what would consume him, Pike was jerked back to reality. It was as if somebody had grabbed him by the head to pull his feet onto solid ground; the reality he had to now deal with. But it was too late to save himself and he knew it. The flames, working its path of blackening destruction up his body, had now dealt with everything leading

up to his neck. He dared not look down, for he feared what he might see. A body, burned to the bone? Or perhaps a bloody mess, barely visible through the growing cloud of choking smoke. Then, without the slightest of a warning, he was ripped apart. An unbearable pain seemed to approach from behind, hitting him like a rock. The fire, now ravenous for the flesh, was consuming him fast, evolving into an engulfing inferno of utter eradication. Through the agony, at last Pike knew. The power, the might of what he was dealing with. The life bringer, the destroyer of death. The starter of civilizations, the conqueror of worlds. The comfort to many, the nightmare to the equal. As he took one last look at his world and remembered his life, stolen from him by an incomprehensible force not meant for humans, he felt the same captivating trance coming over him, caused by the same flames. This time, however, he knew it was different. He would not be returning from it. This is fire.