



Raven's
SPECTRE

ROYAL BASTARDS MC



International Bestselling Author
CRIMSON SYN

RAVEN'S SPECTRE

ROYAL BASTARDS MC PREQUEL #7

CRIMSON SYN



CONTENTS

Dear Readers

Prologue

1. Spectre
2. Raven
3. Spectre
4. Serge
5. Spectre
6. Spectre
7. Raven
8. Spectre
9. Spectre
10. Raven
11. Spectre
12. Raven
13. Raven
14. Spectre
15. Spectre
16. Raven
17. Raven
18. Spectre
19. Raven
20. Lucifer

Epilogue

About the Author

Also by Crimson Syn

DEAR READERS

Hello Synful Readers,

Something truly Evil is lurking in the RBMC.

A deep sadness has taken over Liam Hudson's soul and the only way he sees out is to cut a deal with the Devil.

But what happens when he wants out, how do you beat the Devil at his own game? And how do you save an innocent little bird from being taken away?

This story contains a Dom/Sub relationship, religious triggers may be involved, and definitely a little bit of gore.

Raven's Spectre is the 7th prequel in the Washington National Chapter and should be read after Belle Macabre.

<https://geni.us/BelleMacabre-RBMC>

****I want to say a big thank you to my bestie, Author Nikki Landis, for letting me borrow one of her Reapers. Make sure to grab her wicked Reapers!****

Make sure to grab Tormented by Regret to follow more of Ethan Hudson's lineage coming May 2024:

<https://geni.us/TormentedbyRegret-RBMC>

Naughty Reading,

Crimson Syn

PROLOGUE

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THE RAIN POUNDED DOWN ON THE PAVEMENT, THE WHEELS OF my bike barely able to withstand the turbulent winds. But I pushed on, I let it wash my sins away. I wanted it to take me. To send my bike off this mountain so I'd never awaken again. Instead, I pushed on through the heavy raindrops, barely able to see the road before me. Just a little more, and I'd get to the place where demons lay waiting on lost souls. But I wasn't lost. I was a willing participant. I'm sure they'd eat up any deal I made.

I'd left the clubhouse an hour ago. My brothers' not believing the rumors, not until Bulldog spoke up.

"I'm telling you, they speak to fucking Lucifer!"

Guardian, one of our Enforcers, smirked. "Dude, I don't think that's the way shit goes down."

"I was just with Mammoth, he fucking told me that they speak to Lucifer." Mammoth was the newest Enforcer of the Tonopah Valley Chapter and he was a fucking Reaper. *A Reaper!*

Hart, our Road Captain, shook his head. "Listen man, I mean I know it sounds reasonable, to you, but..."

"It's true." Bulldog's voice rang out and every one in that entire room focused on him.

Guardian leaned back in his chair, propping his feet up. “Hell Prez, if you say it’s true...” his words trailed off.

“What I’m about to tell you doesn’t leave these walls. We will never talk about it again so don’t ever ask me again.”

“I’m listening,” Guardian’s voice rang out as he tipped his chair back.

Bulldog grunted and kicked it forward. The chair nearly toppled and Guardian struggled to regain his balance. “Shit, Prez.”

“I’m not playin’ around with you. Sit up and listen or get the fuck out.”

Running a hand across his head, he looked at him sheepishly. “Yes, Sir.”

“What Spectre says is true. Every one of those guys up in Tonopah Valley have come across Lucifer. If you’re a current member, you’d done the Devil’s Ride.”

“What the hell is that?” Hart asked.

Bulldog hesitated, putting his forearms on his knees and leaning forward as if he were about to tell us a ghost story, which technically, it kind of was.

“The Devil cuts deals with our boys. He offers them a contract in lue of vengeance. If they survive the Devil’s Ride...” His voice trailed off and I took a step forward.

“If they survive they get possessed.”

He looked back at me. “That’s right. They turn into the Devil’s Reapers. Each one has a bounty to collect.”

“That’s fucking crazy, Hart shook his head.”

“Crazy or not, it’s true. Ain’t it, Saddle?”

Saddle, our VP, stepped into the room. He pulled his hat up off his eyes and looked at each of us. “If you ever get to ride with them, be prepared. Those fuckers are scariest sons of bitches I’ve even been around.”

“So why hasn’t the devil chosen us? You found the Royal Bastards, Bulldog. Don’t you think he’d come after us too?”

Bulldog nodded. “He tried...once. When you believe in God, you’ve got to believe in the Devil. But I denied him, Keys has too...I’m just not sure how long he can hold out for.”

Keys was the Tonopah Valley Chapter President and he’d been around with Bulldog from the start. They were close, and I believed that they’d kept each other’s secrets as long as they could have, until now.

“So Lucifer is real?” I asked him.

He looked back at me and nodded. “He’s as real as they come.”

“Well, fuck me sideways.” Guardian uttered.

Bulldog lifted his chain around his neck, revealing a plain silver cross. “This has gotten me through the worst of shit. I’m not asking any of you to believe in him, but this is the only protection you’ve got.”

Everyone fell silent, not really knowing what to say. Hart asked the hardest questions though.

“Why’d they do it? I mean...what made them do it?”

Bulldog shrugged. “The Devil knows how to choose us, brother. Especially men like us who have seen enough death to break a soul. Each and every one of us are vulnerable.”

Virgil was leaning up against the bar, comfortable in the shadows. You could barely make out our Chaplain’s form. He’d just joined the RBMC and we all had our reservations about him. We didn’t quite trust him just yet, not like he was trying or anything.

“He’s right. I’ve seen him, talked to him. Years ago, before I even knew you existed.”

“What happened?” Saddle asked.

Virgil leaned in, the dim light in the bar casting a shadow on him and his black hat. He looked up, and you could barely make out his clear gray eyes.

“I was young and stupid. I thought that maybe if I talked to him, my demons would shut up. I mean hell, I thought the crossroads were a joke. Turns out I was wrong, so very wrong.”

“What’s in the crossroads?” Brim asked.

“It’s where he cuts deals, sort of like the Devil’s Ride.”

“What kind of deals?” I asked carefully and his eyes shot up to mine.

“Deals for your soul.”

Brim was staring at me, a hard stern look at my face. “What?” I asked him.

“I have a feeling you’re about to do somethin’ stupid and I’m gonna have to go save your ass.”

I grunted. “What I do or don’t do, ain’t your business Tail Gunner.”

He narrowed his eyes on me and I looked away, knowing my brothers had a tendency of doing the opposite of what I wanted when it came to my life. Especially when their other mask was that of a hero. A Goddam, tail gunning, Fire Lieutenant.

Virgil ignored us, continuing with his story. “If you ever see the Devil...if you ever get to talk to him...he opens doors you don’t ever want to go through. Demons you don’t ever want to meet. I’ve seen them. I’ve dedicated my life to fighting them. And I guarantee you, that’s a fight you don’t want to have.”

“Fuck,” Saddle whispered.

Bulldog stared up at me. “You willing to take that fight on, Tracker?”

The realization only made me want to go find out if it was true. Maybe I could make a deal too.

“All I needed was the truth,” grabbing my jacket I headed out the door.

“What are you doing, Spectre?” Brim ran behind me.

“I’m going out.”

“Where?” Hart asked, right on my tracks.

“Does it matter?”

“Of course it matters. Do you honestly believe this is going to fix all your problems?” Bulldog stated, still standing at the entrance of the clubhouse.

I turned toward them, raising my arms into the air in frustration. “What am I doing here Bulldog! Waiting to die? Every day for the last five years! When they deserve to live!”

“*You* deserve to live!” Bulldog glared at me, helpless in his plea to save me. But he knew as well as I that I couldn’t be saved.

“Becoming a Reaper isn’t easy, Spectre. The Devil will own you.” Bulldog picked up his pace, following me out as I made my way to my bike. My only sanctuary.

“I never said I wanted to be a Reaper.”

“Then what are you doing?”

“I’m going to save my family.”

I kicked up the engine, watching Bulldog and my brother’s defeat as I sped off.

I’d shut everyone out after the accident. My wife and daughter had perished and I had been left for dead. But I didn’t die. I survived. And there wasn’t a day that went by that I didn’t want to go with them. Why didn’t he take me too? *Why?*

Whatever lesson God wanted to teach me, I didn’t want to take part in. I wanted my wife and child by my side, and that was all that mattered to me. My little girl, so full of life. They’d been my whole world.

The day they died was the day I picked up drinking. That poisonous venom ran through my blood inhibiting me from taking my own damn life. But I didn’t stop trying until Bulldog found me, intoxicated and incoherent. That’s when he dragged my ass to the hospital, they pumped my stomach and I

turned around and did it again. And there he was again, dragging my ass to the hospital. Telling me he's got my six when all I wanted was to take my own goddamn and be left alone to rot.

It took me months to realize this motherfucker wasn't going to let me die, so I went a different route. I jumped off the damn roof. Broke my left leg, three ribs, and had a concussion. That's when they confined me into a damn psych ward. But he came by every fucking day to make sure I stayed alive.

It took me a year to force half the darkness out of my head. The other half remained in the death toll that followed me. I was the tracker for the Royal Bastards. Throughout the years the MC had taken a more twisted turn and I lived off it. The members didn't want to face it but we had to stand our ground. The Bloody Scorpions were constantly fucking us over, and if we didn't pull power, they'd have the upper hand.

So I took it upon myself to make sure they knew our name. That everyone from Port Townsend to New York knew our fucking name. And word quickly spread of the Royal Bastards MC and what that symbol represented.

Bulldog hated me for it, but he was grateful either way. It's what he wanted. Representation. And in order to gain respect we had to take it. With every life I took it brought me closer to that darkness I craved. I wallowed in it, it became my shelter, and eventually it would be my demise.

SPECTRE

The hours became a blur as I focused on getting where I needed to be. Dawn had come and gone, and the sun was already setting once again. Streams of purples and pinks covered the sky, the last little bit of beauty before darkness fell.

I geared the bike down the highway, approaching the road where so many of the Bastards had ventured. Each of them committing their souls to hell. I figured my conversation with Lucifer was long overdue. I was well on my way down to him anyway, there was no redeeming my soul, so I might as well cut a deal.

Lightning struck, illuminating the eeriness of the night as I revved my bike down that desolate, dimly lit road. In that terrifying moment, a pair of blood red eyes pierced through the darkness and met my gaze. I quickly approached the dark shadow lurking in the center of the crossroads, but just as I drew nearer, my bike inexplicably jerked, sending me tumbling against that rough, uneven pavement below.

The deafening roar of thunder and another flash of lightning marked the foreboding night as I found myself sprawled on the rain-soaked ground, my motorcycle lying a few feet away, clearly worse for wear. Pain seared through my body as I struggled to get up, determination overriding the ache that surged through my limbs. The wind picked up and the storm's relentless fury was a fitting backdrop to the evil I was about to behold.

Through the curtain of rain and darkness, I glimpsed the shadowy figure still lurking at the crossroads, a sinister presence whose mere existence defied everything that I knew as being reality. Those two crimson eyes pierced the night, staring straight into the depths of my soul. Fear gnawed at me, but I couldn't look away. This is what I'd come here for, and with a heavy heart and trembling legs, I approached the ominous figure. The rain continued to pour, soaking through my clothes as I stood face-to-face with the demon, its form shifting and swirling like thick, black smoke. The figure never fully formed.

“Speak,” it hissed.

“I've heard you have the power to make deals,” I said, my voice steady but laced with desperation.

The demon turned to me, its voice a sinister whisper, “I do, mortal. But deals with me always come with a price. And that price is steep.”

“I don't care. Name it...your price. I'll pay it.”

“What is it that you seek?”

I hesitated for a moment, my thoughts consumed by the images of my wife and daughter. The void they'd left behind swallowed me whole. “I want my wife and daughter back,” I declared, determination ringing in my voice.

The demon's evil eyes bore into mine, probing my soul. “Why?” it hissed, its voice dripping with curiosity. “Why do you desire this?”

Tears welled up in my eyes as I spoke, my voice quivering with raw emotion. “Because they were everything to me,” I whispered, my words heavy with longing and pain. “I can't go on without them. I'll do anything to have them back, even if it means sacrificing my own soul.”

The demon's eyes glinted, and a wicked grin played upon its shadowy features. Although I couldn't make it out, I could feel the judgment pouring out of it. It chuckled and chills ran up my spine.

“Humans are so weak. Very well,” it murmured, “your soul in exchange for their lives. Just remember what I said, such deals with the shadows come with consequences that you may not yet comprehend.”

I nodded, the weight of my decision hovering over me. Desperation had driven me to the crossroads, and now I stood ready to make a pact that would forever alter the course of my fate. I closed my eyes and waited, and then a sudden chill swept through the air, and the atmosphere grew heavy with what I could only describe as an ancient, sinister feeling. A figure materialized from the shadows, a commanding and terrifying presence that eclipsed the demon’s malevolence.

He appeared out of the darkness, looking just like any other human. He didn’t have horns, no clove feet, but I knew instantly who I was standing in front of. My instinct was to fight it, the urge to kneel, so I forced myself to stay very still, standing my ground as best I could.

He was Lucifer himself, the Morning Star, the Fallen One. His eyes gleamed like burning embers as he regarded the crossroads demon with a mixture of disdain and amusement.

The demon, startled and trembling, stammered, “M-Master, I... I was just about to...”

Lucifer raised a hand, silencing the demon’s feeble explanation. “You dare to traffic with such insignificant souls?” His voice carried the weight of eternity, a power that made the demon quiver in submission.

“Master, I was only doing your bidding.”

“I don’t need you striking deals with souls that are already mine.”

“But this soul has value. It is willing to give up its soul for love.”

Lucifer’s gaze turned icy, and his voice took on an edge of steel. “And I have no use for a soul that may be redeemed.”

The demon persisted, its defiance flaring in its futile attempt to argue its case. “But, Master, we demons thrive on

such deals. This soul is bound to serve us in the depths of hell.”

Lucifer’s eyes blazed brighter, and his power drilled down on the demon, overcoming its resistance. “Am I not making myself clear?”

Lucifer’s voice became a deep ominous tone, laced with a palpable threat that forced an aura of dread to reverberate from the demon. The evil in his tone caused me to shake and not able to withstand it, I collapsed onto my knees.

Lucifer’s eyes fell on me as he waved his hand in the air. “Leave us,” he stated in exasperation. As if the demon were a child, he was tired of scolding. “And next time remember your place, if you don’t want to spend the rest of eternity in a cage.”

The crossroads demon, defeated and clearly filled with fear, reluctantly vanished into the darkness, leaving me alone with the devil. Lucifer’s demeanor shifted from wrathful to speculating as he stared at me.

His voice took on a more whimsical, businesslike tone. But it still held that evilness that continued to chill me to the bone.

“Lost souls amuse me. But yours is beyond that. It’s broken in ways that make me shudder. I like it.”

I bit back a curse, forcing myself to look up at him as I was clearly being pinned to the ground by his power.

“Your wife and daughter are not with me, if you’re wondering. They’re up in he...hea...” He paused, closing his eyes, unable to say the word as he pointed to the sky.

He grimaced, cracked his neck and looked down at me again. “Is that where you want to drag them down from?”

Realization suddenly hit me and that oppression in my chest tightened. “What?”

“They’ve found peace,” Lucifer crouched down before me. “They’re with, you know who. Are you ready to tear them away from that?”

“Fuck you,” I finally said.

“Such a good phrase, isn’t it? Fuck you, fuck me, fuck it all,” his voice dropped to a malevolent whisper.

“So simple yet so perfect.” He chuckled, and I continued to shake.

He stood up, looking down on me and I waited patiently for lightning to strike. When nothing happened I slowly looked up to see darkness in his smile.

“You’re already doomed to an eternity with me, biker. Nothing you do could ever redeem that black hole of a soul of yours. I have to admit I’m impressed. Your death toll...fuuuck. For a human.” He kissed his fingers in a chef’s type of kiss and a smile played on his mouth. “It’s perfection.”

“I won’t be your Reaper.”

Lucifer smirked, his tone turning condescending. “Ohhh, I don’t want you for that. No. Too easy. But I can use you for something a little more interesting.”

“That’s not what I came here for,” I argued.

“No?” He laughed, a sharp cackling sound that ended on a deep menacing note.

“No. I came here to strike a deal...”

He crouched down before me, patronizingly patting my head. “You don’t make the rules, human. Down here, I do. And the only deal I’ll allow you to strike is with me.”

I grimaced, struggling to stand but unable to. “What do you want?”

He stood, once again speaking as if he were negotiating a business deal. “It’s simple really. There is this thing. Let’s call it a raven. And she’s being held captive by...I guess you could call him a madman. I’ll give him that title, I mean he is one of my favorite kinds,” he smirked back at me. “Unfortunately, this madman decided it would be beneficial to betray me, and now he needs to pay the consequences.

“I’m sorry, wait...A raven? As in a bird?”

“What other kind is there?” His smile was sinister and I held back a shiver of fear.

“You talk as if she’s an actual...human.”

He smirked and looked down at me. “I need you to steal her from him and bring her to me. Her lineage is special. And they owe me a soul. I want hers.”

“What?” I asked genuinely confused.

“Did I not speak English?” He started to repeat his sentences in what seemed like a dozen other languages, filling my head with them all at once until I finally screamed, covering my ears and rocking forward in pain.

“Stoopp! I understand you!” I yelled.

“Then why are you wasting my time?” He blinked at me as if *I* were crazy.

“This is insane,” I slowly stood up, my knees screaming from the ache. “This isn’t real, it can’t be.”

“Your brethren would say differently. They’ve tried to challenge me before, you should ask them how that went.”

“My brothers have nothing to do with this.”

“No. I suppose they don’t, do they? But this is all you’re doing, isn’t it? It’s your *choice*, your deal.” That word- *choice*- it dripped from his lips in disgust.

I gasped as he was suddenly an inch in front of me. Stumbling back, he moved his fingers, holding me up straight in a searing, invisible grip. The grip of the devil.

“You bring that soul to me, and I will rip your little family from the heavens and shove them down into this purgatory to live your hell, as you wish.”

I shook in anger. He’d twisted everything I had come here for. This wasn’t what I wanted for my family. “I take it back. I take it all back!”

He tsked, shaking his head and wagging his finger in my face. “No take backs. A deal is a deal.”

“And if I don’t bring the soul.”

“I will burn your brethren to the ground,” he snarled and I could feel his evil power come over me. My eyes rolled back, and visions of my brothers burning and screaming in pain filled my head. Tears fell from my eyes, although I was unable to scream with them.

He released me then, and as my eyes adjusted once again, I knew his threat was real. I either did what he wanted or he’d take everyone I loved and they’d burn forever. It was a simple deal, one soul in exchange for my brothers’ fate.

I nodded. “Okay, I’ll do what you want. Where do I find her?”

He grinned and clapped his hands in mock excitement. “Now that’s what I want to hear!”

I gave out a low rumble of anger and that fiery gaze of his landed on me. His eyes bore down on me, holding that threat in the air around me. “Do you think I would need you if I knew where she was?”

“N-no,” I grunted. “Then why ask such stupid questions?”

“Because I need more than just a name. At least tell me who her captor is?”

Lucifer sighed, flailing his hand in the air. “I suppose I can help you there. His name is Serge Bastien. Ask around, do what you do best to find him.”

In my naivety, I pushed him for more information. “Why can’t *you* find him?”

“Because he knows how to hide from me. Or at least his witch knows how to hide him from me. Fucking bitch.” He uttered beneath his breath.

“So if I find him, I will find this raven.”

Lucifer gave me a smile that could wither away any soul. One that darkened everything around him. “You find him. You will want to make sure to kill him, before he kills you. And you bring me that raven. Alive.”

A thin piece of parchment paper unveiled before me. Words appeared out of thin air, covering the paper in onyx ink, two blank lines were left at the bottom of the page where my signature would go. I watched him as he bit off the edge of his finger, using his blood as he signed the bottom line in crimson blood. He then waved his hand to me.

“Your turn.”

His name was the first I could make out, a binding contract with Lucifer Morningstar. The contract blurred in and out but I was able to make out the gist of it. One raven’s soul for the souls of my brothers; of my family. Failure to comply meant my immediate death and the unending suffering of all those I loved. Those at peace would be ripped down to hell.

“Do you concur, biker?”

Taking my switchblade out, I cut into my finger until that same crimson blood appeared. My finger hovered over the blank line. I fisted my hand, keeping myself from the stupidity I was about to commit.

Bulldog’s voice echoed in my head, forcing me to try and do the right thing.

I looked up at Lucifer and spoke slowly and carefully. “One raven’s soul, and my family continues to rest in peace. My brothers will be untouched and *if* I fail, which I will not, I become a Reaper.”

Lucifer narrowed his eyes on me. “What makes you think I won’t rip you apart right here where you stand.”

I smirked back at him, like he’d done to me. “Because you need me more than I need you.”

The words on the page suddenly began to transfigure, my words remaining.

With a swipe of my finger, I left my blood stained name on the contract. My body was seized up above the ground and an agonizing wave of pain ricocheted through my bones. I could feel the twisting of my soul as inhuman wails echoed around me in an ominous celebration declaring the binding of it to the devil. I was then dropped in a heap on the ground. I was left in

silence, only the ruffle of the wind against the sand resonated around me.

I sobbed into the concrete, a deep heart wrenching sound that filled the silence around me. I thought of my pretty young wife, of my baby girl and the tears continued to run down my cheeks. That's when I tore myself up, shouting up to the God I knew now existed.

“What the fuck do you want from me?!” When I didn't hear or see any response I cursed up at the skies. I cursed with all my might, and then falling to my knees I begged my wife for forgiveness.

“I'm sorry baby. You married a fucking loser, son of bitch, who couldn't protect you in life let alone in death. Please forgive me, baby. Oh God, please forgive me!”

I'm not sure how long I stayed there, sobbing and begging. In the end there was only one certainty, my deal with the devil was sealed.

And I slowly staggered down that long stretch of highway toward my bike, wondering two things: *What the fuck had I gotten myself into, and was there really a way to deceive the devil?*

RAVEN

The man stared at me as if I were some kind of disgusting wild animal.

“What can it do?”

“She sings, Sir.”

The man circled the cage, looking at me as if I were some insect, some disgusting creature that crawled out of the dirt and into his perfect realm. I hugged my knees to my chest and lowered my head.

The gypsy continued to try and sell me off. “She doesn’t look like much. Beautiful, yes, but...”

The man grimaced as he stared down at me. “An abomination.”

“To say the least, Sir.”

He crouched down to my eye level and poked at my side through the bars.

“Do you speak?”

I didn’t answer, trying to hide myself.

“How does she...you know. Do what she does?” He waved a hand dismissively.

“She’ll do it,” snarled my captor. The old gypsy who had stolen me from my mother’s side when he saw what I could do. He was a disgusting vile man with teeth the color of yolk,

he smelled acrid, soaked in sweat and tobacco and he always snarled when he spoke.

“If she doesn’t, her mother pays the price.”

I shuddered, knowing she’d been tortured and hung naked in the back of a camper for the past week. The fucker had raped her, beat her, and made her suffer while I watched, caged up and helpless. I cried for her, begging her to forgive me. She never spoke another word, and I was sure she had gone into shock.

“Does she fuck?”

“I’m sure she will do whatever you ask...”

“Not for me!” The man raised his voice as if he couldn’t bear the thought. “But my clients would pay good money.”

My captor snarled and almost grinned. “For your price she’ll do it.”

“Fine.” The man went to his desk and pulled out a check book. He was much better looking than the men I’d been with, wealthy too. You could see it in the way he walked. Holding his head up high, looking down his nose at the gypsy. He seemed to have perfected that demeaning gaze and in it, he’d also gained a look in his eye that demanded fear.

“Five hundred thousand,” he stated, handing the gypsy the check.

“It was a million!” He snarled, his four foot frame leaning forward and banging his hand on the table.

The man stared up at him and slowly stood from his chair, towering over the gypsy a good two feet.

“When I see her shift.”

The gypsy looked back at me. He shoved his cane at my ribs through the cage and I yelped, cowering further.

“You obey him in every way, bitch. If not, you’ll never see your mother again.”

The door slammed as he walked out of the room and I shivered. The man seated at his desk looked at me, his eyes

narrowing.

“I know creatures like you. I’ve come across quite a few in my lifetime. All vile, all belonging in cages.”

He stood, a looming presence in the small space, and slowly approached the cage where I couldn’t help but recoil in fear of anyone that came near me. My muscles trembled and ached from my hovered form, and I scrambled backward against the metal frame, the cage barely big enough to hold a medium size dog, let alone a human.

With deliberate and unhurried movements, he reached into the cage, his fingers like cold steel as he gripped my chin, forcing my gaze up to meet his. His eyes, two pools of darkness, seemed to swallow me whole.

“You will dance,” he seethed, his voice a sinister whisper that echoed in the dimly lit confines of the office, “you will sing, and you will shift on command. And you will *fuck* anything and everything that walks through those doors and desires you. Do you understand?”

I couldn’t do anything but tremble, but I managed to nod, my compliance born of a terror that threatened to consume me.

“Your life,” he continued, his grip on my chin unyielding, “belongs to me now. Lucifer’s Embrace will cradle you in its bosom and offer you protection. But if you disobey me, in any way, I will destroy you, not before sending for your mother and making sure you’re a witness to her destruction first.

Once again, I nodded, the weight of his words sinking deep into my mind. In those chilling moments, I knew without a doubt that he meant every word, and I was bound to a dark fate from which there was no escape.

Nobody really knows where our curse came from, but it’s been a part of my family for centuries. It turns the women in our family into nighttime messengers with wings. It’s something we keep secret and only talk about quietly when we’re alone. The initial transformation happens at the turn of your period. As soon as the first drop of blood falls, we shift. It never gets any easier. It’s shocking and violent and it makes

us sick at first. Eventually we learn to control. My mother was good at that, and she taught me everything she knew.

“It’s not the feathers that give you power, Raven. It’s your voice.”

Ravens are known to mimic, but my mother and I held power in the melodies we formed. She never quite taught me everything she knew, but she did teach me to sing, and that’s been the only thing that’s helped me to survive. The gypsy knew nothing, he only knew he’d trapped a pair of raven shifters, but he enjoyed torturing my sweet mother. It pained me to see her hurting. Maybe it would be best if I was gone, I could keep her safe as long as I did what was asked of me.

SPECTRE

“Hey Charlie!”

“Well if it ain’t the ghost of Christmas past.”

I grunted in retort. The man behind the counter just stared at me from beneath his faded truck hat while chewing the tobacco he had built up in his cheek.

He spit into an old rusty jar he kept beside the cash register. A goop of dark black molasses the color of the cancer that ran in his sixty year old body. He swiped the rest of the spit off his yellowed mustache and looked at me.

“What the hell you doin’ round these parts, Spectre? You know you ain’t welcome in half these good folk’s fine establishments.”

I smirked. “Yeah, well, I’m only planning’ on bein’ in your *fine* establishment for the least amount of time possible..”

“What does a Bastard want in an old podunk gas station like mine?”

“Lookin’ for some information Charlie. And you and I both know that this old *podunk* gas station has a lot of passersby that do a lot of whispering to you.”

“I don’t know whatcha talkin’ about?”

I lay a fifty on the counter. “You sure about that?”

He stared at the bill and then his eyes lit up as I lifted another fifty out of my wallet.

“Tell me what I need to know and there’s ten more of these waitin’ on ya’.

“There may have been a few tidbits here and there. Depends on what you wanna know.”

“I’m lookin’ for a man. Goes by the name Serge Bastien. You heard of him?”

He nodded and I laid the second bill parallel to the first. “What have you heard, Charlie?”

He sighed. “I can’t tell you that, Spectre. No one around these parts has any protection, ya know. I talk, I’m dead.”

“I’ll offer you protection...”

“Now that’s bullshit if I ever heard it.”

“Tell me what I need to know and not only do you get the money, I’ll put a watch on you til this shit clears out.”

“Last time a Bastard promised us protection, this whole town went up in flames.”

He wasn’t wrong. Bulldog had done a number on this town, runnin’ out half the population. Of course it wasn’t all his fault. The Scorpions had a lot to do with the filth that got cleared out. Charlie was one of the few who were spared.

“Yeah, well. you can trust me.”

“I don’t trust no one. Least of all a Bastard.”

“Fair enough.” I shrugged, taking the money and turning to leave.

“Hey, I didn’t say I was done.”

I smirked. I knew as soon as those bills disappeared he’d have somethin’ to say. Money always talked.

“You’re wastin’ my time, Charlie.” I took another three strides toward the door when he shouted out to me.

“Fine! I’ll tell you where to find him.”

I turned slowly toward him. “Talk.”

“He’s not somebody you wanna mess with, Spectre. I heard he dabbles in dark shit.”

“I live in the dark, Charlie. There isn’t anything that surprises me these days.”

Especially not after having a conversation with Lucifer, but I couldn’t tell him that.

“Yeah but this ain’t your normal dark shit. This is the type of shit that crawls in the shadows. The type of shit that haunts your nightmares.”

“Devil worship?”

“Darker.”

“Magic?”

“Shit that’ll stay in your soul for a lifetime, Spectre.”

“Where can I find him, Charlie?”

He sighed. “He’s got a new place down in Seattle. A club of sorts. Down underground.”

“What’s it called?”

“You’re gonna fucking love this.” He leaned forward, whispering it as if afraid something would hear us. I couldn’t blame him for being paranoid. “*Lucifer’s Embrace.*”

“Of course it is,” I nodded, not at all surprised.

“What have you heard?”

“This guy deals in halloweeny bullshit, ya know. Shit like curses and old ancient shit.”

“Like what, Charlie? I need specifics!” I lay another hundred on the counter and his eyes danced on the money as if it were green glitter.

He leaned forward, taking a glance up at the rounded camera in the corner, making sure there was no one in earshot.

“Occult shit. Devil worshipping is the least thing you should be worried about. This guy works with demon shit. I heard he deals in exports and trading.”

“Exporting and trading what, Charlie?”

He hesitated, and I lay another hundred down. “I’ve heard rumors. Of birds that turn into women, of drugs that cause hallucinations, of demons playing tricks on your mind.”

“Pretty powerful, I’d say.”

“Yeah,” he nodded.

I lay the rest of the money down on the counter. “Thanks, Charlie.”

He gripped my arm as I stepped away, and I slowly turned back to him. “My protection, Spectre.”

I grabbed his hand and pried it off me. “I can’t offer you protection from this, Charlie.”

“So what am I supposed to do?” He yelled as I swung the door open.

“Buy a rosary and start praying,” I murmured as I sauntered out into the night.

I stared out at the deadly silent road that lay beyond the gas station. I had two options, go left and go home, or I go right and head on down to Lucifer’s Embrace.

I thought about it for a long time before I headed over to the phone booth that stood in the corner of the station. I pulled out a quarter, and slid it into the machine waiting for a tone. I dialed out to the only human who I could think of who knew about this shit. *Mammoth*.

“Hell man, I’m not allowed to say anything about this.” Mammoth sighed, surprised at what I’d told him. “I didn’t tell you what I did so you’d go play chicken with Lucifer himself.

“I need your help, brother.”

“Look, *I* can’t say anything, but you may wanna talk to Exorcist. He knows more about this shit than I do.”

Exorcist was Tonopah Valley’s Enforcer. Aso a Reaper.

“Will he be willing to talk to me?”

“Let me give him a heads up that you need to talk to him. I’ll page you when I do.”

I paced around the phone booth for a good ten minutes when the page came through with a number. I picked up the handle and dialed out.

“Yeah, hello.”

“Exorcist?”

“That’s right.”

“Exorcist, my name is Spectre, I’m...”

“The ghost. I’ve heard of you, tracker. What do you want?”

I had to smirk. Bastards weren’t much for small talk, they just cut right to the chase.

“I met your Lucifer tonight.”

“Ahhh fuck. Is he recruiting again?”

“No,” I shook my head confused. “What do you know about dealings at the crossroads?”

“I know nothing good happens out of talking to Lucifer’s minions, let alone Lucifer himself. Bad shit always happens.”

“You ever gone against him?”

“Once or twice. We don’t talk much about that. That’s the darkest power you’ll ever feel come down on you. It’s the worst kind of suffering and God ain’t got much to say on that.”

There was a long silence and he continued. “Listen kid, I don’t know what you got yourself into, but you don’t fuck with the devil unless you want to feel the horns, you get what I mean?”

“Yeah, I got you.”

“If he asked you for somethin’ you better get it done. And quickly. Fucker’s impatient.”

“The Devil’s Ride...” I began, but he cut me off before I could even ask about the curse.

“You don’t ride unless you’re ready. You lookin’ to ride, kid?”

“It crossed my mind. What do you get out of it?”

That long ominous pause made the hairs in the back of my head curl. “You don’t just become a slave to the devil, kid. You become a monster.”

I thought about telling him about my deal, but something stopped me. It was pointless to ask because I wasn’t going to let it get that far.

“I appreciate the information, Exorcist. You’re a good man.”

“Listen kid, you sound solid. Whatever you do, know he’s watching. Every move you think you’re going to make, he’ll find a way to get in your way.”

“God is...”

“God ain’t around, kid. He’s busy with the people who believed in him in the first place. He’s got nothin’ to do with low lives like us.”

Those words resonated through my broken soul. He was right, I had no one to help. I got myself into this and I was the only one who got out of it. And suddenly, it was as if a light bulb turned on in my head. If I was planning on defeating the devil, there was only one man I needed to find who could help me do so. And he was about to owe me a huge favor.

SERGE

God, she was beautiful. The epitome of everything that was wrong in this world. A hedonistic pleasure only reserved for the truly twisted. Murmurs of the surreal raven whore, with the voice of an angel, had made its way along the sea side and down the west coast. Men paid large quantities of money to see her, others gave everything just to have a moment to be with her, although most couldn't bear to witness her transformation. We'd watch them scurry away like the rats they were while the numbers in my bank account kept rising. She was my diamond in the rough, and as much as I denied myself I knew I wanted her more than any fucker that walked through that door. But I would never admit it. Instead, she was treated as a pet with all the flourishings. We kept her raven hair shiny and soft and her feathers like silk. She had a personal masseuse who would work out her aching muscles after each transformation. She drank the finest wine, wore the most expensive jewels, and ate the richest food. Her rise from poverty had been swift and the snooty dark haired bitch had recently acquired a sense of arrogance that had gone to her head. Nothing that a good flogging couldn't beat out.

I could hear her screaming through the door. "He's repulsive! You can tell your *boss* that I will not do it!"

The disdain in her voice as she uttered the word-*boss*-dripping, only fueled my anger and hatred for her. I tore through the door, my whip in hand. One of the guards glanced up at me as I entered, while my pretty black raven turned her

back to me. I signaled to the guard and he quickly ducked his head and simpered out.

As soon as the door slammed shut, I strode over to her, fisting her hair, forcing her to look at me in the reflection of the mirror.

“You will do as you’re told.”

“He’s disgusting.”

“He’s paid a lot of money for you.”

“Do you think I care?”

I held up the whip to the mirror, her eyes widening as they landed on it. “Is this what you want from me?”

“You might as well, because I won’t do it.” She spat out angrily. It was that anger that made my cock hard and my disgust for her even more pronounced.

“You conniving little bitch!” I slammed her forward onto the makeup counter. She raised her head, spread her legs, and made sure to bend over for me.

“Do it,” she snarled at me.

Her reflection was wild, hair wild, hazel eyes glowing in that bright gold light they had right before she shifted.

“Shift and I’ll kill you.”

“I’d rather be dead!” She cried out as the first lashing tore through her fishnet tights.

“I hate you!” she screamed and arched back as the whip caught her mid back, the edges sharp and grazing against her soft flesh.

“I’m going to make you remember who you belong to.”

Her cries moved my soul as I lay each lashing, painting her delicate flesh in a bright crimson. On the tenth lashing she whimpered, falling forward, finally defeated.

I gripped her by the hair and forced her up against the mirror.

“You defy me and I will torture you, bitch. Your mother may not be around anymore but that doesn’t mean I won’t do what I want with this tight little body of yours.”

Her mother had died at the hands of that fucking gypsy only weeks after she was signed off to me. Which meant, she was solely mine. And my only leverage at the moment was her freedom. I made sure to keep her under lock and key at all times, and she obeyed. Because although she was rebellious, she knew what I was capable of.

A knock came at the door, and flinging her across the counter, I went to answer it. Ripping it open, it took me a moment, as a massive monster stood on the other side of it. His beady eyes fell on my raven as he licked his lips and grabbed his crotch. She had been right, he was even more vile than she was, if that was possible.

“Can I help you?” I asked, my voice laced in disgust.

“I came to claim what’s mine.” He said, attempting to one up me as he straightened to his full five six stature. I towered over him, yet he seemed to think because he had paid, he had a right to my pet, and that infuriated me more than her refusal.

“Get out,” I growled.

I saw the reflection of her eyes on me. She was surprised that I’d protect her. Good.

“Excuse me. I’ve paid nearly half a million for her to fuck me.”

“And I’m paying you a full million to leave!” I roared signaling for security to take him.

“This is absurd!”

“This...is...life,” I slammed the door in his face just as the guard grabbed him and pulled him back toward the exit.

Slowly, I turned to face her, her eyes wary as they tracked my movements into the room. “I’ll send someone to tend to your wounds.”

“I don’t need anyone to help me.”

“I didn’t ask!” I shouted, and she instantly flinched.

“You do as I say, when I say it, shifter.”

“Y-yes, Sir,” she whispered.

When she looked up at me, those golden eyes held me captive, rendering me speechless. She was absolutely mesmerizing.

“You’ll pay this off... tonight,” I ordered. She nodded, and didn’t argue again as I turned and shut the door behind me.

Back in my office, I slammed the door with a force that echoed my frustration. The intensity of my reactions to her were unsettling to say the least. I shouldn’t care about her well-being. I wasn’t human; the witch had seen to that. No heart, no immortality. But the soul, this fucking soul was still intact, and that was a major problem for me. In more ways than one.

I had become trapped in this place, all because of one little rebellious act. All I’d done was try to get away from Lucifer, instead, I’d run into the arms of the witch, who was more than willing to tie me to her.

And then there was this damn raven. I paced the room, grappling with these feelings that I thought were long gone. I was an immortal, not a disgusting creature. There was no reason I had to show any care for anything, least of all a shifter whore.

I stared at the closed door, hating myself more than I hated her. She had stirred something within me, a dormant fire that threatened to ignite. The notion of caring, of feeling anything, gave me a vulnerability that I couldn’t afford. Not in this life that I lead.

But in the end I knew, I was more like the raven than I thought I was. I was confined to a witch’s curse, a succubus that robbed me of my humanity, and yet left any essence of my soul intact. I chose the path of darkness, while the raven was pure light. A light I knew the devil wanted to extinguish. Just knowing I had something he wanted, made me crave her even more.

SPECTRE

The entrance to the strip club stood hidden in the heart of Seattle's underbelly, away from the prying eyes of the outside world. A flickering neon sign, once vibrant, now aged and dim, carried the club's name in twisted letters that seemed to writhe in the shadows.

"Lucifer's Embrace." I almost laughed at how obvious it was.

Stepping through the heavy velvet curtains that hid the entrance, I was immediately engulfed in a gothic atmosphere of blackness and sin. Dim red and purple lights cast a sickly glow over the space, creating an eerie undertone that veiled secrets that humans were too embarrassed to reveal.

The air was thick with the acrid scent of cigarette smoke and the sickly sweet aroma of exotic perfumes. Seductive beats of the bass throbbed like a heartbeat through the club. The floor was a labyrinth of polished black marble, reflecting the dimly lit stage where a dance of shadows and flesh played out.

I made my way to the bar where a lanky, pale faced man greeted me. "What's your poison?"

"Whiskey. Neat."

"Any Preference?"

"Johnny."

"You got it, boss."

I nodded, turning so my back was up against the bar and I could see my surroundings. Leather and lace, that's all I could see among the throng of people. Collars, metal spikes, a bdsm club of sorts but there was an air of something else in here. I could smell it on them all. It was...supernatural.

My eyes wandered over the women on the stage, getting flogged by a man in a black mask, it was a dark altar of temptation. A temptation I had an urge to play in but never did. I had this feeling that might change as whatever this place held, these demons, played off my darkness.

Charlie was right, these people were intoxicated by some type of drug, a hallucinogen that glazed over their eyes, and took over their bodies. Their bodies contorted with the sway of the music, and their faces had this haunted look of pleasure on them. As if they were suspended in an ongoing orgasm that only fueled that lust and longing human beings sought after.

They were a motley crew of lost souls, used to satiate Serge Bastien's desires. I wondered what type of demon I was about to meet, and Virgil's words echoed in my head. I gripped the chain around my neck, one I'd bought right outside the doors of this seedy place. The silver cross glinted in the dim lighting as I fisted my hand around it.

Believe. I told myself. I had to believe it could offer some type of protection.

If you believe in the Devil, you believe in God.

I kept repeating those words in my head as I continued to take in my surroundings. People sat in shadowy corners, their faces obscured by the shadows. Some were transfixed by the show of bodies before them, their eyes wide, while others nursed their drinks in silent contemplation. Some women had a look of unease in their eyes, and the men with them only fed off it. Enjoying their discomfort.

A sense of anxiety hit me in the gut, a warning. I could feel the presence of evil permeating every corner of the club. A malevolent force watched quietly as it conducted the show. I could feel it crawl up my skin, trying to take a hold of me.

I had no idea what the fuck I had just gotten myself into, nor if I could get out of it. In some absurd way, I wanted to go back to a few hours ago where I was just a simple man sitting around his friends drinking beer. Now, I had met Lucifer and was thrown into one of his purgatory cells, looking for something, someone, otherworldly. The fact that this even existed, hadn't settled in my brain yet.

The bodies on the stage writhed and I could hear moans emanating from around the room. The whiskey glass was placed beside me, and I quickly downed it, requesting another. I'd need at least six shots to do what I was about to do.

I turned to the bartender. "Do you know where I can find Serge Bastien?"

The bartender raised a brow. "Who is asking?"

I smiled. "An old friend."

"How old?"

"Ancient," I stated, staring the man down.

He took a step back, eyeing me warily. "Normally I wouldn't do this, but..."

"I'm just here for business," I stated, taking another shot of the whiskey and letting it burn down my throat.

Reluctantly, he gave a small gesture towards the side entrance. I drank the last drop of whiskey before heading that way. The doorway led down a flight of stairs to the basement and out to a black hallway lit by dim wall sconces that cast an eerie glow against the black paint. Everything had a gothic look to it. A touch of vintage blending in with the modern.

After a few minutes of going down what seemed more of a tunnel than a hallway, I came to a heavy black wooden door. A sense of dread hovered in the air as I stood a few feet away. The door, painted in a deep, rich black, seemed to absorb any colors around it. As I got closer, I focused on the texture of the wood which I then recognized as souls, reaching out from the pits of hell. If he wanted to freak people out, this would do it.

The doorknob was sleek and metallic and it gleamed in the low light. As my hand reached out to grasp it, the coolness of the metal shot goosebumps up my arm, heightening that creeping fear I was starting to learn to hate.

Silence surrounded the moment, broken only by the sound of my heavy breathing. I turned the knob and the door yielded, slowly creaking open. I was starting to regret coming down here when the door suddenly swung wide open.

“Can I help you?”

I blinked twice before responding to the man who looked at me like I was some kind of insect.

“Yeah, I’m looking for Serge Bastien?”

“Who’s asking?” He gave me a once over as his eyes narrowed on me.

I smirked. “Lucifer.”

He smiled, ducking his head and shaking it as if amused. “Lucifer?”

I nodded. “Yup.” Even I thought it was ridiculous.

“So he finally found a way to talk to me?”

“Yeah, I guess he did?”

He looked behind me. “You come alone?”

I nodded in acknowledgement.

“And who told you where I was?”

I hesitated, not wanting to tell him one of his own employees had given him up. Instead I shrugged. “Heard about you around town.”

He narrowed his eye on me. “Of course, you did.”

He turned, waving at me to shut the door. “I suppose if Lucifer sent you, you’ve got some kind of power.”

“Not...exactly,” I murmured, hesitating before closing the door behind me. It made this ominous heavy click, letting me know there was no way out once I was in. Taking a deep breath, I turned. The walls were the first thing that caught my

eye. They were covered in these strange symbols that looked carved in silver. The carvings seemed to writhe and twist, creating shadows and dark reflections that caught your eye and made you look twice.

“Interesting,” he chuckled. “He sent a human to talk to me.”

“I’m a Royal Bastard.”

“Ahhhh, one of his Reapers. I didn’t think you could penetrate my protection walls.”

I looked around the room slowly. “Not a Reaper.”

His dark eyes met mine and he leaned back in his chair watching me carefully. “Then what the hell are you?”

I smirked. “Like you said. I’m human.”

A look of amusement mixed with perplexion crossed his features. “Might as well come in and have a seat, then. When the King of Darkness calls I suppose I should listen.”

The furniture was a mix of dark wood and sleek metal, combining the classic with the contemporary. A large desk loomed in the center of the room, covered in more silver patterns and those same strange symbols. Brass fixtures hung from the ceiling, casting pools of warm light onto a polished wooden floor. The atmosphere was tense, coated in a thick layer of tobacco smoke and incense.

In the corner stood an antique bookshelf and a single, plush armchair sat near it, inviting someone to delve into the secrets contained within the pages. My hands itched to touch the old leatherbound spines. I may not look like much but it didn’t mean I wasn’t well read. I wasn’t going to tell him that though, the less he thought of me, the better.

I stood in the middle of the room, holding my breath as I took it all in. In the recesses of the darkness, he turned to me.

Serge Bastien had an aura of menace that emanated from him like a silent warning. His eyes were cold and timeless, seeming to pierce through the secrets I held in my soul and I wondered if he could see everything.

He dressed in a suit that spoke of both old money and an ancient darkness, and as he moved he seemed to float across the room, his movements unnerved me. The suit clung to him like a second skin, and the dark velvet of the fabric blended in with the shadows surrounding us.

As he spoke, his voice carried an old accent, not one that I recognized. It hinted at the years he'd been alive, probably centuries. He chose his words with precision, and his gaze held a knowing glint that sent shivers down the spine of anybody who dared to meet it, myself included.

As I stood there, before this immortal thing, time seemed to tick away slowly. His all knowing smile was meant to faze me, and I did my best to ignore it.

“What’s with all the weird carvings?” I asked, breaking the silence.

He smirked. “Weird?” He took a second to look around the room as if he were noticing it for the first time. “Yeah, I guess it would look strange to someone like you. Strange but full of secrets that are more timeless than you could ever imagine, biker. Don’t you think so?”

I raised a brow knowing what he meant. I was too low on the totem pole for him and he wanted to make sure I knew that. Instead of correcting him, I continued to play dumb. Didn’t want to give away the small amount of cards I held.

“You’re not much for small talk, I see.” I commented on him as I continued my walk around the room. Not wanting to be anywhere near him as well as not wanting him to notice that he’d ruffled any of my feathers.

“Small talk has its place. But today, unexpected visitors are more intriguing.”

“Unexpected? You didn’t think the Devil would drop by your swanky office?”

Serge leaned back in his chair, looking amused. “I didn’t think he’d find me so quickly. Been dodging him for centuries.”

“Dodging the Devil? That’s a new one.”

He watched me, tilting his head. “There are places and shadows even the devil can’t penetrate, Human. But it seems my luck has run out.”

I crossed my arms over my chest and finally looked at him. “So, what’s the story? Why’s Lucifer after you?”

He paused, a flicker of seriousness in his eyes. “Immortality has its downsides. The devil wants a soul that’s proved elusive. Mine.”

“Must be a hell of a life being on the run this long?”

He nodded, seeming unexpectedly honest. “A life spent looking over my shoulder, always one step ahead. I didn’t expect it to catch up to me so soon, especially not today.”

I smirked, now showing my amusement. “Lucky me, stumbling onto this supernatural *drama*.” I emphasized the word dripping with sarcasm. “So, what’s the plan now?”

“You tell me,” he opened his hands in a gesture that asked me to proceed, folding them before him.

He didn’t seem to care that the Devil was looking for him, and I was curious to know why. So I figured the only way to get information was to give a little back.

“He wants you dead.”

Serge gave out a boisterous laugh. “Yeah, I could see why. He doesn’t like to be defied.”

“I can spare it. Your life.”

“Can you?” He narrowed his eyes on me. “And why would you do that?”

“Because you have something I need,” I whispered, staring at one of the carvings.

Serge followed my gaze and suddenly he was by my side. I couldn’t help but jump back. “How did you...” I stared at him in a loss of words.

He gave me a knowing smile. “An old friend gave me these.”

“Who?”

“Someone who hated Lucifer as much as I did.”

“Someone good.”

He shrugged. “What is good? It’s just the perception of man. Let’s just say she was on my side.”

“Where is she now?”

“Dead,” he smiled. “But I would think she likes to watch, like some perverted witch.

The lights began to flicker and that same evil presence I felt out in the club filled the space.

“So how does one get their hands on them?”

He laughed again, wholeheartedly this time. “Ohhh, I like you. You don’t fuck around do you?”

I shook my head. “There’s no time for it. I just want to know.”

“So let me get this straight. You cut a deal that went raw, and now you’re out to kill me, but will spare me if I tell you how to hide from the Devil? Do you not hear yourself?”

“I know what you’re dealing in. What type of... supernatural you’re bringing into this world.”

“You know nothing!” He finally showed his anger and that fire inside him burst.

Taking my gun out, I pressed it against his chin. “Don’t think for one second I won’t kill you.”

He smirked. “Honestly, I don’t care. Humans like you, have no power over beings like me. You naive, little insignificant *man*.”

He said the words with loathing in them. As if he hated the terms of man.

“I’m a lot more deceiving than I look.” I stated.

His eyes narrowed on me then and he stared at me, wanting to intimidate me. I remained stoic, not wanting to show an ounce of fear.

“You are, aren’t you? Did the devil give you some power that I don’t know of? Something...*unexpected*,” he mused.

“You laugh at what you don’t know.”

“No. I laugh at a man who was so overcome with grief he became desperate and made a deal with the most evil of entities. Now he’s sunk himself in such a black hole he’s got no way out. And since God doesn’t seem to really care for those of us who dwell on the darker side of the world, he’s come to me to ask for help.”

“Fuck ,your help. I’ve come here to strike another deal.” I shoved the gun at him and he laughed.

“Ohhh this is getting better and better. Go ahead. I’m curious as to what a puny human like you can offer someone like me.”

“Since you don’t seem to care about your life, then how about I spare your raven’s instead?”

His eyes narrowed and in another millisecond he was standing before me, his presence powerful and evil. The gun in my hand twisted and contorted until it fell onto the floorboards with a loud resounding thwack.

“What did you just say?”

“The devil wants your pet. Whatever she is, is valuable to him. You may be protected but we both know she’s not. Give me what I want, and I’ll forget her and let you keep her. Go against me and...”

I wasn’t ready for the attack. My words cut off as he wrapped his fist around my neck and flung me up against the wall. Fighting him was useless, he had powers I could only dream of having.

“You think this is a game, mortal? I can break you in two if I want to.”

“Do it,” I croaked. “I’m not afraid to die.”

His grip tightened, and for a moment, it felt like the air itself had abandoned me. The room closed in, and as I struggled for breath, I could sense the gravity of my situation

sinking in. The man in the suit had powers beyond those of what I was told about. Fucking devil had lied and now this entity held my fate in his hands. The stark reality of my mortality hung in the air like a heavy shackle.

As he held me pinned against the wall, his eyes bore into mine with an intensity that sent shivers down my spine. The atmosphere crackled with tension, and the room seemed to pulse, exciting that ominous energy.

“You’re not like the others,” he hissed, the words laced with both menace and curiosity. “Most mortals cower at the mere mention of death, but you... you’re different. You truly want it.”

He gripped me tighter and those shadows started to play with my vision. They looked like demons at play. He suddenly hissed, tearing his hand away from my throat.

I dropped to the floor, gulping in a desperate breath of air that stung my throat. Despite the pain, I met his gaze with a death defying one of my own.

“Kill me or spare me, it won’t change a thing,” I wheezed. “You’ll give me what I came for.”

We both glared down at the hand he held by the wrist. It had been seared by some unknown force. It was then I realized the devil had left me some type of gift.

“Fuck,” he muttered, visibly in pain.

I slowly pushed myself up from the floor, a smirk playing on my lips. “Looks like even immortals have their Achilles’ heel.”

Serge shot me a venomous look, his anger simmering beneath the surface. The air grew tense as we locked eyes.

“You think this changes anything, Biker?” he spat, his words laced with venom and hate.

I shrugged, feeling a sense of newfound confidence. “Changes everything for me.”

The devil’s intervention had changed the course of our meeting. I had the upper hand now and Serge knew it.

“Get out,” his voice was low and menacing.

“So I guess you won’t be helping me?”

He reached out to grab me again and stopped, inches from my throat. Thinking it over twice, he took a step back.

“You touch my raven and I may not be able to kill you, but I will find ways to torture you so painfully you will regret ever going against me.”

I smirked. “You know I’m really tired of you demons or whatever you are, threatening me with pain. I’m not afraid of pain,” I snarled. “Do your best, but just remember one thing, Serge Bastien. I’m the devil’s servant now. I don’t think he’ll like knowing that you’re playing with his things.”

“Get out!” His scream reverberated against the walls and it nearly made me jump out of my skin. Trying to remain calm I stared back at him, a smile playing on my lips.

“Until we see each other again.”

I stepped out of the office feeling as if something was shoving me out. As soon as I was alone in the hallway, I could feel the hairs on the back of my neck stand at attention, that odd evil sensation coursed through my body, and I broke out in a run, heading up the flight of stairs and back out into the club.

I needed to find that bird. It was my only leverage against both Bastien and the Devil. As I made my way across the floor, the lights suddenly flashed and went out. People screamed, some moaned, and suddenly a spotlight lit the stage. What I saw next, floored me.

SPECTRE

Just as I burst back into the dimly lit club, I began to make my way through the crowds of people forming by the stage when the lights suddenly died, plunging us all into pitch darkness.

A hush swept through the crowd, and an eerie silence took over, broken by a single spotlight that cut through the blackness and illuminating an empty stage.

I froze, as did the entire crowd, and watched as a shadow flitted across the stage. It was a black bird, swift as it perched itself on the edge of a chair. At first it seemed like an ordinary raven, but I knew better. This was what the devil wanted me to see. The air thrummed with a supernatural energy, and I could tell that something otherworldly was about to happen. I closed my eyes briefly, wishing I'd never stepped foot on those fucking crossroads.

Virgil's words echoed in my mind again. *He opens doors you don't want to go through. Demons you don't want to meet.*

As soon as my eyes opened, the unreal happened. Right in front of me, the raven began to shift and transform. Its neck stretched out, melding itself into the naked form of a woman, and she was fucking beautiful.

My eyes traveled down her body, the sounds of men groaning rose above any sound. Her body was hidden half in shadows but I could see a curvy silhouette and flashes of supple flesh. Someone came out and wrapped her in something. When she stepped out into the spotlight, she was

wearing a dress that mirrored the raven's sleek darkness, flowing like a midnight metallic waterfall around her, and glowing blue and purple against the light. She was plump in all the right places. Her hips were wide, the gash in her gown revealing thick lush thighs. Thighs that I wanted wrapped around me. Her tits were large and heavy, her cleavage deep and barely hidden by the dress. The crowd murmured in disbelief, but for the most part they were held captive by the shifter on the stage.

She then began to sing, and I thought I'd skipped everything and God had taken me straight to heaven. Her voice was both angelic and haunting, it reverberated through the space, captivating every soul in the room, including my own. The crowd was caught in a spell, and I glimpsed around me, noticing how her melody was wrapping around them, holding them transfixed. I realized I was the only one that wasn't completely caught in her rhythmic spell.

When I glanced back to the stage, her eyes suddenly met mine. A flicker of surprise passed through her delicate features, and she frowned, looking uncertain at me. She looked around the room at all those hypnotized faces, yet I wasn't one of them. Her voice definitely held power, I could feel it coursing through my body, producing goosebumps, but it had a different effect on me. One, I don't think either of us expected.

She walked over to me, her hips swaying sensually, and I looked up at her as she gracefully crouched down on the edge of the stage. Her voice was low and deep, it sounded as though a profound sorrow filled her.

I reached up to her, touching her hand and a shudder ran through her body. I caught the ripple of black feathers dancing in her hair and I blinked, not knowing if what I was seeing was real. But her eyes betrayed her, glowing in this warm, golden amber light, filled with pain and a quiet torment that echoed my own. Those haunting notes filled my head and soul.

What in the ever lovin' hell was this?

I knew this was a show. This was what Serge Bastien wanted people to feel when they came to see him. She was being used in order for him to feed something that lingered in the shadows. Something that gave him power and money. Lots of it. I truly felt bad for her and at the same time I felt this intense obsession building in me.

I was being drawn to her like a moth to a flame. I didn't know if it was the Devil's protection over me, or my own will to fight, but as much as she sang directly to me, I wasn't being trapped or controlled. And yet the world around me faded as she continued her hypnotic performance, and all that existed was her and I, the spotlight casting a glow on her captivating silhouette. A strange yearning gripped me, fueled by desire and the need to own this haunting beauty.

I am so fucked.

One thing was to hide from the devil, but this temptation was too hard for anyone to handle. I stood there, staring into those unbelievably surreal eyes until the final notes of the song echoed around us.

She moved back and I gripped her hand, wanting her close. But she simply shook her head, and slowly pulled out of my grasp. The hum of the crowd began again, music pumped through the speakers, and whatever had just been witnessed was now erased.

I watched as she slowly disappeared toward the back of the stage and I followed her.

"Hey!" I called out to her just as she was about to round the corner.

She turned to face me, her eyes reflecting a mix of curiosity and trepidation. I offered a charming smile, trying to put her at ease. "That was incredible," I said, my voice a low murmur. "I've never seen anything like it."

She remained silent, cautious. "You- you remember that?"

"Of course I do. Why wouldn't I?"

"I'm sorry," she searched the hallway, quickly realizing we were completely alone. "I don't normally talk to the

audience,” she finally whispered, her gaze darting towards the exit.

Respecting her boundaries, I took a step back. “Fair enough. I just wanted to introduce myself. I go by Spectre. And you are?”

Her eyes flickered with a hint of apprehension and she hesitated. “I don’t usually share my name,” she admitted.

As she tried to slip away, I reached out and grabbed her arm gently. “Don’t go.”

She quickly pulled away, holding her hand to her chest as if I’d burned her. Looking down I could see the goosebumps forming on her arm. “Who are you?”

“Just a friend.”

“I’m not alone here, you know?”

“I know.”

“They could come for me any second.”

I nodded. “I know that too.”

“What do you want?” She whispered, her lips trembling.

“I’m not sure,” I whispered back, stepping in closer.

Uncertainty lingered in her eyes but the magnetic pull between us intensified. Neither she nor I could deny what was happening.

“Why isn’t anyone out there surprised at what you are?”

She looked toward the stage, a sad look in her eye. “Because I make them forget.”

“And why haven’t I?”

“I don’t know,” she whimpered, almost on the verge of tears.

I stepped closer, pressing my body to hers. “I won’t hurt you.”

“Why?” she finally asked, her voice soft but guarded.

“Why won’t I hurt you?”

She nodded. “Yes.”

“Do you want me to?” I asked, the vision of her strapped to that stage chair, a flogger in my hand crossed my mind. *God, I was a sick fuck.*

“I-I don’t know. I don’t know anything right now. Most men run at this point,” she looked left, then right, as if wanting to escape but not knowing how to.

“Why do they do that?” I asked, taking her hands and placing them on my chest.

“They usually find me disgusting, and they don’t want to touch a shifter. I make them forget me at my Master’s request.”

Her Master, being Serge Bastien. I tilted her chin up, my fingers brushing against her skin like a whispered promise. “I’m not most men and I don’t find you disgusting. I find you utterly captivating.”

Her eyes widened, searching mine in bewilderment. Gently, I traced the outline of her face with my fingertips, marveling at the delicate features that seemed almost too perfect to be real. “You’re the most beautiful thing I’ve ever seen,” I whispered, my voice hoarse with lust.

Her eyes continued to glow that amber light in the dark space and the whole world seemed to fade around us. The pull between us was strong and it not only filled me with need, but also guilt.

A picture of my wife rocking my daughter to sleep flashed before my eyes, and it cleared the fog out instantly. I quickly pulled away, needing to gain some space between us, but not enough that I wasn’t touching her. Her chest rose and fell against mine, and she smelled of lavender and vanilla.

“I want to see you again. Tell me I can see you again.”

“Why?” she whispered, confused.

I smiled, my gaze locked with hers. “Because there’s something about you that I can’t ignore. I’d be crazy if I did.”

“That, you definitely are. Most men have to pay to see me.”

“I’ll pay anything.”

She slid her hands up the leather of my jacket and she smiled sadly. “I doubt you have the means for what I cost.”

“How much do you cost, little bird?”

I traced her cheek, sliding my hand around her neck, my thumb playing along her jawline.

“Millions,” she whispered.

“How much would *you* charge me?” I leaned in, sliding my nose along her neck, unable to keep myself from touching her, and loving the sound of her whimper.

“Oh, God. Nothing. I wouldn’t charge you a dime.”

“That’s all I need to hear.”

I gave her a gentle kiss on the cheek and reluctantly pulled away. As I turned, she grabbed my hand and electricity shot up my arm. I raised my eyes to hers.

“I’m Raven,” she whispered her name and I nodded.

“I know, little bird. And I’m coming back for you.”

I slid my hand out of her grasp and made my way out of the club, alert to my surroundings. I didn’t know how or when I would get to see her again, but I had to. I was in too deep now.

RAVEN

I ran into my bedroom at the end of the long hall. Slamming my back against the door I tried to slow my heartbeat. I gripped my skirt, closing my eyes and leaning my head back, remembering how good he felt.

A stranger.

A Spectre.

I moved over to the vanity and stared at myself in the mirror. I gasped when I realized my eyes were still glowing. I quickly shut them, urging myself to calm down. After a few seconds I stared at myself again, my eyes had finally gone back to normal. I slid my hand to my cheek, still feeling the tenderness of his kiss. No man had ever kissed me like that before. So carefully, as if he were afraid, I'd break.

From the moment I got on stage I couldn't tear my eyes away from his. He had this predatory grace about him, unlike that of Serge's who wanted to destroy me, this man wanted something more. I could see it in his eyes as he swayed to the melody I offered him. I tried my best to make him forget but he didn't allow it, and I sensed a freedom in that. I didn't want him to forget. I wanted him to remember it all, to remember me.

I'd never experienced anything like that in my life. His eyes had held a promise of something different. Not disgust or hatred, but kindness and caring.

I stared at myself and rolled my eyes. "You're delusional, Raven. No man is ever going to want you."

I turned away from the mirror, determined to set my mind on something else, when his words echoed in my head.

I want to see you again.

I shook my head. “It’s a lie, Raven. Why would any man want to see you again?”

I reached back and undid the zipper of my dress, letting it pool at my feet. His words echoed again.

Because there’s something about you I can’t ignore.

“Ugh! Stupid.” I picked up my dress, flinging it across the bed in frustration when the door to the bedroom flung open.

I screamed, quickly covering up my breasts as Serge walked in, his eyes taking me in as he approached me. I looked away, nearly cringing as I felt his hardness press against me.

“What do you want?” My voice trembled as his hands reached around me.

“I disgust you, don’t I?” He sneered, his breath reeked of alcohol.

I stayed quiet, not wanting to ignite his anger.

“You think you can forget your place, Raven? That you could sing to just anyone.”

“I wondered if he’d seen the show tonight. I prayed that he hadn’t.”

“You’re nothing but a plaything for me. *My property.*”

He yanked down my arms, my breasts on display. He reached out pinching the tips, cruelly digging his nails in until I cried out in pain. He then shoved me back onto the bed.

“You’re mine, Raven. Don’t you ever forget it.”

“No!” I scrambled back off the bed just as he reached for me.

He grinned, slowly spreading his arms as he knelt on the mattress. “Who’s going to save you, shifter? Do you think anyone here will do that for you?”

He swayed forward and suddenly clutched my arm, yanking me toward him. “I can do anything I want with you and no one would be the wiser. No one would miss you because you’re just a stray I picked up. A stray I can discard just as easily.”

He gripped my face with one hand, forcing his hand between my thighs. “I’ll make you mine whether you want to or not.”

I screamed, shoving him away before I willed myself to shift in front of him. I screamed as the pain tore through me. I kept that scream inside when on stage, but not here. This was a curse, it wasn’t natural, turning into a bird was a pain that would break human. Because I was still human, something Serge Bastien didn’t understand anymore.

“You fucking bitch!”

He lunged for me and I managed to dodge him, flying out of the bedroom and down the hallway. I flew up into the rafters, hiding among those treacherous shadows of his. His screams and curses followed me the entire way. I couldn’t stop shivering as I cuddled up against a wooden beam. It was the farthest place I could find, where no human could get to me.

He’d attempted to rape me several times throughout the years. Once he almost managed to go through with it. I’d been exhausted after a show, and I’d crept into the dressing room and fallen asleep. He’d found me, and in his drunken stupor he began to tear away my clothes...I awoke with him between my legs, his eyes penetrating and evil. My only power against him was my ability to shift. He had no control over that, and I’d become too fast for him to trap me. I preferred that pain to letting Serge Bastien use me.

I watched as he appeared on the empty stage. The club had died down and only the employees remained.

“I will cage you again, bitch! Keep testing me, and I will keep you chained forever!” He screamed out, startling everyone around him.

He cursed at those that stared at him before he stumbled out of the room, stumbling in his drunkenness. In the morning, he'd act like nothing had happened, and he'd be back to his slick, slimy demeanor once again.

I could hear the murmurs of those below me. The way they shook their heads, judging me. I had no friends here that would defend me, I was truly all alone. As I crouched down further, I let my feathered wings offer protection. My mind wandered to that stranger that had appeared tonight, and for once, I let my imagination linger on him. The stranger. On what it would feel like when he touched me, if he'd kiss me again. I liked his touch, and I wanted more. That pull between us wasn't normal. Maybe it was a part of the curse, or maybe he too held powers. But what if he was just human and that damn succubus that lingered in the hallways was playing games with us. His name lingered in my mind as I let my exhaustion consume me. The worst thing about it all, was that I wanted him to play with me.

SPECTRE

I wasn't afraid of Serge Bastien. The fucker had nothing on me and as much as I knew he hated to admit it, he damn well knew it. The Devil knew exactly how to get under his skin, protecting me in the process. I had the upper hand there, and I was slightly smug about it. But then there was the other evil now present in my life. The Devil himself, and that was a force I wasn't sure how to get off my back.

Flashes of the symbols on the wall made me grab a pen off the hostess stand as I walked out into the chilled night. I sketched what I remembered of the symbols on a napkin, and stuffed the piece of paper into my jacket pocket. I had to find a way to make these work. Some type of magic had to exist.

I grunted. *Magic?* My life had turned into something absurd. Symbols on a wall with power over devils, demons and curses, and I'm pretty sure back home my brothers were worried sick not knowing the hell that surrounded them. If I told them what I knew I was pretty sure half of them wouldn't believe me. Either way this was going to be my secret, and I was going to take it to the grave.

The wind picked up, and I clutched my jacket close, making my way down the narrow alleyway heading toward my bike. My mind had gone back to the raven on the stage. She'd been so stunning I'd forgotten everything around me. All that existed was her and I. Her voice sounded like that of angels, and her soft smile had tugged at places in my chest that hadn't been touched in years. I wasn't paying attention to my surroundings when suddenly I felt that dark presence again,

and I was sent sprawling back onto the concrete wall by some unseen force.

The impact sucked the air out of me, but before I could slide to the ground, long bony fingers wrapped around my throat, lifting me up against the cold brick wall until my feet were dangling off the ground. The darkness seemed to thicken as an all too familiar sinister presence approached, and when the dim light revealed his features, I was met with the piercing gaze of Lucifer. He was decked out tonight, dressed in a black suit, silk black shirt, and a blood-red tie. He paced in front of me as if slowly contemplating what to do with me.

“Liam, Liam, Liam. What are you up to?”

I struggled against the hold he had on me but I had no more fight in me. “I did what you asked.”

“You realize no one has ever dared to betray me. At least not anyone who’s actually lived to tell about it. Not that life matters that much to you anyway.”

He approached me, his eyes never leaving mine, searching for any secrets he could find. Instead I went completely still, slowing my heart rate, putting on my best poker face.

Suddenly, I felt a fist hit my face, and the taste of copper filled my mouth. I spit it out while Lucifer took out a red handkerchief and blotted my mouth with it. Whatever had hit me, was once again unseen.

“I know you’re plotting something, biker.” He looked at the blood on the handkerchief and then placed the silk back into his pocket. “Something that won’t bode well for you or any of your brethren. You might as well tell me.”

He gripped my chin, forcing me to look at him. “Before I find out the hard way.”

My throat tightened under that bony grip, but I managed to croak out a strained response.

“Go fuck yourself.”

His laugh was a charming deep sound that traveled down the base of my skull and sent a cold shiver down my back.

“Already done that, twice.” He held up two fingers and then with one of them he smeared the blood off my lip. I pulled back, right as he sucked it off, savoring the metallic taste.

“You taste of pig and lies.” He leaned in, his face inches from mine. “I can smell them on you, Liam. Don’t make this harder on yourself.”

The grip on my throat eased, and I crumpled to the ground, gasping for air. Lucifer continued to pace before me, a sense of malevolence radiating off him.

“Did you find him?” He asked carefully.

“I did,” I stroked my throat as I struggled to stand.

“You kneel!” He pointed at the ground and my body immediately fell to its knees before him. I bit back a curse as I was forced to stare up at him.

“Did you mention me?”

“I did,” I snarled.

“And what did my dear old friend say.”

“He told me to tell you to go fuck yourself.”

Lucifer snarled, and I doubled over as the pain of my intestines being squeezed was overwhelming.

“Is that right?”

“Fuck you,” I spat out more blood onto his shoes.

The pain in my insides intensified and I cried out, falling to my side. Lucifer grinned. “I think what you’re not realizing, biker, is that I can tear your guts out and still keep you alive to feel every ounce of pain your...higher being... has so proudly allowed you to feel. What a gift, isn’t it? To feel.”

He snarled the words as I felt my guts twist inside of me. “Kill me. I don’t care.”

Lucifer grinned. “Ohhh I know you don’t. That’s why it’s so much fun. You don’t care about yourself but you care about

everyone around you. And hurting them is true pain for you isn't it.

I bit back a retort as I tried to crawl away from him, still attempting to flee. To do something. Could I pray?

Lucifer placed a shoe on my head, holding me against the concrete. "Now tell me about the raven."

I froze, grateful he couldn't see my face. I had to protect her at all costs. "She wasn't there."

"What?" He gripped me by my hair and hauled me up in the air as if I were some ragged doll. "What do you mean she wasn't there?"

"I didn't see her there."

"Then go back in and find out where she is!"

"I doubt Serge will let me in there again."

He yanked me up against the wall bringing his face to mine. "Do you think I give a fuck?"

"No. I don't."

"You have one job. Find her!" He released me and I fell to the ground, scrambling until my back was pressed against the wall.

It was then I realized that he was desperate, and it was showing. He couldn't go where I could, it's why he'd enslaved me in this stupid contract. But I also remembered my wife at that moment. Her Catholic upbringing and her belief in angels. I could see her sitting on the couch telling me about something she had read. I tried as hard as I could to remember it. Something told me it was important.

What the hell was it?

I thought long and hard until it slowly came to fruition. *Free-will*. God had given humans free will and the angels hated us for it. And there was one in particular, that with all his power and beauty, couldn't quite get his grasp on humanity's free will. He could corrupt it, he could tempt it, but we still had the choice.

“What if I tell you I won’t do it?”

Lucifer’s eyes flared with anger, frustration evident in the clenching of his jaw. “You think you have a choice in this, biker?” he sneered.

I met his gaze, unwavering. “Yes, I do.”

I slowly stood up, my insides burning, my vision slightly hazed and I could barely swallow, but I suddenly had this epiphany. “I’m bound by your contract, Lucifer, but I can choose how I respond, what I do, and whether I help you or not.”

His anger intensified, but I stood firm, fully understanding that there was one thing he couldn’t control — my choice. The power of free will, the essence of humanity that even the devil couldn’t extinguish.

“You need me more than I need you, Lucifer.”

“I’ll torture their souls for all eternity!” He shouted angrily, the world vibrating beneath his rage. But I remained unmoved, because I realized he was also bound by that contract. And he couldn’t do anything unless I made a move.

“Their souls are not bound to you. At least I’ll know they’ll be at peace.”

“You’re playing a dangerous game, biker. And if you’re not careful, you might find that hell has a way of catching up to you.”

“It already has,” I snarled back.

Lucifer grinned, his presence distorting the very air around us. The shadows moved along the walls and concrete toward him, whispering secrets that only he could hear.

“Your wife and daughter will have you to thank as I tear them down from their little peaceful plot in Hea-hea...that damned place.”

“You can’t do that!”

He gave me a viciously evil smile. “Just watch me, biker. You have three days to bring me Serge’s head and the raven. If

not your little family will be the ones to pay the price for your insolence.”

With that, the devil vanished into the shadows, leaving me alone in the alley, the echoes of his warning lingering in the air. The game had intensified, and I fell to the ground, feeling once again defeated.

I wasn't sure if the devil had the power to tear a soul from heaven, but as I looked up to the sky, I prayed they'd keep them safe.

Despite the devil's warning I couldn't give him the raven. She didn't deserve that fate, no one did. And something deep in my gut told me I needed to protect her. Those bright amber eyes of hers had seen me, like few others had and I needed to see her again.

As I stumbled onto my bike, I spit out blood. My body ached, but regardless of the pain, I had to find a way back to her. Revving the engine, I sped off with the knowledge that not the devil, and definitely not any fucking demon was going to stop me. I had an advantage over Lucifer, and that was that I had nothing to lose.

SPECTRE

“*W*here the fuck have you been?” Bulldog attacked me as soon as I walked into the clubhouse.

Hart wandered from one room to the next and when he saw me, he merely shook his head. “You fucked up this time brother,” he remarked making his way into the next room.

“I’m fine.”

“You cut the deal?” Saddle asked from his perch on a barstool, his eyes fixed on me through the reflection of the bar mirror.

I glanced from Bulldog back to Saddle, and shrugged. “A deal was cut.”

“Are you fucking kidding me!” Bulldog yelled as Saddle whirled around in the stool, staring at me in shock.

“You’ve gotta be kidding me. So what are you, a Reaper now?” Saddle asked.

“No,” I went behind the bar and grabbed a beer. Popping the cap open, I gulped it down like water.

“So is your family gonna pop up all Pet Semetary like, Buzz, our younger Enforcer asked as he swiped clean the bar counter.

“Nice, Buzz,” I uttered.

“Hey. All this Lucifer shit’s got under my skin. How else do you want me to describe it?”

“My family is not going to be touched.”

Virgil, sitting in the back of the bar leaned forward, that ominous shadow following him around like a second skin. “What happened?”

I looked around the room and hesitated for a brief moment. Bulldog was the one who cut the silence. “Talk boy, or I swear to God.”

“You were wrong,” I looked at Virgil. “God ain’t around for this fight.”

He nodded. “You’d be surprised.”

“Bullshit. Lucifer’s real and now he’s got me in some kind of warped head lock I don’t know how to get the fuck out of.”

“What does that mean, brother?” Saddle asked.

“It means if I don’t do what he’s asked, he’ll tear my family out of heaven and...” I stopped myself, staring into each of their faces. I felt ashamed of what I’d done. I let my emotions get the best of me and I’d put them all in danger without them knowing. Maybe that was for the best. Keeping them in the dark. At least then, they would suffer the worry.

“And there’s a woman. A beautiful fucking woman who’s in danger.”

“And you’re gonna save her?” Bulldog asked.

I smirked and shook my head. “I’m supposed to trap her, bring her to him.”

I stood up, spreading my arms in an exaggerated fashion. “You’re looking at Lucifer’s newest servant.”

“Well, fuck,” Saddle stated.

“Couldn’t have said it better myself, brother.”

Virgil’s voice carried an edge to it as he spoke. “You don’t believe in God?”

I turned to him, a slow rage burning in me. “Why should I? He’s not here when I need him. He never has been.”

“Doesn’t mean he’s not watching.”

“And what the fuck good is that to me? How does that help me?”

“You’ve created a purgatory of your own. You have the choice...”

“You know what,” I cut him. “I’m fucking done with all these choices. I don’t want to hear it.”

“Well hear this, brother. You don’t have to be the devil’s servant. You have your own free-will. It’s up to you if you let him corrupt it.”

I took the last few strides toward him, slamming my empty beer bottle on the table before him, practically snarling down at him. “I cut a deal with the Devil, *brother*,” I emphasized the word, letting him know that I didn’t consider him one. “I don’t think there’s any more corruption to my soul that can be done.”

Virgil nodded. “You’re absolutely right, brother.” His statement made me take a step back.

“Just do me a favor. Remember one thing, and this will be the last thing I’ll say to you about this.”

I nodded, still guarded but willing to hear him out. “Your soul may be corrupted but that doesn’t mean there’s no room for redemption. Remember that God forgives those who want to be forgiven. Show true penance and you’ll see light filter in.”

I turned away from him, because in my heart I knew he was right. My eyes landed on Bulldog who didn’t look as convinced. “What are you planning, Liam?”

“For now, I want to see that woman again.”

“”You got a woman?” Siege asked as he walked into the last part of the conversation.”

“Seems like it,” Saddle stated.

“Well hot damn, didn’t think anyone could ever fill that empty void of yours.”

“She’s not my woman,” I grunted.”

“Then what is she?” Bulldog asked.

“Powerful,” I whispered, remembering the lure of her song, and the endless curves I yearned to sink into.

Virgil cut through the bullshit and simply said what everyone was thinking. “Then she’s your way out. Mark my words brother, God has sent you redemption. Save her and I assure you can save your soul.”

Buzz popped open another bottle of beer and brought it over to me. “Drink up, brother. You’ve got a long few days ahead of you.”



BULLDOG WALKED OUT WITH ME THE FOLLOWING NIGHT. “ARE you sure you don’t need my help?”

“There’s nothing you can do.”

“I can call Keys. He can send out the troops.”

“For what? They’re all under Lucifer’s demons. Virgil’s got a point, I got myself into this, I need to find my way out.”

I hopped onto the bike, but as I kicked down the kickstand, Bulldog placed his hand on my shoulder. “So what happens if you don’t come back?”

“You just rest my body beside my family. I’ll be at peace there.”

Bulldog gave me a sad nod, squeezed my shoulder and as he took a step back, I took off before the knot in my throat got any bigger. Bulldog was like an older brother and there was no one in this world I could be more grateful to. If love and family existed in my world, it took root with that stubborn mule.

Two hours later I was pulling up into the alleyway beside Lucifer’s Embrace. The heavy beat of the music reverberated through the brick walls as I hid the bike in the shadows and made my way to the notoriously seedy club. The neon sign flickered as I approached, its light casting that eerie red district

glow over the entrance. Everything about this night seemed quiet, a little too quiet.

I had to remain focused. My mission was clear: just find Raven and talk to her. At least that was the plan. I ignored the fact that I yearned to see her, or that I wanted to put my mouth on those full lips, or kiss the crevice between her thighs.

“Fuck,” I murmured to myself as I was next in line to enter. Even if I could do that, first I had to slip into the shadows, without catching the attention of Serge’s watchful guards.

As I neared the entrance, I expected the bouncers to halt me in my tracks. Yet, to my surprise, I slipped through the door easily, like the ghost I was. Going in and out of places unrecognized was what I did best, and Serge’s confines were no different. Except the supernatural bullshit, of course.

The thumping bass masked my every step as I weaved through the dance floor, eyes scanning the crowd for a trace of her. The club was an erratic display of flashing, writhing bodies, and hedonistic energy, a perfect cover for what I needed to do.

I pressed against the dimly lit corridor leading backstage, my heart racing with the anticipation of finding Raven. The air was thick with the scent of anticipation, a merging of sweat, perfume, and something darker that lingered beneath the surface.

I heard her voice before I saw her. That same melody traveled through the crowd and made its way to me. It was like a haunting serenade that echoed through the backstage corridors. I was mesmerized once again, my focus wavering for just a moment. Her voice, ethereal and captivating, reached into the recesses of my being, resonating in my body. It was a primal reaction, a raw, visceral response to her song. And with it came a longing. I wondered if I was feeling what she was feeling. The melody wrapped around me like a seductive whisper and its impact sent a surge of desire through my veins.

I shook my head, clearing it of that thick fog before it could control my responses. I needed to be on alert at all

times. I snuck toward the back of the stage, hiding in the darkness right beside it, ready for when she stepped off.

I steeled myself, waiting patiently, doing my best to ignore the melody. When I glanced up, my cock reacted. She was in a sheer red nightie, I could make out her perfect heart shaped ass, her sultry body barely covered by the material. There was nothing stopping me from taking this woman. She was my raven in the dark, waiting to be found, and I sure as fuck had found her.

RAVEN

I slowly stepped foot off the stage, feeling slightly uncomfortable in the small garment Serge had made me wear. He'd let me know a whore should always dress like one, and he didn't want me wearing those god-awful dresses anymore. I'd simply walked away with the new flimsy clothes and decided this was not an argument I wanted to have.

I was contemplating what I was going to wear for the next number when a shadow loomed from out of the curtains. My scream for help was silenced by a hand being wrapped around my mouth, the other around my waist as I was dragged toward one of the back rooms.

I kicked and I dragged my heels but he shoved me into a room. I darted past him toward the door but he held me tight.

“Easy, beautiful. I’m not gonna hurt you.”

The lights flickered on and standing before me was that same stranger that filled my thoughts day in and day out.

“Hi,” his lip curved upward in a sexy smirk that melted my heart.

“Hi,” I whispered back, lost in his gaze for a moment. Then suddenly, realization hit me and I grabbed him by the forearms, urging him toward the door. “What are you doing here? If Serge catches you, you’re dead.”

He shrugged as if he had no care in the world. “Believe me, that ringleader is the least of my problems.”

“But he’s the most of mine,” I looked up at him pleading.

“What if I told you I don’t want to go?”

“Then I’d tell you, you’ve gone mad and you need to see someone about that.”

He chuckled, nodding silently. “You might be right about that.”

Once again his dark eyes met mine, and I felt that pull. A shiver ran down my body and heat pooled at my core.

“Do you feel that?” I asked him.

He slowly slipped his hand around my waist and pulled me into him. “This,” he groaned as my body pressed against his hardness.

“She’s playing with us,” I whispered against his mouth. Only a fragment of an inch away from mine.

“Who?” His voice was deep, husky, sending a thrill through me.

“The succubus,” I whispered, leaning my head back and giving him access to my neck.

“There’s a succubus?”

I gave out a laugh. “Yes, I suppose I should have told you that.”

“Explains my need then.”

“What need?” I moaned as his tongue ran along the curve of my neck.

“My need for you,” he danced us back toward a lounge chair, kissing and biting my neck, his hands squeezing and caressing my body.

He sat back into the chaise lounge and his eyes roved over me, lingering on my breasts. I wondered if he was true. All humans felt her pull when they entered Lucifer’s Embrace, but even with that seduction the men ran away from me. So I wondered if he’d stay and in my lust filled fog, I played along.

“Are you sure you’re not afraid of me,” I whispered seductively as I slid onto his lap, straddling his thighs. I was

playing with fire and wondered how far I could push him.

“Why would I be?” He asked, his palms trailing up my thighs and making me shiver.

“Your hands feel so good,” I whispered, nipping at his earlobe.

“I’ll make sure you feel them all over these gorgeous curves.”

I smiled at him. “Most men don’t last this long,” I reached down between us, running my hand along his hard length hidden beneath the layers of clothes.

“I told you, I’m not most men,” he reached up, sliding his hand around my neck and pulling me in for a kiss.

His tongue tangled with mine and he tasted fresh, of spearmint. His kiss was soft at first, deepening as I continued to press my hand and squeeze him.

“How do you know how to do that?” He breathed, releasing me. Both our eyes dropped to his lap where I was undoing his belt. My eyes met his as I slowly undid the zipper, and I smiled when he grunted as soon as my hand glided over him.

“I’m not a whore, but you can’t expect me to be innocent either.” I stroked him and he leaned his head back.

“Fuck. Your hands are so soft.”

I giggled, slowly sliding off his lap and onto my knees.

“You do this for a lot of these assholes.”

I shook my head and licked the tip of his cock. “Only for those who stay.”

His brow scrunched. “But I thought...”

I smiled up at him, my eyes dancing as his eyes widened and he realized he’d be the first to ever receive my attention. And slowly, I took him into my mouth, sliding my tongue along the base of his shaft and loving the feral moan that emanated from his chest.

His fingers tangled in my hair, pulling it back off my neck and in a ponytail so he could watch. I gently ran my tongue over him, closing my mouth around the tip and sucking him in slowly.

“Fuck, that’s torture,” he breathed.

I moaned around him, slowly picking up tempo as I stroked him and sucked the sensitive tip. His cock jerked in the air, cream slowly seeping out of the slit.

“Lick it off,” he ordered me, pressing my head back down on him.

I did as he asked, taking his creaminess and swirling it on my tongue, savoring his flavor.

“Ohhh, you’re a naughty girl.”

He stood up, dragging me with him and spinning me so that I was on all four on the chaise lounge. His hands ran up the black heart shaped corset, cupping my breasts over it. He grunted in frustration and spanked me.

“You couldn’t wear anything less difficult?”

“You don’t like it?” I stared at him over my shoulder, an expectant look in my eye.

His hands squeezed my ass cheeks and he bit down on his lip, a sexy grin forming on his rugged features.

“I fucking love it,” I watched him bend down and then I felt him bite down on my right butt cheek. I yelped from the sting and he followed it with a nice, hard spank.

I couldn’t help but accept the pain as pleasure. Serge had groomed me so that my pussy would get wet off that powerful sting. He’d issued it as cruel punishment, but I’d learned from the patrons that it didn’t have to be that way. I could find pleasure in it, and I did. Serge hated me for it, and yet when he was finished with his lashings he’d run off to jack off at the sight of me,

But Spectre wasn’t running. He was taking his sweet time, gripping my cheeks apart and running his tongue across my backside, around my puckered hole and down to my core,

He slid his fingers along my wetness, flicking my clit as his tongue continued its course up into my dirty hole.

“Spectre,” I cried out, my hips humping his fingers.

He spanked me hard and I froze. Gripping my hair, he tugged me back up against him. At first I thought he was going to curse or yell at me. Really hurt me, but instead he licked my lips, forcing my head back to look into his eyes,

“I want to hurt, little bird. I want to hurt you so bad, you’ll remember me for the rest of your existence.”

“Hurt me,” I whispered against his lips and his groan of satisfaction made me wet and needy

“Not yet. But you only come on my cock, you understand me?”

I nodded. “Yes, Sir.”

He bent down, his mouth on my neck, sucking and licking me as I felt his throbbing cock slide between my legs. I slowly moved my hips, and as he bit down on my neck to hold me still, he entered me in one swift thrust.

I gripped onto the edge of the chair, crying out as stretched me onto his thickness. I’d lost my virginity a long time ago, to a man as disgusting and vile as Serge. But Liam erased those thoughts, instead his cock forced its way inside me, penetrating me, and I felt owned. I felt like he belonged there, inside of me.

I slid my hand back, ripping the nape of his neck as he continued the sweet assault on my body.

“You’re so fucking perfect,” he growled as his thrusts became a rough staccato beat that shook the legs of the chaise lounge.

When I turned to him he gasped in shock. I froze again, looking at myself in the mirror beside us. My raven enjoyed him, my eyes glowed that amber gold, brightening with each stroke. His eyes never left mine in the reflection as he played with the black feathers of my hair.

“So soft,” he whispered before sinking his face in it.

I cried out as his hand reached around me, rubbing my clit in hard circles as his cock did what it wanted to me.

He bit down on my neck, running his tongue to my ear and whispering hoarsely. “Cum for me, little bird.”

It didn't take long after that. Seconds, until I was arching up on my knees, pressing back against him while we both watched him thrust his cock inside of me. Our reflection was so surreal, so erotic as my body blurred, shaking in its orgasm.

“Fuck,” he whispered against my temple. “So fucking beautiful.”

I moaned, circling my hips along his thickness. He wrapped his hand around my throat and spoke to me, still staring at me in the reflection.

“Tell me I can cum inside you.”

I paused for a long minute, contemplating the idea of getting pregnant. It had never crossed my mind, not with Serge and his medical team of monsters. They'd put me on the pill, not wanting to have me pregnant. Hell, if they could, they'd do away with my ovaries all together.

I turned my face to his. “Cum inside me, Spectre.”

He groaned, his hands cupping my breasts, yanking roughly on the corset until they popped free. His hands consumed them, his cock stretched out and jerked inside me, and as he pulled on the tips of my nipples I heard him grunt. His thrusts became rougher, desperate, and suddenly his arms were around me, his face buried in my neck as a low growl reverberated along my skin. His cock jerked inside me, pumping me with his seed.

“When I get you pregnant...” his words trailed off and I smiled, stroking his hair.

“You can't. I'm protected.”

He squeezed me, kissing my neck. “Oh I will, little bird. I said *when*, not if.”

He tipped my head back against his shoulder and kissed me deep, the taste of his tongue now my favorite flavor.

A few minutes later, after his soft caresses and kisses, he reluctantly broke away from me, slipping into his jeans. His jacket lay strewn on the edge of the chaise.

“What is that?” I pointed to the symbol emblazoned on the leather as I lay lazily watching him.

“It’s a patch,” he crouched down beside me, his face inches from mine. “I’m part of an MC called the Royal Bastards.”

“An MC?” I asked, wanting to know more about him. Wanting to know everything.

He nodded. “A motorcycle club. But you don’t need to worry yourself about that,” he brushed back a trestle of my hair behind my ear, his fingertips lingering on my cheek.

“Promise me you won’t place a foot out of this place.”

I shook my head, confused, but I could sense his urgency. “I w-won’t. I can’t, Serge will kill me.”

I watched as his hand turned into a fist at my words. He was angry at the thought. “Don’t worry about Bastien, I’ll deal with him. Just promise me you’ll wait for me.”

“I-I promise you,” I reached up to caress his cheek. “Can I ask why you need me to do this?”

“I just need you to do this one thing for me.”

“But you’ll return, right.”

He smiled, his thumb tracing my bottom lip. “Bear with me, okay. I’ll come back for you, little bird. I’ll promise you that.”

He kissed the top of my head and just as quickly as he’d come, he disappeared, leaving me perplexed and completely satisfied. I lay back against the soft velvet lounge chair and ran my fingers down my neck and across my nipples. The coarseness of his stubble left marks all over me and I cherished every one of them.

There was a slight sense of fear that he wouldn't be back for me, but it quickly disappeared. Something told me I could put my trust in him, all I had to do was be patient. Harder to say than to do.

SPECTRE

The bar was filled with the haze of cigarette smoke as I paced back and forth in front of the phone booth, this gut-wrenching feeling wasn't going to let me sleep anytime soon. I needed to get Raven out of that club as fast as possible, before the damn devil could get his hands on her. I didn't think he needed me anymore since I'd led him right to Serge Bastien's door. He just needed to wait for Raven to step outside the protective symbols and he'd dig his claws into her.

Taking a long swig of the rum, I let it burn my insides before picking up the phone and dialing the number I had memorized.

Exorcist's gruff voice answers after the second ring "Speak."

"Exorcist, it's Spectre."

"Well hot damn, I thought you were dead, kid."

I curled my hand into a fist. I could still feel the sting of the needle penetrating my skin etching the symbols I had memorized from Bastien's wall onto my arm. I didn't know if it would work, but it was the first thought that came to my head. And as the tattoo artist's hands recreated those patterns on my flesh I felt as if they were shielding me. I had taken a desperate risk, hoping that these symbols would actually protect me and so far the devil hadn't paid me a visit. I was pretty sure he had no idea where the fuck I was.

Serge had offered me information without even realizing it. Those symbols weren't just drawings, they were now a part

of me, inked onto my skin and they gave me the upper hand I needed over the devil.

I stared down at the tattoos etched onto my forearm. This is where my fate had led me. The symbols blurred and the image of my deceased wife and daughter filled my head. I swallowed the tears that threatened to fall. They were safe for now. He wouldn't pull them down from heaven. He couldn't, I had to at least have faith in that. He was a lying bastard, and I was a naive fool.

“Let's just say I found a way of dodging the devil.”

He gave a sharp chuckle. “If you say so.”

“Exorcist, I swear. I found a way. I'll share it if you can help me.”

“Hell, I don't need to hide. My contract is a sealed deal, kid. But I appreciate you trying to save my soul. The only problem I see here is that you...you ain't one of us Reapers, kid. I can't offer you any protection from what's to come. You need to watch your back.”

“That's why I'm calling in the first place. I need your help, brother.”

“Shit, Spectre, you know I'm not one to mess with the devil's business. This could only lead down dark paths. Besides, what does Bulldog have to say about all this?”

“He doesn't know?”

“Well fuck me! You haven't told him? You think the devil's bad, wait 'til he finds out you've gone rogue.”

I lifted a brow knowing full well Exorcist was right. When Bulldog found out what I'd been up to he'd make sure I'd burn in a hell of his own making. And I doubted the devil had anything on what he would do to me. Not that Bulldog would care. He'd probably say a prayer as he was beating the sense into me.

“Listen brother, I only have a few minutes on this phone.”

“I'm listening,” Exorcist grunted.

“It’s the raven. Serge Bastien won’t let her go, and I can’t just stand by and watch her get abused.”

“You got a thing for this raven?”

Glimpses of her pale flesh and those deep moans as I sank into her filled my senses and I shook the thoughts away. “That doesn’t matter. I need to get her out, but I can’t do it alone.”

“Oh it matters, kid. You’re divin’ in deep in this one. You’re talkin’ crazy shit about going against the devil himself, Spectre. I already told you, that’s impossible.” He stated gravely.

“There are ways, Exorcist. You may not want to be a part of it, but I suggest you start getting some defense strategies in place for you and our brothers. I’m fucking doing this for all of us.”

“What in the hell is that supposed to mean?”

“The devil is a smug snake. You know this. Do you honestly believe he wouldn’t have leverage?”

“Our brothers,” Exorcist whispered.

“He’ll kill them all if I don’t give him what he wants.”

“Motherfucker.”

“I can’t kill him, Exorcist, but I can use his vile nature against him and beat him at his own game.”

“You’re fucking crazy, you know that, kid?”

I shrugged. “I’ve been called worse.”

“Okay. What can I do?”

“I can’t leave her in his grip. If I do, she becomes his and God only knows what he’ll do to her.”

“And if you don’t give her to him?”

“He hurts those we love.”

I could sense his reluctance on the other end of the line. “Okay, there’s a seer Keys talks to from time to time.” He paused for a long moment before he spoke. “She knows things that our demons know. We tend to stay away, but she has a

dark gift that might be able to help you in ways I can't. She's not controlled by any entity, she's good at what she does. Hell, she creeps me out and she's human. But like I said, messin' with Devil... that's a whole different level of suicide, Spectre."

I was frustrated but I had no other choice. "I'm running out of options here, Exorcist. If this seer can help, I'm willing to do whatever it takes."

I could hear his deep sigh. "Alright, kid. Her name's Elara. Lives in the desert a few miles away from the clubhouse here in Nevada. Take down the address and don't fucking tell anyone I gave you this information."

I quickly jotted down the address, listening intently to his directions. "Just remember, you're steppin' into a realm where consequences ain't always clear."

"Exorcist, nothing's fucking clear anymore. I owe you one, brother."

"You owe me a hell of a lot more than that. I swear if my soul gets dragged down to the fire pits of hell, I'm finding a way out and haunting your stupid ass."

I nodded. "Deal."

"Son of a bi..." I hung up, cutting him off before he unleashed a string of insults at me.

RAVEN

The air in the club hung heavy with the suffocating weight of secrets and sins. My senses were still reeling from my encounter with Spectre. I could still feel his hands on me, the roughness of his stubble on my neck, the way his tongue tasted of mint. As I ran my fingers down the base of my tender flesh, I tiptoed down the dimly lit hallway toward my makeshift bedroom. My heart was still pounding and I kept remembering his last few words to me. The way he was shaking, as if he knew something really bad was coming for me. I wondered what would happen if I did step out of this club, not that Serge would allow me. He barely allowed me to breathe.

As I turned the corner, a snarl cut through the silence, and I stopped dead in my tracks. Serge emerged, a dark silhouette against the dim lighting, his eyes glinting with that evil smugness that I wished I could slap off his face. The curl of his upper lip and the way he leaned in sent a cold shiver down my spine.

“Where the fuck have you been, Raven? You’re supposed to be on that damn stage singing your heart out.”

“I-I...” I searched for something quick to say, but I was never good at telling lies. “I’m not feeling well.”

Serge stepped closer, his eyes giving me a once over. “You look plenty fine. Healthy even, especially with those rosy cheeks.”

He gripped my cheek and pinched it roughly until I whimpered in pain. I slid my hand across the tender flesh as he continued to look me over. I was weak when it came to Serge, I'd been a witness to his cruel nature before. He thrived on torturing lost souls and relished in their torment. The echoes of their suffering fueled the darkness that lurked behind his eyes.

I shuddered involuntarily, quickly noticing that showing my weakness only struck his sadistic side. He was a master manipulator, a puppeteer that had put these strings on me. Strings made from the fragile threads of my fear.

Serge leaned forward. "Are you lying to me, shifter?"

"N-no..."

He sniffed the air and snarled. "You reek of cologne."

He glanced down the hallway where I came from, knowing full well what that area of the club was used for. His eyes narrowed and instantly I could see that spark of his temper flare up. His fingers curled like a vice around my neck and he shoved me back against the wall, keeping me trapped.

"Who were you fucking?"

I shook my head. "No one."

"Liar!" He roared, his nostrils flaring as spit hit the side of my face.

His eyes fell to my breasts, and I yelped as he tore at the material, ripping until he could see the red marks Spectre had left there.

Gripping me by my hair, he yanked me down the hallway and toward the security office. Once inside he ordered everyone to vacate the room. They quickly scrambled, casting uneasy glances in my direction as they ran out, almost knowing that this wasn't going to end well for me.

"You want to lie to me?" He snarled, angrily scanning the video feed for any trace of who I'd been with. Tension coursed through the room and my heart was pounding in my chest for another reason now. *Fear.*

I silently prayed I hadn't been seen but that turned out to be pointless. Besides, God had left my side a long time ago. Serge suddenly rewound footage and right there, clear as day, my biker's handsome face highlighted the screen. Even with the graininess, anyone could make out his leather clad form. You could clearly see him strolling into the club without any fear burdening him as he risked his life to get to me.

Serge's curses erupted, a storm of profanity echoing through the room. Being consumed by his rage, he slammed his fist into the control board breaking his own skin. The room reverberated with the impact, and the acrid scent of blood that now penetrated the charged atmosphere.

In his rage, he suddenly shifted his focus back to me, and without warning, he reached towards me with his bloodied hand, seizing my throat and pinning me against the door. The cold metal pressed against my back as I struggled to breathe under the pressure of his fist.

He squeezed me tightly, and I clawed at his already injured hand that gripped me.

The devil's own fury seemed to course through him, and his eyes bore into mine with a disgust that made me shake in fear. I felt the walls closing in, and the room quickly became a suffocating enclosure that Serge had created just for me. He wanted to break me. To show me he was the only one with the power to control me.

"You fucked the biker? My fucking enemy!" he roared, his voice piercing the small confines of the room. The intensity of his anger flared, and I could feel the vibrations of his rage as his grip on my throat tightened, his bloodied hand a vise that seemed to squeeze the very breath from me. The air grew thick with tension as his eyes locked onto mine, pupils dilated with a lethal combination of fury and possessiveness.

His lips curled into a snarl, revealing the darkness that crept beneath the lie that was his composed exterior. The room seemed to shrink, closing in on me, continuing to suffocate me. My nails tore at his flesh as I fought to breathe.

“Did you think you could betray me, bitch?” he hissed, the words dripping with venom. “You’re mine, Raven. Mine to control, mine to toy with. And you dare to betray me for that biker trash?”

The cold metal of the door pressed against my back, the only reminder that I could still feel something other than Serge’s grip on my body. What could I possibly say or do? I swallowed hard, trying to respond, but the words only came out in a gurgled wheeze as his bloodied hand continued to choke the breath from me.

Serge’s eyes flickered with this twisted, sadistic glee. He was overcome with the power he knew he had over me, I was trapped in his twisted dance of dominance that he craved, and I could feel his lust for me, pressing against me.

“Listen to me very closely, Raven,” he sneered, his lips grazing my ear with a chilling warning.

It took every ounce of me to stare back at him, defiance in my eyes. His grip tightened on my throat and I choked, wheezing in an inhale.

“If I ever catch you with that biker again, the torment I’ll unleash on both of you will make hell seem like a fucking paradise. Do you understand?”

I managed a strained nod, my breaths coming in ragged gasps. Serge’s eyes were devoid of mercy, and he smiled evilly for a moment, watching me struggle for breath before he released his grip, letting me crumple to the floor.

“You go near him again and I will cage him and torture him every day. And I’ll have you watch as I tear his heart out.”

“Please,” I gripped his pant leg. “He has done nothing wrong. Please don’t hurt him. I’ll do anything you ask of me. But please...”

Begging him was probably futile and fueled by my instinct to protect the man who had shown me the only care I’d ever felt from anyone in this world.

A sinister smile crept across Serge’s face and I realized in that moment, that I was signing off my freedom once again.

He wouldn't miss the opportunity to tighten his hold on my chains. His eyes were cold and calculating as he stared down at me.

"Anything, Raven?" he mused, the corners of his lips curling into that evil smugness he had perfected. I hated him to my very core.

"Yes. Anything. I'll do anything just please don't hurt him." I already knew what he was capable of. I'd already endured it. There was no escape and I only had to wait it out, because eventually, he'd kill me and finally end this torture.

"Oh my sweet bird. You always know what to do to please me, don't you? He snarled.

His hand, still stained with his blood from his violent outburst just seconds before, reached down and gripped my chin. I could feel the sharp edges of his nails digging into my skin, a cruel reminder that any semblance of kindness was just a cruel game he played.

"What a disgusting display of loyalty for a piece of shit that used you and left you at my mercy."

His grip tightened, and I winced in the sharp pain, I knew from the sting that he had drawn blood.

His tone became laced with a sickening sweetness as he ran a finger down my bruised neck. "I suppose you wouldn't know what true love means. But I'll teach you something to live by. Loyalty should be a two-way street, my sweet shifter. And you have literally wandered off your path."

I shook, knowing that he was trying to put these negative thoughts in my head but I remembered Spectre's eyes, and the way he had begged me to wait for him. He'd be back for me. I didn't have faith in anything anymore, but I had faith in him.

"Every choice comes with a price, Raven," Serge intoned, his voice dripping with self satisfaction. "And now, you've offered me a blank check which I am more than willing to collect."

He released me abruptly, shoving me aside as he tore the door open. One of his guards stood on the other side.

“She’s to be caged until I say so.”

“No!” I grabbed for him but instead was hauled to my feet by the bodyguard. “Please, Serge! I won’t see him again!”

His dark chuckle echoed down the hall as he disappeared into the shadows. “Oh, i’ll make sure of that.”

Without a word, the guard seized me up and shoved me down the hall towards Serge’s office. I stumbled, turning and trying to fight him off, but his grip on me was unyielding, only causing bruises.

“Please,” I begged and dug my heels into the floor and continued to try and scramble away.

As we reached Serge’s office, the door creaked open, showing dark shadows inside. The bodyguard, ignoring my pleas, kept pulling me closer to my inevitable punishment.

I spotted the small confines of that familiar cage, cold and harsh, and it felt like it was mocking me. It was so restricting, and I remembered how it barely gave me room to move, to breathe. I scraped my fingers on the floor, hoping for something to hold onto and delay what was coming. But it was all useless. Within seconds, the man had shoved me into the cage. The door closed with a resounding clang, sealing me inside.

“Serves you right?” The guard smirked at me before walking out, slamming the door behind him and the silence slowly drowned me.

I pressed my palms against the hard bars, the cold metal biting into my skin. The cage, a constant reminder of how powerless I was. I felt like it was squeezing the air from my lungs. In that small, lonely space, I let the tears fall. All the while hoping for something that I’d never thought possible. Hoping he’d find me and make good on his promise.

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Serge stepped closer, his eyes giving me a once over. “You look plenty fine. Healthy even, especially with those rosy cheeks.”

He gripped my cheek and pinched it roughly until I whimpered in pain. I slid my hand across the tender flesh as he continued to look me over. I was weak when it came to Serge, I'd been a witness to his cruel nature before. He thrived on torturing lost souls and relished in their torment. The echoes of their suffering fueled the darkness that lurked behind his eyes.

I shuddered involuntarily, quickly noticing that showing my weakness only struck his sadistic side. He was a master manipulator, a puppeteer that had put these strings on me. Strings made from the fragile threads of my fear.

Serge leaned forward. "Are you lying to me, shifter?"

"N-no..."

He sniffed the air and snarled. "You reek of cologne."

He glanced down the hallway where I came from, knowing full well what that area of the club was used for. His eyes narrowed and instantly I could see that spark of his temper flare up. His fingers curled like a vise around my neck and he shoved me back against the wall, keeping me trapped.

"Who were you fucking?"

I shook my head. "No one."

"Liar!" He roared, his nostrils flaring as spit hit the side of my face.

His eyes fell to my breasts, and I yelped as he tore at the material, ripping until he could see the red marks Spectre had left there.

Gripping me by my hair, he yanked me down the hallway and toward the security office. Once inside he ordered everyone to vacate the room. They quickly scrambled, casting uneasy glances in my direction as they ran out, almost knowing that this wasn't going to end well for me.

"You want to lie to me?" He snarled, angrily scanning the video feed for any trace of who I'd been with. Tension coursed through the room and my heart was pounding in my chest for another reason now. *Fear.*

I silently prayed I hadn't been seen but that turned out to be pointless. Besides, God had left my side a long time ago. Serge suddenly rekindled footage and right there, clear as day, my biker's handsome face highlighted the screen. Even with the graininess, anyone could make out his leather clad form. You could clearly see him strolling into the club without any fear burdening him as he risked his life to get to me.

Serge's curses erupted, a storm of profanity echoing through the room. Being consumed by his rage, he slammed his fist into the control board breaking his own skin. The room reverberated with the impact, and the acrid scent of blood that now penetrated the charged atmosphere.

In his rage, he suddenly shifted his focus back to me, and without warning, he reached towards me with his bloodied hand, seizing my throat and pinning me against the door. The cold metal pressed against my back as I struggled to breathe under the pressure of his fist.

He squeezed me tightly, and I clawed at his already injured hand that gripped me.

The devil's own fury seemed to course through him, and his eyes bore into mine with a disgust that made me shake in fear. I felt the walls closing in, and the room quickly became a suffocating enclosure that Serge had created just for me. He wanted to break me. To show me he was the only one with the power to control me.

"You fucked the biker? My fucking enemy!" he roared, his voice piercing the small confines of the room. The intensity of his anger flared, and I could feel the vibrations of his rage as his grip on my throat tightened, his bloodied hand a vise that seemed to squeeze the very breath from me. The air grew thick with tension as his eyes locked onto mine, pupils dilated with a lethal combination of fury and possessiveness.

His lips curled into a snarl, revealing the darkness that crept beneath the lie that was his composed exterior. The room seemed to shrink, closing in on me, continuing to suffocate me. My nails tore at his flesh as I fought to breathe.

“Did you think you could betray me, bitch?” he hissed, the words dripping with venom. “You’re mine, Raven. Mine to control, mine to toy with. And you dare to betray me for that biker trash?”

The cold metal of the door pressed against my back, the only reminder that I could still feel something other than Serge’s grip on my body. What could I possibly say or do? I swallowed hard, trying to respond, but the words only came out in a gurgled wheeze as his bloodied hand continued to choke the breath from me.

Serge’s eyes flickered with this twisted, sadistic glee. He was overcome with the power he knew he had over me, I was trapped in his twisted dance of dominance that he craved, and I could feel his lust for me, pressing against me.

“Listen to me very closely, Raven,” he sneered, his lips grazing my ear with a chilling warning.

It took every ounce of me to stare back at him, defiance in my eyes. His grip tightened on my throat and I choked, wheezing in an inhale.

“If I ever catch you with that biker again, the torment I’ll unleash on both of you will make hell seem like a fucking paradise. Do you understand?”

I managed a strained nod, my breaths coming in ragged gasps. Serge’s eyes were devoid of mercy, and he smiled evilly for a moment, watching me struggle for breath before he released his grip, letting me crumple to the floor.

“You go near him again and I will cage him and torture him every day. And I’ll have you watch as I tear his heart out.”

“Please,” I gripped his pant leg. “He has done nothing wrong. Please don’t hurt him. I’ll do anything you ask of me. But please...”

Begging him was probably futile and fueled by my instinct to protect the man who had shown me the only care I’d ever felt from anyone in this world.

A sinister smile crept across Serge’s face and I realized in that moment, that I was signing off my freedom once again.

He wouldn't miss the opportunity to tighten his hold on my chains. His eyes were cold and calculating as he stared down at me.

"Anything, Raven?" he mused, the corners of his lips curling into that evil smugness he had perfected. I hated him to my very core.

"Yes. Anything. I'll do anything just please don't hurt him." I already knew what he was capable of. I'd already endured it. There was no escape and I only had to wait it out, because eventually, he'd kill me and finally end this torture.

"Oh my sweet bird. You always know what to do to please me, don't you? He snarled.

His hand, still stained with his blood from his violent outburst just seconds before, reached down and gripped my chin. I could feel the sharp edges of his nails digging into my skin, a cruel reminder that any semblance of kindness was just a cruel game he played.

"What a disgusting display of loyalty for a piece of shit that used you and left you at my mercy."

His grip tightened, and I winced in the sharp pain, I knew from the sting that he had drawn blood.

His tone became laced with a sickening sweetness as he ran a finger down my bruised neck. "I suppose you wouldn't know what true love means. But I'll teach you something to live by. Loyalty should be a two-way street, my sweet shifter. And you have literally wandered off your path."

I shook, knowing that he was trying to put these negative thoughts in my head but I remembered Spectre's eyes, and the way he had begged me to wait for him. He'd be back for me. I didn't have faith in anything anymore, but I had faith in him.

"Every choice comes with a price, Raven," Serge intoned, his voice dripping with self satisfaction. "And now, you've offered me a blank check which I am more than willing to collect."

He released me abruptly, shoving me aside as he tore the door open. One of his guards stood on the other side.

“She’s to be caged until I say so.”

“No!” I grabbed for him but instead was hauled to my feet by the bodyguard. “Please, Serge! I won’t see him again!”

His dark chuckle echoed down the hall as he disappeared into the shadows. “Oh, i’ll make sure of that.”

Without a word, the guard seized me up and shoved me down the hall towards Serge’s office. I stumbled, turning and trying to fight him off, but his grip on me was unyielding, only causing bruises.

“Please,” I begged and dug my heels into the floor and continued to try and scramble away.

As we reached Serge’s office, the door creaked open, showing dark shadows inside. The bodyguard, ignoring my pleas, kept pulling me closer to my inevitable punishment.

I spotted the small confines of that familiar cage, cold and harsh, and it felt like it was mocking me. It was so restricting, and I remembered how it barely gave me room to move, to breathe. I scraped my fingers on the floor, hoping for something to hold onto and delay what was coming. But it was all useless. Within seconds, the man had shoved me into the cage. The door closed with a resounding clang, sealing me inside.

“Serves you right?” The guard smirked at me before walking out, slamming the door behind him and the silence slowly drowned me.

I pressed my palms against the hard bars, the cold metal biting into my skin. The cage, a constant reminder of how powerless I was. I felt like it was squeezing the air from my lungs. In that small, lonely space, I let the tears fall. All the while hoping for something that I’d never thought possible. Hoping he’d find me and make good on his promise.

SPECTRE

I didn't waste any time. I didn't care if I didn't sleep or eat. All I wanted was to get to the location Exorcist had given me. Revving up the engine, it only took me a whole ten hours to get out of Seattle, riding through the night to get to the Nevada desert. The hours blurred and I could feel the exhaustion weighing on my shoulders, but I was fueled by desperation and a determination to save Raven.

The road stretched endlessly, and the desert mountains surrounded me. The temperature had dropped, keeping me awake as I pushed through my weariness. But nothing was going to stop me.

I remembered her soft melodic voice in my ear, the sweetness of her engulfing my senses. I'd never met anyone like her. My wife was soft, gentle, and kind. The complete opposite of who I was. I loved her with every fiber of my being, or so I thought. She was my first love, that high school sweetheart type of feel. Pure. Innocent.

I thought all love was the same until I found Raven. She was this power that seduced me in ways I'd never thought possible. She was so unlike my Mary. While my wife had been bright, Raven held her own personal darkness, one that matched my own. She was both sex and sweetness. A temptation I didn't want to deny myself, an innocence I longed to corrupt. I was growing angry at my wife for leaving me and that wasn't right, not to me or her. It had been so long since anyone had touched me. I felt guilt, I felt that life wasn't fair, and Raven provided me with that moment to lose myself in

something other than this depression that dared to consume me.

I was a selfish fuck but I had my own reasons to get her out of there. I wanted her to be with me. I didn't care if it meant she'd go from one cage to one of my own making. She was better off with a bastard like me anyway. Maybe the devil was right, and I did belong in that burning hell.

Dawn painted the sky in those all familiar hues of pink and gold as I arrived at the coordinates Exorcist had given me. The seer's house emerged from the desert landscape like a mirage. It was a solitary structure surrounded by nothingness. Its isolation added an eeriness to it, as if it existed in a twisted realm beyond the boundaries where a human should step foot into.

I cautiously approached, the only sound heard was the crushing of my boots against the desert floor. The air was thick with a magical energy, as if the very essence of the desert held its own secrets.

The door of the seer's cottage creaked open, revealing Elara standing in the dim light. Her eyes, ageless and penetrating, met mine with a knowing gaze. I froze, and there was a silence that spoke volumes, and I held my breath in anticipation.

I already knew what was coming. Elara was a woman of Native American descent, and like all her people, her presence spoke of a wisdom that had been carried from generation to generation. Her skin had a richness of earthy tones to it, deep lines penetrated the corners of her eyes, and her eyes spoke of a deep connection to the land and the spirits that dwelled there. The desert wind whispered through her dark hair, as she slowly made her way down the porch steps.

"I was wondering when you'd come by. Come in," she gestured to the doorway.

I looked at the entrance, the house stood very still, as if it was its own entity. I swallowed hard, remembering Exorcists instructions.

“There are three things you need to remember, brother. First, you have to understand that you’re entering a sacred space and that there’s energies in there so ancient, they deserve your respect. So you need to enter with humility or don’t even bother, those energies will freak you the fuck out. Second, you wait at that entrance until the desert speaks to you.”

“What the fuck is that supposed to mean?”

“Just listen, dammit. You stand out there and listen to the wind, the spirits know you’re there, they’ll let you in.”

“Okay,” I murmured, slowly writing it down.

“Make sure you state your purpose as you enter. And let them know your intention is not to hurt Elara, you’re just wanting guidance.”

“Yeah, I could do that.”

“And lastly, you enter silently and with a humble heart. That house...it’s a conduit between us and the spirit world. You let Elara lead you where she wants you as soon as you enter.”

“You sure this is gonna work?”

“You follow my instructions and you’ll be golden, Pony Boy.”

I held my breath as I did what Exorcist had instructed. As I approached the entrance, I stilled, and the wind swept around me. Suddenly there was whispering around me, so many voices. I shut my eyes, trying to concentrate on one, when suddenly a soft voice whispered in my ear.

“Enter.”

I step through the door and I stated I wasn’t there to hurt anyone. Suddenly the whispers quieted and when I turned, Elara was standing at the doorway smiling.

“I apologize. My ancestors don’t trust easily. But I see my Reapers have taught you well.”

I followed her into the back of the house which was a lot more normal than I thought it would be. Indigenous relics

decorated the house, and soft quilts with colorful patterns brought warmth to it. The rays of the sun filtered through the windows giving it a warm glow.

She leads me into the kitchen and pushes a chair back. “Sit.”

Taking my jacket off, I slide into the chair and wait quietly as I was told to do. She pours us both a cup of tea and sets the cup in front of me. “Drink it.”

I do as I’m told, sipping on the tea and setting it down. She shakes her head and urges me to keep going. “Drink until there’s nothing left but the leaves.”

As I lifted the cup, her eyes landed on the tattoos on my forearm. She gripped my arm, tugging it toward her. “Where did you get these symbols?”

“An immortal gave them to me.”

The look she gave me was of motherly concern. “Which immortal?”

“He goes by the name of Serge Bastien.”

“That demon,” she whispers. “You stay away from them, do you understand?”

I shook my head. “I can’t. They have something I need to protect.”

She quickly nodded, waving her hand in the air in frustration. “Yes, yes. The bird. But you need to stay away from the succubus. You’ll meet that bitch again, but for now, you keep your family safe.

I nodded and continued to drink the tea she offered until not a drop was left. Grabbing the cup she looked into the remnants of the leaves and murmured to herself for the next five minutes.

“Your Raven is pure of heart. She’s got powers she’s not yet grown into. As the years go by, those powers will become the key to keeping you safe.”

“Years?” I asked.

“Oh, she’s definitely your future.” She went over to a cupboard and took out what looked like a hookah. She quickly lit it up and took a sharp inhale. After a few seconds, her eyes opened, and in shock I flew back in the chair. Her eyes had glazed over into a white film, and they shifted, as if she were witnessing something.

“I see a fight. Brutal,” she whispered. “Don’t let him win.”

“A fight with who?” I asked and she lifted a hand to quiet me.

“The Devil is not happy with you.”

“Yeah, I know that.”

“He’s not happy with her either.” I listened carefully to what she said next. “Her lineage dates back centuries. And there was a man who cut a deal with Lucifer once to save his family. But in order to get out of that deal he did something bad, and as punishment his wife, and every woman in his family, were given the curse of the raven. But it’s not a curse. It’s a gift.”

I nodded in agreement. “I’ve heard her gift.”

She turned to me, that silky white filter still over her eyes making her look zombie-like. “You have and it wields your soul. You need to allow it, Spectre. You hold that part of you in a cage. You need to release it.”

“Easier said than done.” I knew she was talking about my heart.

“Lucifer will always be after you. He will always be after both of you. When you least expect it, he’ll show up at your door.”

I sighed. “That’s good to know.”

“The Raven...” her voice trailed off and a deep smile came across her face. “Protect her. She has your fate and your heart in her hands.”

Her eyes continued to shift and I had to admit, she was freaking me out, then suddenly she stilled.

“Hellhounds are sniffing her out. You need to save her soul.”

“How?” I asked, desperation starting to settle in my gut.

She blinked and the whiteness in her eyes disappeared. “You need to cleanse your soul.”

“Uhhhh...okay,” I uttered in confusion.

“Come,” she patted my arm and then led me out the backdoor. There was a huge tent sitting in the middle of the desert. She pulled me, her eyes penetrating.

“You are to breathe in deeply. Slow, deep breaths. Your demons ride along with you and we must clear you if you are to fight this evil.”

“I don’t understand.”

“You will,” she stated, shoving me into the tent.

When we entered I was greeted by a cloud of smoke and three other men sat in a circle, chanting. It was a Native American sweat box and I was about to fight off my so-called demons.

SPECTRE

I was in that tent for days, sweating it out and hallucinating shit I never wanted to see in my life again. All except for one thing. A vision of my wife and daughter had appeared and, in that vision, I'd seen them laugh and dance. My wife took my hands and told me it was alright. It was alright for me to let go. That she wanted me to find happiness on my own terms.

The feelings had overwhelmed me and I cried for hours, maybe longer.

Elara wasn't joking when she said I had demons. They danced around me, torturing me, laughing at me. Hatred, anger, guilt all lingered as I screamed and fought them out. The men around me only chanted harder as they too saw them.

By the time I stepped out of the tent I was exhausted, and I fell right outside the entrance. I was out for two whole days and when I woke up, I was being tended to by Elara.

"I thought you'd sleep longer," she placed a cold towel to my head. As I sat up the world began to spin, and she pushed me back down into the pillows.

"Shhh, stay still, a while. What you just did isn't something for the light-hearted."

"What happened?" The entire scene was a vague smokescreen, and only glimpses of it came through.

“You did good, Bastard. Real good.” I looked over at the door at the Native American man standing by the foot of the bed. He was at least seven feet tall, his headdress was decorated in bird feathers and golden and blue threads. He was much older than Elara, at least two decades older, and wiser too, you could see it in his eyes. Perhaps he was her father.

“You were there?”

He nodded. “You fight a good fight. You’ll do well.”

We gave each other a nod of understanding and he left me with Elara. “I need to get to Raven.”

“Yes, I know. But you need your strength for what’s to come.”

“How can I protect her?”

“There’s one thing we can do. But you have to be sure about this.”

“What is it?”

She stood up and disappeared through the doorway. The room continued to spin as I waited for her to return. When she did, she was carrying a delicate gold thread which she placed in my hands.

“Bind her to you.”

I looked up at the older woman, her eyes offering warmth.

“I can’t do that to her. She’s been enslaved for years.”

“Then give her the option, either way, with this you will be able to protect each other. Without it, you’re each on your own.”

“What do I do with it?” I held it up to the window, and it glinted in the sun.

“Take a lock of your hair and entwine it with hers. Say the words I give you, and your souls will be binded. She’s to wear the thread until the full moon and then the spell will be fulfilled.”

“You realize I have no idea what I’m doing?”

She smiled and patted my hand. “Like father said, you’ll do well.”

“I sure as hell hope so,” I murmured, laying my head back down and letting sleep take over for now.

RAVEN

Lucifer's Embrace was chaotic tonight. Something about the full moon made the crazies come out to play. It was a costume themed party and everyone took advantage of the event, wearing their flashiest and edgier outfits.

I wandered around in my black leather costume, allowing myself to reveal the wings on my back, my hair turning into those soft velvety black feathers. I wore a black mask, decorated in black and purple stones that glittered beneath the dim lights.

Serge had outdone himself tonight. The Halloween decorations had transformed the place into a gothic mansion complete with tall candelabras that flickered casting shadows that danced along the walls. I wasn't sure if it was my imagination or Serge's power that made me see eerie silhouettes in every dark corner.

The air was thick with evil and I gripped my belly feeling that odd gut wrenching fear that started in my core and worked itself up my spine every time something bad was about to happen.

I forced my eyes to adjust to the dark, but I couldn't make anything out. Cobwebs adorned the edges of the bar, along with bottles of blood red liquor that lined the shelves. A fog machine enveloped the packed scene in a mysterious mist. Bartenders dressed as witches and warlocks that played their part in concocting potions and bubbled drinks that smoked and appealed to the orgy loving patrons.

The lights cast deep purples and blood-red hues along the patrons that danced on stage. Dim chandeliers hung from the ceiling, their skeletal frames casting a spectral glow over the people below. The dance floor was packed as bodies were guided to the haunting beats of a specially created Halloween playlist.

And in the midst of the decorations, and the special effects, there was one man who took over the show. He dressed as a dark sorcerer and stood on a tower above everyone else, his laughter echoing through the space, blending in with ghostly wails and sending a chill up my spine.

His penetrating black eyes locked onto mine and I froze where I stood. There was this unsettling feeling in the way he looked at me. Like a silent understanding that he was the one that held the strings to manipulate me at his will. In that intense moment, a subtle nod of reassurance from him gave me an odd calming effect, although that heavy unease lingered.

With a quick signal, he whispered instructions to one of his guards that lurked in the dark. Always hovering, always watching. Their gaze brought my attention toward a man reclining on a red chaise lounge in the VIP area of the room. This man was to be my target for the night, another one of Serge's slimy business partners, ready to relinquish every cent in order to fuck a shifter. This was their game, a transaction veiled in the disguise of power, a cruel ritual that played out repeatedly in my life.

In their sordid spectacle, I was reduced to a mere thing. An abnormal freak show attraction that Serge, for whatever reason, believed he needed to exhibit.

I became a pawn in a twisted game of desires and transactions, my abilities overpowering any sense of humanity I had left. Yet, as I contemplated my place in this scenario, I couldn't help but wonder how many others had unknowingly become a target in Serge's exploitations. In his world there only existed shadows and illusions, and I was only one among many, an abnormality paraded for the amusement of those who reveled in the macabre dance of power and submission.

I lowered my head, ready to obey. I had no choice in the matter. If not I'd be put back in that cage, and I couldn't do that again. I was simply a slave for him to use, to get his kicks off, but if I obeyed I was safe. Because despite the hatred he seemed to have for me and my kind, I knew that he lay deep in the shadows, watching and craving me like so many others had. Stroking and cumming while screaming my name, a disgusting vile wish, unfulfilled.

I turned toward them and slowly walked up the steps to the private area where Serge took his prey. Taking a deep breath I reluctantly approached the red chaise lounge, my senses heightened, and the air thickened with an unspoken tension. The man reclining on it was older, nearing his early seventies at least. He was handsome, thick salt and pepper hair matched his beard, and his eyes were bright, almost amused. He seemed oblivious to the evil dance of manipulation playing out around him. His eyes shifted down my body, clearly undressing me. He had this self-assured arrogance about him that spoke of greed and a leery look in his eye that whispered of lust. They could never hide it, and when my eyes fell onto his lap, his cock surged in his pants.

Serge's guard stepped out of the shadows, gesturing discreetly at me to engage the man in some type of conversation. As I neared, I caught fragments of their conversation. There were hushed words about investments, business dealings, and a sense of competitive tension that ran between them. The man's eyes flickered toward me as I approached, a mixture of curiosity and desire played on his face as his eyes landed on me, a momentary distraction from the business at hand.

Serge knew exactly what he was doing and I played my part, luring the prey into our world of seduction and need. I don't think anyone really knew what they were getting into when they met me. It was all a facade I had perfected over time. A small smile, a touch of the wrist, leaning my full breasts against their arm while concealing my anger and disgust for the man beside them. I dwelled in this silent anger that was slowly simmering with the need to break free from

these shackles. These were the times I hated my parents more than ever. The times I felt the most alone in this world.

Around me moans penetrated the space and the man slowly leaned into me, sliding his fingers across my jaw.

“You’re mystical?” The man’s accent was laced in a sense of intrigue as his words trailed off while his thumb brushed my lower lip.

“Is that a compliment?” I asked innocently, batting my eyelashes at him.

“Yes. Very much so. What do I call you?”

“Her name is Raven. She is one of my shifters.” Serge interrupted the exchange, sliding the tip of his cane along the tops of my breasts where the man’s eyes followed suit.

The man nodded. “The investment.”

“One of them,” Serge smirked. “The others are still pending transactions.”

The man smiled, sliding his hands along the same path Serge had laid out on my body. “And what does this investment shift into?”

“A raven,” I whispered.

His hand wandered over one of my breasts, sheathed in a black transparent corset. My nipple puckered as he squeezed the tip/

“Are you giving her to me as payment, Bastien?”

Serge’s evil laughter made me cold inside. “No. No. She’s not free for anyone, Giovanni. You’d have to pay a pretty penny to have her.”

“Quanto?” he asked, his Italian flowing from his tongue.

If it was any other setting I might have actually liked the man, but this was merely business, and I was the whore being bought off.

“She would cost you nearly half your fortune,” Serge whispered.

My eyes flashed to his, and we both knew he was taking a risk.

“How much?” The man started again, not taking his eyes off me.

Serge smiled to himself, while his eyes never left mine. “Let’s do this. And I usually do not make these sorts of accommodations. But if you sign the contract then perhaps she could be yours for a couple nights.

“Done,” the man did not hesitate.

Serge gestured to his bodyguard who brought the paperwork and a pen. Without even reading what he was signing, his eyes were on me as he scribbled his signature onto the paper. Condemning himself to Serge’s malevolent greed.

I felt bad for the man, but in the end he was paying for something special, wasn’t he?

Taking his hand, I walked him down the stairs and among the writhing bodies below. The faces around me blurred into a surreal vision of masks, all concealing the truth that lies beneath them.

My thoughts went to the man who recently penetrated my thoughts. He’d stayed that night, made me his in every way and then disappeared not to be heard of again. I wondered if he’d return like he’d promised. As I weaved myself through the throngs of half-dressed people, my heart ached. I wanted to see him again. I wanted to be his again. I wondered what had happened to him. Had Serge found him, killed him off for touching his property.

Raven shuts the door behind her, knowing what will happen. She turns to the man, slowly undressing, a dance she did nightly for whatever business client Serge had set up. As the material fell, the man smiled, reaching out to touch her stomach. She wanted to recoil from his soft touch, so unlike Spectre’s course callous hands.

“I want you to shift while you’re on my cock.”

I tilted my head, not understanding what he wanted. “I usually shift before.”

“I want you to do it while on my cock.”

“I don’t think that will work.”

He gripped me tight, pulling me against him. “I’m paying you to make it work.”

My heart began to beat faster, my hands turned clammy and I didn’t think I could get out of it so easily this time. He dragged me to the couch, taking his cock out, he looked at me.

“Sit on it.”

I bit down on my lip, thinking quickly on how to do this. As I took a step forward, he grabbed me by the wrist and pulled me over him, forcing me to straddle him. His dick slid over my mound. I wasn’t ready for him to penetrate me and as he tried to enter me he got frustrated.

“God dammit. Put it in you.”

I licked my hand slowly, rubbing at myself so it wouldn’t hurt. I thought of Spectre, and of his touch as I grabbed the man’s dick and inserted the tip. He shoved me down on it and I cried out in pain, I was too dry.

“Fuck me,” he growled angrily, giving me a brutal smack on my ass. He was too rough, not what I wanted. And as I lifted, I shifted.

“What the fuck?” He scrambled back, falling back onto the floor, his dick in the air as I flew around him.

“What the fuck is this?” He roared, grabbing his pants and flying out the door.

I slowly shifted back to my human form, gathering my clothes as I ran after him. I needed to make him forget. He had to forget.

The flashing lights in the club and all the costumes created a chaotic backdrop as I flew out looking for him. I desperately searched the room but couldn’t find him. What I did find was Serge’s menacing figure standing in the shadows staring right at me. His intent was clear, he was angry, and I didn’t think I would survive the night.

My eyes were darted everywhere, trying to figure out what to do when suddenly the fire alarms went off. Serge froze, confused by what was happening, when again, another loud boom echoed from a corner of the room.

There was a gunshot, and this time the people got scared. They screamed, scurrying past me in their fear and desperate attempt to get out. Serge turned, wanting to know where it was coming from. His eyes were searching for me, and I managed to hide among the crowd.

Another gunshot rang out, sending shockwaves through the crowd and panic continued to ensue. Now I was truly scared, and as I ran toward the back staircase, Spectre appeared, seizing that opportunity to reach for me. I was too shocked to say anything, and with a forceful grip, he guided me away from the dance floor, deftly navigating through the frantic crowd.

“What are you doing?” Fear engulfed me as he led me toward an exit door.

“Trust me,” he whispered into my ear, his voice a mixture of reassurance and command.

“No. No he’ll...he’ll kill me.” The exit loomed ahead, and the chaos closed around me. Serge’s furious shouts radiated through the club, a symphony of rage that pushed Spectre to break out into a run.

My eyes darted nervously between Spectre and the chaos behind me. I felt a strange sense of entrapment and freedom, like a caged bird with clipped wings that had found an unexpected savior.

We burst into the cool night air, the chaotic sounds of the club fading into the distance. His grip on my arm remained firm, a silent understanding that I had no say in the matter.

My mind went to the darkest places, knowing that Serge’s cruelty could reach over depths of hell. He’d literally defeated the devil. But beneath all the fear, there was a strange sense of safety at knowing that Spectre was here. He hadn’t left me.

What was I doing with this man? I barely knew him, or how dangerous he could be. Could I really trust someone in my life other than myself?

Serge Bastien's enraged cries lingered in the air, and I stole a glance at Spectre whose determination scared me.

RAVEN

“*W*here are you taking me?” I tried pulling away from his grip on my hand, but he only pulled me deeper down the dark alley.

“Far away from here.” I stumbled, grabbing onto his wrist as he continued in his determined stride.

“This is crazy, you can’t just drag me off into the night like this?”

“Why not?”

His question gave me pause. It was a question I asked myself time and time again.

Fear, I whispered to myself, but I couldn’t say the word out loud, not to him. “Because he’ll find us.”

“Not if you’re with me.” His grip tightened, and when he looked at me his eyes held a steely resolve that made me nervous.

“This is insane, Spectre!” I tried to pull out of his grasp again, when he suddenly whirled around, gripping me by the shoulder. The intensity in his eyes made me shiver.

“You need to trust in me, little bird.”

The air seemed to still, and for a moment, the only sound was the distant hum of the city, and the murmur of people walking by, beyond the alley.

“Why should I trust you?” I retorted, frustration now mingling with that inane fear. “I don’t even know you.”

“Is that how you feel?”

“You left me once before...”

“It was only a few days, little bird.” He caressed my cheek so tenderly, my heart nearly made me cry out.

“It felt like an eternity.”

He pressed his forehead to mine. “I’m sorry, little bird. I never meant for it to have taken this long. But I needed to make sure I could protect you. Trust is earned, I get that. But right now, I’m the only chance you’ve got.”

His words rang true, and the gravity of the situation started to sink in. “What do you mean, the only chance?”

His jaw clenched, and instead of responding he turned and continued to pull me toward his motorcycle.

“Get on,” Liam ordered, his voice low and commanding.

I hesitated, eyeing the motorcycle warily. “You’re gonna get us both killed.”

Spectre pressed a hand down his face in frustration. “Trust me, our death sentence has already been written. If we stay we won’t survive the night. Getting on this bike is our only ticket out of here.”

His words lingered in the alley’s darkness, and the distant siren of fire trucks approaching were the only semblance of life around us. The urgency in his voice pushed me forward, and taking one last reluctant look at him, I swung a leg over the motorcycle. He slid into the seat in front of me, and I wrapped my arms around his waist just as the engine roared to life, its powerful vibrations between my legs sent a shiver down my spine.

As we sped away from the alley, the city’s chaos blurred into streaks of neon lights. I clung to Spectre, the rush of wind drowning out the questions swirling in my mind. A sense of freedom lingered here.

“Where are we going?” I shouted over the roar of the engine.

“Somewhere safe,” he replied, his eyes focused on the road ahead.

As the motorcycle turned onto an old abandoned highway, my grip on Spectre tightened, a silent acknowledgment that, for better or worse, our fates were now entwined. The dusty road stretched ahead, winding through a desolate landscape as Spectre steered the motorcycle down an unending curve.

As dawn approached, he gestured at the road. “The Royal Bastard’s have a safehouse on the Nevada border. We’ll stop, rest, and then I’ll tell you everything!” He shouted back to me over the roar of the wind.

The safehouse, an old wooden structure, loomed in the distance. It was a dark mass against the backdrop of the dusk sky. Spectre brought the motorcycle to a halt and silently, he waited until I dismounted, the night air cool against my skin. Spectre led the way, his footsteps almost ghostly on the wooden porch, and I quickened my pace to keep up, reaching out to grab onto the back of his jacket. He didn’t say a word to me until we were inside.

Pushing open the heavy wooden door revealed the interior of the safehouse. It was warmer than I expected, the glow of a few strategically placed lamps revealed a room that seemed frozen in time. Worn, leather furniture adorned the space, and the air was cool, carrying the scent of aged wood. The place seemed forgotten.

A stone fireplace took over the center of the room, and a thick coating of dust aligned the mantle. A faded rug covered a portion of the creaky wooden floor, and a trunk lay beside the leather couch.

Spectre moved through the room with the ease of someone familiar with every nook and cranny. A wooden table in the center held an old, tattered map, worn from the touch of countless hands navigating unknown territories.

As he led us deeper down into the safehouse, we passed a bedroom, a small bathroom and finally reached a back room. This bedroom was much larger than the other. He threw his

helmet in a chair and turned to look at me as he shrugged off his jacket.

Spectre finally spoke, his voice breaking the silence. “We’ll be safe here, at least for now.” His eyes met mine briefly, a shared acknowledgment that we had a lot to talk about.

“There’s a bathroom in here as well. You can use the shower, I’ll use the other bathroom.”

I looked at my clothes and he quickly strode over to the armoire in the corner. “There’s some clothes here that might fit you. I’m sorry, I didn’t think that through.”

He was scrounging around the drawer when I came up beside and placed my hand on his. “It’s okay. I’ll find something.”

His tired eyes met mine, and he gave me a quick nod before heading out into the hallway. His shoulders were hunched over, burdened with the weight of the world. I sifted through the clothes in the armoire, selecting a t-shirt and some sweat pants that matched my size. I then made my way into the bathroom, flipping on the light switch, I groaned as I caught sight of myself in the mirror. I looked as tired as he did, dark circles under my eyes, my hair wild and unkempt from the wind, my dress torn.

Turning away, I kicked my heels off and turned on the shower as I let the dress pool at my feet. I slid my panties off, setting them aside to wash, and then I stepped into the tub. The water, warm and comforting, cascaded over me, washing away the residue of the night’s events. As the steam began to rise, I let out a deep breath, allowing the tension to melt away.

I had so many questions, the first one being what Spectre’s intentions were with me. I wasn’t one to trust easily, that was true, and I wanted to trust him but at the same time I wasn’t stupid. People...men, didn’t save women without wanting something in return. And as I let the water pour on my shoulders, I wondered what that could possibly be.

SPECTRE

Daylight streamed in through the windows as I walked barefoot back to the kitchen. This place was a mess and I had a few choice words for my brothers when I got home. Keeping the safehouses clean and up to date was part of our responsibilities. Apparently, everyone forgot this one existed.

I ripped open the cabinets hoping to find some type of canned food we could eat. I was in luck, there were a few cans of soup and raviolis. The hot shower had revived me, and I was too anxious to sleep. I could hear her shuffling in the bedroom, probably as restless as I was. Who could sleep when the devil was after them, right?

As I busied myself with the makeshift dinner preparations, the creaking of the bedroom door let me know she'd decided to join me. Clad in a white t-shirt three sizes too big, and only wearing that, she emerged. "I can't sleep," she admitted.

I offered her a small, understanding smile, and quickly looked away. Even in a mere t-shirt she looked sexy as fuck. "Yeah, me neither." Motioning towards the table, I added, "Hungry?"

Her stomach rumbled in that instant, and surprised, she wrapped her arms around herself. The t-shirt slid slightly up her thighs, clinging to her tits, and I ignored the hot sensation in my groin, willing it to control itself.

"I guess so," she smiled and settled into a chair at the small table.

I placed a generous bowl of ravioli in front of her, sliding into the chair next to her. The clinking of our spoons filled the air.

“How are you feeling?” I asked, breaking the awkward silence between us.

She looked down at her bowl, stirring it absently. “I honestly don’t know.”

“What do you want to know?” I asked her, knowing I couldn’t keep the truth from her forever.

Her gaze met mine, a wariness, I felt all too deeply, held in its depths. “Why did you take me with you? What’s your role in all of this?”

Sighing, I leaned back in my chair. “I admit, initially I wasn’t supposed to do what I did. What we did.”

Her cheeks turned red and my cock surged. I pressed down on it, trying to fight this pull between us that always surged at the most inconvenient time.

She looked at me, warily. “So what were you there to do?”

“I was hired to find Serge and to kidnap you.”

“Well, I would say you’re two for two,” she continued to stir the remnants of the food in her bowl.

“Yeah, you could say that,” I whispered, wondering if there was any way to fix this.

“So, who was it?”

“What?” I stared back at her.

“Who sent you?”

“Listen, I took you because I couldn’t leave you there. There’s something bigger at play here. Something that’s after you, and I couldn’t let that happen.”

“After me? What does that even mean?”

Choosing my words carefully, I tried to explain it to her. I told her everything about me. The crossroads, my family, my sadness. I told her about Elara, and what happened there and

why. And lastly, I told her about the demon and lucifer and she simply stared at me.

“Is it so hard to believe?”

She slowly shook her head. “I-I’ve seen things. I am those things that creep in the night. A supernatural entity if you want to call it that, but to think the Devil would want to remember me and my family is just a ridiculous notion. What in the hell could he possibly want with me?”

“To use you, Raven.”

“Like you did?”

“I didn’t use you, Raven. If I was, I wouldn’t be here right.”

“So am I supposed to be grateful to you. Maybe it’s best I get down on my knees again for you.”

“Why are you angry at me?”

“Because you lied!” She threw the spoon on the table and it clattered loudly before she pushed back on the chair and headed toward the main living room.

“You didn’t tell me you knew who I was from the start. You let me think that you were special somehow. That this thing between us was real.”

“Do you feel that it’s real?”

“Does it matter,” she turned away, crossing her arms over her chest.

I went to reach for her but she brushed her shoulder away, and I stood there, feeling helpless with my hands glued to my sides held in fists. “Your family has a history with the Devil, Raven. Your great-great-grandfather managed to escape a deal with him, and now the Devil is back for what he’s owed. You.”

Raven’s eyes widened, and she sank back into the seat, absorbing what I was telling her. “You expect me to believe this? That my family made a deal with the Devil?”

I nodded, my gaze unwavering. “You were cursed, weren’t you? A curse you couldn’t get out of and your grandfather

tried but he only got himself trapped. I don't know how he escaped, but I wouldn't lie about something like this, Raven. I may have kidnapped you, but it was only to protect you from the Devil. We need to figure out how to break this curse, or deal, or whatever it is before it's too late."

"This is insane."

"You have a very special power, Raven. You have the power to make people forget things. Your voice, it's hypnotic. What more can the Devil want, than to take something as beautiful as you and corrupt it to do his evil work."

"How?" She turned to me. "How did you get away from him?"

I pulled up the sleeve of my shirt and showed her the symbols. "Serge Bastien was good for something."

She reached out, tracing the tattooed lines. "I know these. They're all over his walls."

"Angel repellent, is what I like to call it. He unknowingly gave me what I needed to keep the devil at bay."

"And what about me?"

"There's one thing we can do. But I don't know if you will go through with it. If you do, we have to do it now. He can't track me, but his hellhounds could smell your bloodline."

"What can we do?" She whispered.

I remembered the gold thread and the piece of paper with the words carefully scribbled down on it with Elara's magic words. "We can bind your soul to mine."

She took a step back, her eyes widening. "What?"

"It's the only thing we could think of. If you bind your soul to mine, we could save each other."

"Do you have any idea what you're asking me?"

"I know. And I'm sorry, but if I don't, I'll lose you forever."

“You want to put me back in chains?” She pressed her hand to her ample chest, tears running down her cheeks.

“No. I don’t. But I’m not the bad guy here, Raven. He is. They are. I’m not here to hurt you, or own you...” those last words trailed off and her eyes met mine in a silent acknowledgement that she had already been mine.

Fuck it. “How can I fix this?”

“You can’t! I should have known you were too good to be true. Why not? A devil’s servant come to save me, right? My life ‘s already a sad, chaotic shit show, let’s add one more thing to the pile. I mean how could I possibly believe that you actually wanted me.”

“I did, I do!”

“No!” She pointed a finger at me angrily. “All you wanted was to fuck the shifter before you had to hand her off, right? Make yourself feel important.”

“Stop it! That’s not what this was.”

“No?” She whirled around on me, the amber in her eyes glowing deep as anger emanated from her. “You didn’t use me to get off, then. You didn’t use me as your, what did you call it? Redemption. Spiteful, selfish...”

“No!” I reached out to her and she scrambled just out of my reach.

“I bet you went and laughed it off with the Devil. Letting him know how good of a fuck your “little bird” was.”

“Stop it!” I reached for her and she pulled away, the gesture irritating me beyond words.

“Don’t.” She seethed at me and a rage surged in me.

I slid my hand into the tresses of her dark waves and pulled her to me. “You’re gonna deny me?”

Her fingernails dug into my forearm, keeping me at bay. “Don’t you dare.”

I gripped her hair tighter, pulling her head back. “Or what?”

“Spectre,” my name came out with a quiver of fear, while her eyes begged me to kiss her.

“My name is Liam, little bird. I want you to remember it when I have you screaming my name.”

“Liam,” my name was a whimpered whisper as her lips parted. I took the signal, sliding my mouth over hers in a sensually charged kiss that ignited the lust we both had for one another.

Her hands left my arm and slid around my waist, fisting my shirt as she brought us closer together. I deepened the kiss, the grip on her hair tightening as her breasts pressed against my chest.

“Raven,” I whispered her name as I slid my mouth down to the nape of her neck. Sucking and kissing as my fingers dragged beneath the t-shirt. I slid the clothing off her, unable to hold in a growl at the sight of her plump tits.

My hands roamed down her back as I took one mound into my mouth. My tongue, eager to stroke and suckle on the tight tip. She cried out so wantonly as I bit down on her flesh.

“Liam,” she moaned my name as her hands found my hair, her fingers running through it in sweet desperation.

I twirled her in my arms, walking us past the armoire and toward the bed. She barely realized where I was guiding her as I took my time running my tongue along the flesh of her tits and neck.

As we reached the edge of the mattress I flung her down. She yelped, surprised, but the moment passed quickly as her bright eyes watched me undress.

I slid my shirt off first and I watched as she bit down on that bottom lip of hers, her eyes leaving a heated caress as they took in my chest and abs. The subtle pleasure she took made my cock jerk as I unzipped my pants. I tugged them off, my cock protruding lewdly through my briefs.

“Liam,” she whispered softly, her eyes never leaving the swell of my dick.

I reached down, stroking it through the cloth and groaned from the slight pressure, mixed with that dull pain that made me crave for more.

“Do you want to taste it, little bird?”

My sultry beauty eagerly folded her legs beneath her and began to crawl on the bed toward me. I was gonna need every ounce of my strength to last for her.

She looked up at me as she gripped the waistband of my briefs, slowly tugging them down and over my cock.

She gasped at the sight of it, long, hard and thick for her.

She slowly slipped her delicately manicured hand around it, carefully stroking up and down. I placed my hand over hers, putting pressure on it, squeezing the girth and teaching her how I liked to be jerked off.

“Tight, long strokes baby.”

She bit down on that lip of hers and I gripped her hair, tugging her head back until I had access to her mouth. Her stroking was driving me wild but her mouth drove me to the brink of insanity.

I licked her lips and she met my tongue in her own languid lick against mine. I then guided her down onto the tip of my dick where she slid that same tongue over the head, twirling it against the crown before she slid my cock into her hot mouth.

“Fuck, Raven.”

I grunted as her teeth slid gently along the base of my cock. I hissed, “Yessss. Suck slowly, baby. I promise you’ll get every drop.”

She moaned as she dragged her tongue along the area her teeth had been before. I slid my hands in her hair, pulling it back in a ponytail for a better grip.

Tugging her head to the side, I leaned and whispered in her ear. “I never said to stop. I want your teeth all over it.”

She grinned, sliding her mouth over it and consuming it. Her teeth continued to slide softly around me as she sucked me

down her throat. A small gag urged a grunt of approval as I slid deeper into her mouth.

Her ass was swaying in the air before me. Two perfect globes. White, unmarked flesh that was ready to be taken and used.

I pulled her off me, my cock falling off her tongue as she gave it one last long lick.

“Dirty girl.”

She gave me a seductive smirk as she slid back onto the mattress. Her dark hair was such a contrast against her pale skin, and that discerning gaze of hers was focused solely on me.

She ran her fingers along the base of my neck, tracing the tattoo that adorned the left side of my torso.

“It’s missing something,” she whispered.

I smiled. “You.”

I leaned down and licked her lips as I sank down between her thighs realizing she wasn’t wearing any underwear.

“Fuck, baby girl.” Her pussy was soaked as I slid my hardness against it. She spread her legs, dragging her nails along the muscles of my back.

I dragged my mouth along the soft flesh of her neck, her needy sighs filling the room.

“Tell me what you need, baby.”

“I want...” She gasped as I bit down on her shoulder.

“What do you want, my dirty girl?”

“I want...” She arched back as I continued to leave kisses along her body. My teeth grazed her tits as I made my way between her legs.

“Spectre!”

I spanked her inner thighs as she tried to close them. Gripping her knees, I positioned her legs wide open for me as I slid my nose along her mound, inhaling her.

“Say my name, Raven.”

“Liam!” She cried out as I took my first lick of her.

“Again!” I ordered, softly spanking her needy mound.

“Liam,” she moaned deeply as her fingers slid through my hair, pulling on the strands as my tongue found that special button between her legs, igniting her whole body.

RAVEN

“*L*iam, oh my God!” I arched back, my legs shaking as he eagerly ran his tongue over my lips.

My pussy quivered as his tongue found my hard clit. The pleasure he created was intense and intoxicating. My body moved against his tongue in an erotic dance that could only exist out of this heat.

I felt the hardness of his tongue rub against my clit while he groaned in satisfaction, hungrily sucking on it. Giving it French languid kisses of his tongue.

“Liam,” I sobbed, begging him to release me from this torture.

Instead, he sank two fingers into me, his dirty talk driving me to the brink of his exquisite madness. “How does it feel to have my fingers inside you, little bird? Touching this sweet little cunt.”

“Oh, God!” I cried out.

He gave me a sinful smile as he curled his fingers inside of me, pumping them harder, barely pulling them out as he drove them deeper and deeper into me. “I want you to cum all over me, my Raven. I want you to mark me like I’ve marked you.”

I screamed and he continued to stare at me as he leaned down between my legs and put his mouth over my clit and sucked it. My hips bucked wildly as he continued his tonguing, his fingers searching for that little spot deep inside of me. I watched hypnotized as he spread my lips wide with

his fingers and licked me ever so slowly. From my pussy to my clit, over and over, watching me tremble from each slow stroke of his tongue. My head fell back as I felt his tongue pushing against my sex.

“Liam, please,” I moaned as his tongue hit my clit in just the right way each time.

“Please what, baby?” He took another long lick of me and my lips part, unable to speak, my tongue mimicking his.

He let out a warm sexy chuckle. “Do you like my tongue on you?”

I nodded, panting over and over again as he continued groaning into my pussy. Nobody had ever put his mouth on me like this. He had me ready to cum and he knew it as he grinned at me over my pussy.

“Cum for me, little bird. Cum all over my tongue,” he groaned, quickly going back to tonguing my clit.

“Do it, baby,” he grunted, his tongue pushing over my clit perfectly in an up and down rhythm.

My body arched back and his name fell off my lips, loving how amazing his tongue felt, how I never wanted that feeling to stop. He held me right on that precipice and I was willing to fall, but I was holding myself off as long as I could because nothing had ever felt this good. His mouth closed over my clit, and as he sucked on my sex I came undone.

My mouth fell open in a silent scream as his fingers slid into me once more. “Cum on my fingers” he whispered in that rough husky voice of his that melted over my body like warm honey.

I squeezed my eyes shut and bit my lip as my moan remained trapped in my throat. Liam only grinned while he watched me tremble as my orgasm continued to heighten.

I looked down at him, feeling my pussy squeeze around his fingers before he came over to me and licked my lips.

“Your eyes are burning again,” he whispered to me right before he leaned down once again, putting his tongue to my

sensitive core.

Something happened then, my body fully reacted and my sex suddenly started to squirt. He moaned as his fingers continued to torture me, and I watched in shock as he pulled them out letting the tiniest bit of cum squirt into his mouth. I whimpered again as his mouth encompassed my pussy, sucking at me hungrily. I grabbed his hair and pulled but he only groaned against me while I tried to fight him off.

“Stop” I pull on his hair, trying to pull him off me and he finally lifts his face, his lips covered in my juices.

I pull him up to me and he kisses me, his tongue ravaging mine as his hand goes down between my legs and rubs my clit again before his fingers slide back up inside me.

“No” I whimper against his lips.

“Yes. One more time” he groans. “I know you want to. You’re my needy little bird.” He smiled against my mouth while I lay there at his mercy, his fingers sinking deep into me again and after a few minutes my hips are bucking wildly and as my body is still quivering, he made me cum once more.

In my daze I felt his mouth slide over mine, stealing a passionate kiss before he slowly slid his fingers out of me, hovering over me. My legs wrap around him as I pull him down into me and as soon as I feel his hardness slide through my mound, I moan.

“I love how badly you need me.” He grins, teasing his cock against me.

I jolt and whimper, still feeling the aftershocks of my orgasm traveling through me. He laughs and kisses me and then kisses down my neck then back up and kisses my mouth and groans as he pulls away and sits up.

“No, don’t.” I reach for him but he simply sits back, slowly pulling at his cock.

I try to straddle him but he stands up. “Not tonight, little bird. You must be worn out by now.”

I crawl to him off the couch, kneeling in front of him. “Please, Liam.”

His eyes turn sad as his fingers trace my face. “You’re so fucking beautiful.”

“Can I love you, Liam?” I asked, as if asking for permission to enter his heart.

“Is that what you want?” His voice caught as his eyes began to burn.

“Yes. Please let me love you.” I slowly stood before him, leaving kisses on his abs and chest and as soon as his eyes met mine I watched as this strong man shattered. Whatever this feeling was between us, was stronger than both of us.

He lifted into his arms, sinking me back into the couch as he slowly entered me. It was all I needed. That feeling of being full, of being owned.

“I want to be yours, baby,” I whispered against his temple as his thrusts got deeper and rougher.

“I own you,” he grunted in his sexual haze.

“Yes, Liam. Own me!” I cried out as he forced that pleasure out of me. My body trembled and I held him tight, knowing he was close.

His hips met mine as we collided forcefully, his cock impaling me, thick and rigid. I cried out as my sensitive pussy came again. It was a shock to my senses and I was slowly drifting. He gripped my head and continued to make me watch as he fucked me. It wasn’t angry, it was dominant, and I wanted it. I wanted it so badly.

As his body tensed around me, my pussy clenched down around him. “Cum inside me, baby.”

He groaned and I felt him releasing himself in me. The act was purely carnal, but I didn’t care. When he pulled out of me, he cradled me. Kissing my shoulders and neck as he murmured sweet nothings into my ear. I’d never been taken care of like this before and I realized it didn’t matter if he

bound my soul to his. I wasn't planning on going anywhere.
I'd finally found my freedom in his arms.

LUCIFER

I could smell the sex emanating from them. They were drenched in it. I sniffed the air snarled. Well he'd done it, he'd gone and knocked her up. I should have known I couldn't trust one of his kind. I felt an unease stirring and looked up at the sky.

"Don't fucking ruin this for me," I whispered to Him.

I still had the scent of the Seer's blood on me, and when I looked down at my white jacket, crimson pooled at the cuff. I grunted in disgust. She'd begged for her and father's life but who told her to fuck with the Devil. I mean I have a reputation to uphold.

I still remember how the tears in her eyes had turned to black tar as I'd slowly and torturously taken her soul. It was so obnoxiously bright as I'd looked into her eyes, but she'd committed enough sin to get out of that evil place they call paradise. I saw it all, her childhood, how she'd fucked a married man, how she liked the power of the earth in her hands, and how my Spectre had come into her world.

I stopped searching then, pausing on the moment he revealed those damn sigils. Humans weren't privy to that information which made me think Serge had something to do with it. But when I paid him a visit, that fucking succubus had played her games. She thought that by sucking my cock it would make me forget her betrayal, but the bitch had me literally by the balls. I allowed her that. Her twat was still tight and ripe for the taking. And I loved how she trembled from the

pain I inflicted. Over and over, I'd made her orgasm as I tore into her heart. She'd scream and laugh in delight, already dead, already manipulating that darkness. It was always a thrill taking out my lust on her, but in the end she was protecting that immortal.

By the time she had sucked everything she wanted from me, he'd run off like a good little puppy. It irked me that I had to play this cat and mouse game. I didn't have time for this, I had souls to corrupt. So I decided I'd have to get a trap to catch the mouse later. Instead, I had another pet to trap.

Slowly, I sauntered up the steps to their little pretend home. Smiling, I did the one thing I knew best. I made my main entrance.

With a click of my fingers the windows burst into a thousands shards, the wood of the door splintered and burst open, while the ground beneath the house shook as the earth quaked beneath it. I heard a scream and as I entered I found them, huddled in a corner, half naked.

"You couldn't just keep your dick in your pants and your hands off my property, could you biker."

"How did you..." slowly his eyes widened as the realization that those sigils on his arms didn't offer much protection any more.

As I walked in, I swiped over the mantle, a coating of dusting dirtying my finger and I swiped it off. "Your Seer was more than willing to show me what she'd done."

"What did you do to her?"

I laughed. "Why? Are you going to start making deals for her life too?"

"You son of a bitch!" He lunged at me and with a simple flick of the wrist, I flung him aside.

I hadn't come here for him, he was just a useless tool. No, I came here for her. "You are everything I ever wanted." She trembled in fear and I fed off it, inhaling that delicious scent.

“Don’t touch her!” Once again I had to sit the animal down.

“Sit and be a good dog,” I patted his head as I approached her.

“Ah, the cursed one. Your bloodline has been a thorn in my side for far too long.”

In a swift motion, I extended my hand, summoning dark tendrils of the power that ensnared Raven. She cried out as I sifted through her essence, pulling out the best parts and making her relive her torture. She screamed and ohhhh, how I could feel her fighting. Such a beautiful soul to use. I lifted her from the ground while her agonized cries pierced the air, as her lover watched from his perch on his knees.

“Let her go,” he snarled at me, and I barked back at him, mocking him.

“Stupid human. Did you actually think you can defeat the Lucifer? Have you not read my books, I hear their quite the read,” I smiled at him before issuing a lashing across his face.

I started to walk towards the entrance of the house when I was suddenly stopped in my tracks. I pulled against whatever force it was but my feet kept sinking as if in quicksand. When I looked back, the human was standing, a cross in his hand while he prayed.

I laughed out loud. “I’m not a demon you fucking idiot. That shit doesn’t work on me.”

He stared at my feet and smiled. “You sure about that.”

In my rage, I released Raven, sending her crashing to the floor before I reached for the damn Bastard but I couldn’t move.

“She’s not yours, Lucifer.”

“What did you do?”

“She’s mine,” he stated. “In every way. Her soul belongs to me.”

“What the fuck are you talking about?” I spat.

And that's when the melody began. A soft whisper of notes that pulled at me. The raven was singing as she cowered in the corner. I shook my head, as if drugged, while her music lulled me.

"Stop!" I screamed, my rage flooding the small house, making the room shake.

Her voice continued to come over me, and I couldn't move. I cursed that being above me. Cursed with all my might as I knew this was his doing.

"No!!!!" My scream became silent and I became desperate, clawing at the floor as the earth continued to swallow me whole.

I scraped at the floorboards, refusing to relent. These were my souls, he couldn't have them. And that's when He put a vision in me. While I was busy fucking a succubus, He was busy fucking me over. The raven had bound her soul to the biker and in the distance I could hear the faint laughter of satisfaction as the Seer's soul lifted up out of hell. He'd taken her from me, and she'd had the last laugh.

The world closed in around me and I screamed in my fury, cursing at the skies above me, promising him that as long as they lived they would never find peace.

EPILOGUE

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DEAR DIARY,

I wish I could tell you we lived happily ever after, but that would be a lie. The seer had told my husband the truth, the Devil would never stop until he had dragged us both to hell. I can't describe what happened that night, only that God was with us. He'd somehow punished Lucifer in his own way.

We learned later that my powers could affect the Devil. The fact that I'd been pregnant, and didn't know, might have heightened the innocence in me, allowing me to get to him. I didn't know why I started singing or how I even had the strength, but when Liam had started to pray, something came over me.

I looked down at my newborn little boy. He was perfect in every way, just how we'd hoped. I like to think God helped us that day, and protected me and my small family. We named him Ethan, after my great great grandfather, the one who started it all. We'd been blessed with a boy, but I would have loved a little girl, so I had someone to give my gift to. Then again, you never knew what could happen. Liam wanted a family, and he deserved one.

Serge? I have absolutely no idea where he went off to but there's been rumors about a traveling freak-show flourishing and the darkness it holds, sounds a lot like him.

“Baby, you ready?”

I looked up to find Liam standing there in a suit and my mouth propped open in shock.

“What? Does it not look good. I told Bulldog it wouldn’t fit.”

I went to him, sliding my hands up the lapels of the suit jacket and grinned. “You look absolutely delicious,

“Oh yeah,” he teased my mouth.

“Yes,” I giggled as he pulled me in for a kiss. Any kiss he’d give me was dangerous.

I laughed as his passionate kisses fell to my neck. “Liam we’re going to be late.”

“Just a little taste,” he murmured, dragging his tongue along my breast bone.”

“A little taste turns into an hour late just like our wedding.”

I swatted him away and picked up Ethan, handing him to his father. “Take him while I finish getting ready.”

“But...”

“Nope,” I pointed at the door. “Out, both of you.”

He pouted as he started to walk out and I had to laugh. “If daddy’s good he can have a taste later.”

His eyes lit up and he gave me a lopsided smirk. “Just a taste?”

“Eh, maybe a whole meal.”

I giggled as he walked away telling Ethan they were both going to eat off Mommy later.

Shaking my head I went back to the vanity and stared at myself in the mirror. Grabbing my lipstick I slowly ran it over my lips stopping short as a blurred vision appeared in the reflection of the mirror.

I quickly looked back but there was nothing there. A shiver ran up my spine and the hairs in the back of my neck stood up.

I quickly got up, circling the room, feeling that ominous presence I knew so well.

“No,” I whispered.

“Yessss, my Raven. I found you...”

I screamed, feeling the trail of his fingers down my legs. Lucifer was trying to crawl from whatever cage he'd been put into. I shook as Liam burst through the door. He saw the look on my face and his step faltered.

“What's wrong?”

“We have to run,” I said quietly, not wanting him to hear us.

Liam nodded, and grabbing my hand we put our plan into gear. There was no way out for us. All we could do was find our own peace until he returned, and then we'd have to start all over again. But I was willing to do that because in the end I knew, this...Liam and Ethan were my fate.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Thank you for reading!

If you enjoyed Raven & Spectre's story, please don't hesitate to leave your reviews. I do love to hear what sinful thoughts my readers throw my way!

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