





# Glamour

a novella of erotic romance by

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eBook ISBN 1-59426-629-8

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*Wishes*

## One

Marsh sat on the veranda outside of the new place in Rome, watching his lovely consort as she spoke animatedly to one of her associates on her cell phone. The morning sunlight played in her hair and reflected off her sunglasses, creating a light halo around her body. He smirked at the effect. She was a lot of things, but an angel wasn't one of them.

"And I don't care, Ko, you tell Miranda that if she doesn't finish this contract she's finished herself. I don't care if the guy is the Pope. She accepted a two million dollar contract to have the hit done by Sunday. It's Friday. She should be finished by now and on to something else. It's hardly cost effective, I'm losing money. I swear..."

Her voice had an edge of steel to it that had never been directed at him, and for that he was grateful. Just watching her amused him greatly. In the past month since she had become his consort and he had bought the bigger place just outside of Rome proper, he had enjoyed mornings like these, along with the fantastic, strong coffee Kolo had sent from Argentina as a housewarming gift.

He had let her continue to work as it pleased her, and if she was yelling at others she wasn't plotting against him and his highhandedness. Still, for a woman of her age and experience, the fact that she was running the largest assassin syndicate in the world was a feat, and he was proud of her.



He listened to her rant into the sliver of a cell phone then sign off, She took off her sunglasses off and looked at him. He smiled and sipped his coffee, watching her bend over to shake out her hair. Her perfect breasts peeked out of her tight V-neck blouse.

She was delicious looking, even more so now that she was healthy, not slowly dying of the cancer she was riddled with when he first found her. Her body was perfection and she used it to her advantage, though Marsh usually had the upper hand. Their relationship was explosive; the magic they shared bound them together both physically and spiritually, and it worked to his advantage, which he loved.

He smirked at her as she looked at him again. "Problems, pet? I haven't seen you get that pissed off at Kolo ever."

"Fucking Miranda," she mumbled, then smiled at him. "So, baby? What do you think about Beijing?"

"Good hookers, great brothels, great gambling dens. And there's an underground fighting tournament. I like it." He said, sipping his coffee once again, knowing the mention of the whores would piss her off. She didn't like to share him, not that he wanted anyone else. Now mated, he was pretty useless in that area. Not that he couldn't get it up, it was just that nothing satisfied him like her body. He could still fuck around, and planned to, but only to fuel her ire and anger.

Janey, on the other hand, could be turned on and sent out to play with whomever he wanted, and he planned on doing that as well. He knew that she was more than ready for him, anytime he wanted, and he intended to use that fact to his advantage on this little trip she proposed.

"I mean," she bit out as she settled back in her chair and grabbed her cup of coffee, "we have to go there, clean this mess up."

"Have to? Are you asking, or telling?" He watched her shiver and lick her lips, and smiled secretly to himself. She loved being dominated, but it had to be subtle to truly get her wild, and what he had just said was right in that vein. She would play the defiant and independent woman, but in the end she would beg, on her knees, for him to go. He would concede, and she would get her reward for being a good little consort. Truth was, he couldn't deny her anything, but the game they played satisfied them both. And it was about time the game got underway.

"Well, I'm asking...nicely." She smiled. "Very nicely..." Her ripe lips formed into a pout. "Please, baby? Can we go?" "Maybe. What do I get?" "What would you like?" He looked over at her. "I don't know. Make it worth my while, pet. There's not much I don't have. I have you, and you do anything I want. Dazzle me." His eyes were now hidden behind his own sunglasses and he picked up the paper, feigning interest in what the Vatican was up to.

She laughed. "Well..." She hummed, clearly thinking. "How about, when we're there, we go and see one of those hookers you were talking about? The two of us."

"Close, but not good enough...and you'll do anything I want you to do, anyway. If that includes you working at a brothel for the night, then that's what you'll do. And you'll enjoy it, you slut."

She sighed, her jaw setting stubbornly. "Fine, that's all I have. Tell me what you want, or you'll get nothing and I'll go myself." She smirked.

He put the paper down and stared at her. "No, you won't. I won't let you and you know it. You'll get chained to the bed again, pet. You know better." He smirked back at her.

"I do love the chains." She laughed, then dropped to her knees. "Please, baby, give me a clue? What do you want?" She nuzzled his knee.

He thrummed his fingers on the arm of the chair. "Quit being so dense, pet. You know exactly what I want."

"Dense?" She growled angrily, "I'll give you dense." She muttered under her breath before rubbing her face up the inside of his thigh, her mouth stopping inches from the zipper of his pants. She rolled her emerald eyes up to meet his. "Please, baby? Let me go...come with me." She smiled, her small hands undoing the zip as her tongue moistened her lower lip.

Marsh chuckled, happy because he clearly won. He moved her hand. "That's far enough, pet. We'll go to Beijing. Just what are we going to be doing and how long are we going to be there?"

She rested her cheek on his thigh. "Hopefully we'll be there a few days. Although, we could stay longer if you wish." "I might. So, Miranda? And who the hell is she contracted to kill?" "I'm not sure, a Gary Swanson. I think he's a born again Christian or some shit. It sounded like a normal hit to me. Hopefully she'll carry out the hit of her own accord. I'd hate to have to employ anything persuasive, and there's nothing more dangerous than a rouge assassin."

He nodded and ran his fingers through her hair. "So someone is paying two mil for a Joe nobody? Maybe Miranda has info you don't, pet."

"Maybe..." she sniped, clearly not liking the idea of one or her people being better informed. "But, if that was the case, then I'd expect to have been notified."

"I would, too, though maybe it's not possible. Maybe something else is going on. With that in mind, don't you think we should get our travel plans finished and see what we can hear through the grapevine?"

"Travels already arranged and Ko's looking into the grapevine, although I guess it wouldn't hurt to check out your contacts...if you're offering" "I am. Think I'll call in a favor." She smiled. "Perfect, you know I'll be grateful for anything you can

give." "I would give you the world, baby." She smiled at him, shaking her head slightly. "I love you." "I know. So let me make that phone call." "Ok, I'll pack a bag."

## Two

The thought of calling Sean Taylor made him giddy. He hadn't spoken to the Royal demon since the afternoon before he met Janey, and it was about time he thanked Sean for bringing him to his consort. Marsh had done as he was contracted, and gotten Janey to do what Sean has wanted as well, sending her assassins to take care of his interests in the East, with no recompense on his part. Hell Marsh never even asked for the payment of his usual fee after finding Janey. If anything, Taylor got the better deal, monetarily, and bearing that in mind, Marsh decided it was time to talk payment for a job well done. He knew without a doubt that the demon was not going to be very forthcoming with the information, and really he was just pissing in the wind. But even if he didn't have the info he wanted, which he would, it would be fun to just irritate and aggravate him.

Taylor was quietly volatile on a good day, and Marsh was hoping today was one of those. He wasn't

sure why the Royal demon was an exile but he could guess, knowing the man's nature, what went down to get him banished from his home plane of existence. No one purposefully angered him, other than his consort, and he had to admit, it was a turn on. Janey had a way with dealing with certain people that set your teeth on edge, and Sean Taylor was one of those people.

Taylor's business endeavors were broad. Drugs, arms, slavery, black market organ exchanges, secrets, industrial espionage...the only thing that Marsh knew he wasn't involved in was the skin trade, and the reason for that was Sean's younger brother had that market cornered. If anyone had any information on the mark, Sean Taylor or one of his associates would. Marsh was curious to see why such a hefty contract was put on someone as inconsequential as Gary Swanson.

He sat in front of the laptop, grabbed his cell phone, and Googled the mark, instantly coming up with twenty hits. He clicked the first link and chuckled, lighting a cigarette. "So, you're an evangelist faith healer? Well that gives me about fifty reasons as to why someone would want to off you, sanctimonious prick. The trick is to find the right one."

He quickly scanned through the article, picking up on things his consort probably already knew, and made a few notes that stood out to him, like the fact that Swanson's wife, Lulana Tchi, used to be a parishioner. But, after a faith healing in the heartland of America and a whirlwind affair, she married Swanson in a private ceremony and hadn't been seen since the pictures of the wedding. Then there was the fact that her family back in the Orient was beyond wealthy and devout Buddhists. "Ah, the plot thickens, doesn't it?" he said to the computer screen, then clicked a few more links, made a few more notes, then sat back and hit his speed dial for Taylor's number.

The demon picked up and a few seconds later his smooth voice filtered through the phone. "It's been a while, Marsh, you always did have the habit of phoning me at the most...inopportune moments. What can I do for you?" "Well, you know me. I need some information." "Good for you, I'm not in the business of selling information." "I wasn't talking about selling, demon; I was talking about giving

freely." Taylor chuckled. "And what possible gain could be achieved from

that?" "Well, it's a trade off. See, I think someone forgot that I charge a fee

when I'm called in." "Of course. However, I'm sure you gained more than I in that

transaction." "Possibly. Though the fee is still there, demon. You give me the

information I want and well call it even." He heard the demon take a drink of something, clearly mulling over

his options. "We'll see...what is it that you're looking for?" "Like I said, information." "Uh huh. Well, Nicodemus, you're going to have to be a little more specific, if you hope to gain said information...unless there's something else."

Marsh growled at the mention of his given name. "Gary Swanson. What can you tell me about the evangelist prick I don't already know?"

"Evangelist? That certainly doesn't seem to be something that you'd take an interest in. Feeling a lack of faith?" "Stuff it, demon. He's a hit." "Ahh, for little Janey. How's her health?" "She's fine. Look, you going to give it up? Or give me that four mil

I charge?" "Always to the point. I don't know off the top of my head, but that doesn't really mean anything. I tend to stay away from anything that doesn't look profitable, and for karma's sake I stay very clear of anything related to The God. I'll ask Malcolm to check him out, see if he has a master. You have anything else for me? Other than evangelist? Maybe a location?"

Malcolm Frost was Taylor's watchdog, the man who was the demon's business persona. Malcolm also happened to be a vampire, and probably the only one the demon had ever lowered himself to dealing with. "Beijing. His wife is missing, too."

The demon sighed. "It all sounds beneath you, Marsh. I see who won the dominance battle between the two of you." His words were laced with amusement.

"Demon, I'm doing this because I get to take my consort to Beijing and defile her twenty different ways, and possibly watch her kill someone."

"I'm sure," the demon said unconvincingly. "I'll see what I can do and I'll call you back soon. When are you leaving?"

"Today, an hour or so. Kolo made the travel arrangements, and we are staying at the Grand in Beijing. You have my number."

"I do. I'll call you when I find anything, or I'll get Malcolm to pass it on to you."

"Right." He hung up and sighed. Cash, the moniker that Sean Taylor was known by in the supernatural world, was a nickname for his real name. Cassiel was a loose cannon. As an exiled prince the demon was very powerful and extremely fun to irritate, but his innuendos pissed Marsh off. Not that it mattered, Janey was his consort and she answered to him. Her sweet, luscious body was his to use as he saw fit, and the look on his face as he began lining up a slew of ideas in his head on how they were going to spend this little trip would have given his thoughts away to her had she been in the room.

Once the issues got resolved, they would have all the time in the world for him to carry out his desires to his hearts content. He stood and stretched, leaving the room in search of his consort.

## Three

They made it onto the plane with little drama. Janey had to purposefully position herself in the aisle seat due to the sordid looks the dizzy blonde flight attendant had given Marsh as they boarded. She mourned the loss of the window seat as the houses became smaller and smaller, but she compensated her disappointment by glaring at the simple bitch, making her squirm. As the belt lights went out the slut got out of her seat and left through the curtain, moving through to the lower class.

Deprived of her fun Janey sat back in her seat and sighed. "So, what did your contacts say?"

"Nothing yet, love. We'll get a call soon, I'm sure. You think Miss Susie got tired of you shooting daggers at her?" he said completely amused.

"I hope so...not like I'll stop. If she's smart she'll stay behind that curtain for the rest of the trip."

"Well, I don't think she's that smart, pet, those flotation devices she's got in front of her will be useful should the plane go down, though. Don't get snippy about the slut, she's just jealous she had to buy hers

and yours are real."

"I guess." She growled, still unhappy. If there was one thing she hated it was that type of poaching bitch. Not that she was threatened in the slightest. It was the way that the arrogant slut had looked at him as if she already had him between her overused thighs.

Marsh moved to her and kissed her cheek, then pulled her naked earlobe into his mouth and nibbled. "And you know, pet, I absolutely love you, so don't worry. She doesn't even register on my radar." He turned her face to look at him and kissed her, his hand inching slowly up the inside of her thigh.

Her attention on the curtain faltered as it shifted to him and his hand. His fingertips sent shivers up her body. "Mmmmm, she better not."

He chuckled and kissed her neck, causing her to crane it toward him, allowing him a better angle. "Never, pet, you're more than enough for me to handle." His fingers brushed her wetness and she groaned softly. "You like this, don't you? First class and all eyes on you? They know what I'm doing, they know how you like it," he hissed and bit her neck, worrying the skin momentarily. She bit her lip to stop herself from crying out. "You going to open up for me, baby? You know you want to."

"Oh God, baby. Mmm, yes." She opened her thighs to him, moaning in the pain caused by her lip biting, only exciting her further.

He chuckled, and slipped his fingers into her and played on her clit. "So wet," he whispered, "You're going to be like this the entire trip, pet, I will not stand for anything less. Would you like to come, Janey? Tell me, baby."

She smiled weakly as she squirmed on his fingers. "I would." She told him as she struggled to keep her voice even.

"You're losing control, pet, I can hear it. They all know, you know, and they are watching."

"You always know just what to say." Her thoughts firmly ensconced on the sensations his fingers caused deep within her. She shut her eyes to avoid the leering, their stares turned her on more than she cared to admit. He slid in and out of her as she tried desperately to pace her to keep her breathing level.

"That's because I love to see you out of control. You feel so good, Janey, soft and wet." He grinned and slipped another finger into her, rotating his thumb on her clit, building her quickly. "Come big for me, pet."

Her nails clutched at the seats, almost at breaking point. "Fuck, Marsh!" she whispered harshly as her body bucked, allowing his fingers deeper access. Her body released aggressively, leaving her unable to do anything other than shudder and moan in her seat as his fingers milked every last drop of pleasure from her.

He chuckled. The people around them were mostly businessmen all who watched her with interest. "That's it, baby. Mmm, you have quite the audience. Open your eyes and see." He pulled his hand from between her thighs and coated her lips with her honey, then kissed her.

She opened her eyes to his kiss, grinning heatedly in surprise when she saw the men looking at her. She smiled lazily at him through half-closed eyes. "Mmm, I should always fly with you."

"Well, you will from now on, pet." He winked at the one guy closest to them who, to Janey's



amusement, quickly turned away. The other men took their cues from him and did the same.

Marsh sat back and relaxed, sighing. "You do taste fantastic, pet, and just so you know, Miss Prissy Flight Attendant saw the whole thing. Either she is completely not interested, or she is." He closed his eyes and grinned. "But the question is: was it me or you she was checking out?"

Janey's eyebrows shot up into her hairline. "You, definitely you." She leaned in to kiss him. She may have offered in the heat of the moment, but that just wasn't the type of thing Janey was looking for. Girl on girl was a little too hardcore for her.

"So? What's the deal once we get to the city?" he asked after a few moments of pondering.

"We'll get to the hotel and I'll call Ko. We'll take it from there, I guess. I know where Miranda's staying. Worst comes to worst, we'll do some investigating, but I'm hoping to come out of this reasonably unscathed where work is concerned." "Lazy," he said on a sigh. That made her smile. "Perhaps, but I'd much rather spend the time with you seeing the sights." She nuzzled against him. "I was never the bloodthirsty type. Just as long as the job gets done."

He shrugged. "I was looking forward to seeing you work. You don't get a reputation like yours without being talented."

She grinned. "Oh, I think you can testify to the fact that I'm talented. If she pushes me, then I'll fuck her over. But, she's a good worker, I'd rather not have to."

"True. But what I did find out about the mark, hell if any of it is true, then Miranda has a lot of explaining to do." "If any of what is true?" He told her quickly of what he dug up on the Net: about the wife,

her family and his business dealings. "Hmmm...well, we should find Miranda and ask her. Make that first on our list of priorities." "Which would be the best idea. Glad I thought of it." He looked at

his watch. "And I'm sure Miranda is, too," she quipped, setting her seat back, preparing to nap the rest of the flight. Unless, that was, Marsh had any problems with that. When he remained silent for a few minutes, she pulled the provided blanket over her and tried to drift off to sleep. Unfortunately, sleeping on planes had never been her forte, so she tossed and turned, doing the best she could to get comfortable.

Sleep never came, and after what seemed like hours of trying she gave up and righted her chair. Marsh, on the other hand, was sound asleep, and had been since their last words. She picked up her briefcase and started going through some notes, hoping the monotony of it all would drive her to sleep eventually.

## Four

The hotel was above reproach, complete with everything the rich liked and considered commonplace. Silk linens, complimentary in-room spa treatments and champagne, bathrooms that could be a suite themselves, and the best "don't ask, don't tell" staff this side of a brothel. When Marsh traveled, he always stayed in the best places and had been a patron at the Grand a number of times since its inception.

They walked through the Grand's lobby, the staff they met bowed as was custom. They were spirited up to a suite, able to forgo the usual check-in due to his status at the hotel, and Marsh paid the bellhop who helped with their bags a large tip.

Janey moved about the expansive and lush suite. It was indeed beautiful, complete with foliage, large, comfortable couches and chairs, and a deck. It was the usual room Marsh stayed in when he was here, so he didn't need the tour.

He watched her walk into the bedroom and chuckled to himself, knowing that when she saw the playground that passed for a bed she would be back out, and her eyes would be wide. He was right. She walked out and stuck a thumb toward the door she had just

come through and he laughed. "Yeah, I know. I've seen it." "Wow, I'm impressed. You like your luxury, don't you? Trent would never have stood for such a reckless use of funds. Hell any time I went on a job it was strictly single rooms at some mid level establishment."

Marsh shrugged. "If you're going to stay somewhere, why not stay where things are the best?"

"I'm all for my comforts, but I'm sure there are rooms here that we'll never even use." "Oh, I plan on utilizing every space here, pet." "Careful, you know I'll hold you to that." "Which is why I said it. Now, why don't you go and take a swim in the bathtub? I gotta take this call," he said as he flipped his vibrating phone open, placing it on his ear. "Marsh," he said into the small device as he watched her saunter down the hall.

A rough accent came over the phone. "So, you're the Genie fuck looking for Swanson?" "Information on Swanson, yeah. Who the hell are you?" "Me? I'm Mal. The boss told me to call, some shit about him being too busy to deal with the..." The voice stopped itself. "I'm not spouting that shit back." He sighed. "Understood. What do you got for me?" The line went silent for a second. "Not much. My calls came up

blank, which is kinda odd." "I'll fucking say. You guys always know everything." "I try. Anyway, I'm gonna swing by. Seems the lack of info on this

jerk interested the boss. So, I gotta make the trip." "Beijing? Well, shit." The last thing he needed was one of Taylor's

underlings hanging about, especially one he didn't know. "It's not my idea of fun, either, Genie. Look, I'll be local in a few. You'll have to do without my charming self for a while, though, 'til I get myself settled at the palace. You're staying at The Grand, yeah?"

"That's right, Penthouse Suite B. And I'm not a fucking Genie, *Mal*, I'm a Djinn."

Mal made a puzzled sound at the other end of the line. "There's a difference? The boss said there wasn't a lamp and you weren't a hot piece in pink satin."

The candid statement amused him. *Hot piece in pink satin? Shit, what else do these two talk about?* "No lamp, though if you're talking that kinda Genie, the Ifrit are closest to it."

"Yeah, they are the ones with the rugs, right? So where did the lamp come from?"

"Humans and their fucking creative license, no doubt," he seethed. What mortals did to the old legends and stories irritated him. It wasn't long ago he had to explain to his consort that the way the Djinn were portrayed in the movies was a far cry from the tangible race.

"Eh, it happens. At least you don't have Bram Stoker and Nosfer fucking-atu to contend with. I'm telling

you some of that stuffs just pulled right outta humanity's arse. Would be cool to turn into a bat, though." "I suppose so. You know where I am when you get here." "I hope so, if you move it won't take me long to catch up. I'll keep

you in the know with anything I find. I trust you'll do the same?" "Professional courtesy holds me to it." He smiled to himself,

wondering what Janey was getting up to. "Good. I'll keep you no further. My car's coming and I'm getting angry stares from the locals," he growled. "If you need me call the boss he'll put you in touch."

"Not a problem, Mal. And we'll see you soon, no doubt." Marsh hung up and shook his head. Where Taylor found these people was beyond him, but he was actually looking forward to meeting the person with the gritty and heavily accented voice. Sometimes he had feelings about people, and he felt he was going to like Mal. \* \* \* \* Janey had to give it to him, Marsh had taste. She grinned at the bathroom, wondering briefly just how many different rooms it had. The small room for the toilet, the pretty much walk in line closet filled with fluffy towels, the larger room with the sinks full length mirrors and the smaller just off it with the shower stall, the bathroom could have been an apartment all its own. She spied a few more doors and smiled.

Kicking off her heels, she moaned as her tired feet hit the cool marble tile. Her toes wiggled, absorbing the cold and instantly relaxing. Janey had always hated flying, not because of some unfounded fear, but because at the end of it she was always somewhere new and in a different time zone. She hated time zones. Like now, for instance; her head, feet, and body were tired and believed it was midnight. However, in Beijing it was six in the morning and everyone was just starting their day.

She sighed, looking at her tired face in the mirror, and rubbed her eyes. Stretching out her muscles, she slipped her short black dress over her head and dropped it to the floor. The silk fluttered over the tile. If she was going to miss a night's sleep she was going to get comfy before giving herself over to work. Naked, she draped the complementary plush robe over her; with the dark heavy material wrapped around her, she started to investigate the bathroom more closely.

The door to her left revealed a steam room with aromatherapy capabilities that her tired head wasn't quite able to grasp. French doors to her left led her out to a small private garden style solarium with the large tub and skylights. The tiles on the floor and walls had the most amazing mosaic pattern, colorful dragons chasing each other. Each dragon had different features, making every one original. The spicy, sweet smell of jasmine enveloped the whole room.

"I have to get me one of these." She'd never stayed in anywhere so beautiful. Most of the time when she was on the odd job, she had to keep her residence low-key. Trent or Kolo her guardian and companion, whom she traveled with through her youth and lived with had no need for the luxurious. She'd been taught, at a very young age, to be thankful for what she had. She may have grown up with money, but it had never been squandered on mere comforts; they'd never bought something just for the sake of it. In that way, she supposed, Trent, had denied her a proper life, and childhood, something she couldn't forgive the man that was the only father she had known for.

Laughing, she shook her head. The man had destroyed her childhood, but he'd given her much in return. She had control now, and she loved it. In her eyes, it was pretty much a fair swap.

She walked back inside quickly checking the other doors, two cupboards, and a locked door that required a keycard. She'd learned from experience that picking such a lock was a difficult job, and as curious as she was there was something more interesting that demanded her attention.

Narrowing her eyes, she pressed her ear against the door, trying desperately to hear Marsh's conversation. She could only make out a few words. Cursing the extra thick, most likely expensive door, she squished her ear closer, still only picking up some muffled sounds. She heard when the conversation ended, pulling her ear away from the door. Quickly she padded back out the French doors to the silent garden and waited for him to find her.

Marsh entered with two glasses of champagne. "Now, I know I told you to take a bath, pet, I was hoping to find you all wet and soapy."

"I was waiting for you..." She grinned, standing and turning the heater on "Besides, this will take days to heat up, what are a few more minutes? So, did you find out anything interesting?"

He went to her and kissed her softly, placing a glass in her hand. "Nope. Only that somebody named Malcolm is on his way here. Seems I piqued Taylor's interest with my query, and he's sending him out to help." He kissed her again and opened her robe, running his fingers down her flat tummy.

She leaned into him before his words registered with her. "What?!" she croaked too loud, her voice breaking. She stepped away from his distracting fingers. "That flea is on his way where?"

"Easy, pet. You'll spill your drink, and that shit is eight hundred American..."

She glanced down at the drink before taking a sip. It was good. Crisp bubbles bounced playfully off her tongue; she knew champagne and this was divine. Considering the glass for a moment, she sat it down before angrily coming back to her point. "Don't distract me. Malcolm is a parasite, a bottom feeder. Lord, if you even knew...he can't come here," she pleaded, knowing she'd already lost. The more she took a stance against something the more he stood for the point. If she kept going he'd end up best of friends with the vampire. It made her insane, which was his point. He drove her wild.

"Tough, pet. He's coming, and frankly any legwork he wants to do is fine by me. Gives us a little less to do, don't you think?" he purred as he ran his hands over her skin once again, this time on her waist and around to her back. "Not another word about it."

She glowered at him as her body reacted to him of its own free will. "Fine, but the demon will want control over the situation. Why do you think he sent one of his own, Mal of all people?"

"I don't give a shit either way. If the fucker dies, we still complete the contract."

"Ahh, but what if the demon decides it's more profitable to him to keep this guy alive?"

"Then we kill him anyway. Either way, it gets done. You think I'm not above pissing the demon off?"

"No, but if Mal's involved then it becomes difficult, *he* becomes difficult. The guy's like a Rottweiler, just as vicious, just as loyal, and just as ugly." She considered her words. "Okay, he's not ugly, but you get my point. Taylor says jump, Mal's already in the air with the morning newspaper in his mouth. The guy is an annoyance, and the nicknames...he gives you one and it sticks, no matter how apt it isn't."

Marsh shrugged. "Doesn't matter really, he's on the way here and said once he got settled in, he'd be by. Just try not to answer the door naked from now on, pet." Marsh nibbled on her neck.

She sighed, giving herself over to his mouth and kiss. "Oh, you bet I won't. Mmm, God, that feels so



good." Bringing her hands up, she pulled his shirt from his pants, running her hands under and up his well-muscled chest. "Such a wanton thing you are, pet. So, you tired?" She nodded, with a sigh. "Very, but seeing as how it's morning I

don't suppose we'll have the chance for a good long sleep." "You relax, take a quick shower, and have a nap, the tub can wait. I need to set up some stuff for the evening, and I'll wake you up for lunch, okay?" he said as he lovingly touched her face. "I want you well rested, you're no good to me or yourself exhausted."

She nodded sleepily, grateful that she had him to look out for her. Before Marsh she would go on for days, weeks even before she burned herself out. "And you?"

"I will be fine. I'll nap after lunch so you can check on things of your own, cool?"

She wanted to make sure he'd be okay, but didn't have the energy to. Marsh was a big boy, he could look after himself and had for a good few thousand years. "Okay, but I want you to get a good sleep, too. Don't overwork yourself." She yawned, her eyes drooping.

He chuckled and scooped her up into his arms. "I will. I, unlike you, don't thrive in harsh conditions. I just don't have to have as much sleep as you do. So don't worry, love, you just relax," he said.

He carried her out of the massive bathroom to their bedroom and set her down in the middle of the large bed, no small feat as he had to half crawl onto it himself to place her there. "Rest, pet, you'll feel better in a little while."

Using the last of her energy, she grabbed the front of his shirt and pulled him gently down to kiss her. When she let go she smiled up at him. "Night-night. Thanks for the lift by the way." She pulled the covers up to her chin, letting the soft bedding surround her.

He laughed and shook his head. "Sleep well, my love," he said as he turned off the side light and walked out of the room, closing the door behind him and leaving her to drift off to sleep.

## Five

She awoke to a familiar feeling, that of her body crying out for more sleep. It was one that she hadn't experienced for a while, but had never forgotten. When she was younger Trent had taught her well, personally waking her up and making her train for hours on adrenaline alone; even coffee had been banished from the house. Of course, years had passed since those days of ice cold buckets of water and broken bones, but she always thought bitterly back to them. No matter the amount of times his harsh training techniques had saved her life, she still hated every memory.

She'd never agreed on the extent of the daily training she'd been ordered to do, not that she'd ever have complained about it. One didn't complain to Trent Duvall. She would have had more luck talking a nun into becoming a whore than to get Trent to cut down on her training exercises. The old man would piss a fit in his slippers right now if he knew how much she'd slacked over the past few years. She wouldn't be able to run a mile, let alone ten, in the condition her body was in. In her defense she'd never had a reason to keep in shape—up until a few months ago she'd been dying. One thing her training did teach her was to appreciate a good lie-in on a comfy bed.

Yawning, she turned and reached out for Marsh, who was absent from his side of the bed. Startled, she

sat up, all traces of sleep wiped away. His pillow hadn't even been slept on.

"Obviously somebody didn't make it to bed." Sighing, she got out of the warm bed, instantly regretting its loss.

She knew he was still in their room, or at least still in the hotel. Ever since her last wish, the one that made her his consort, she could feel him. He was always there, a heavy presence in her mind. Sometimes, if he was far away, she could close her eyes and almost feel what he was doing. She'd always wanted to see what would happen if he went further than the shops down the street but never cared to lose him that long.

She picked her heavy case from the floor, tossing it onto the unmade bed, before opening it and digging messily around for the dress she could have sworn she packed. This was another thing Trent would never have stood for; he was all about military precision. Everything had to be done in a certain way. Clothes were not allowed to live on the floor, no matter if it was for a few seconds while she found what she wanted. The bed had to be made, and fresh covers and sheets had to be thrown on, despite the fact that it was he who threw the cold water on it in the first place. Cursing her inability to choose only two pairs of shoes, she eventually found the lilac slip dress she was looking for and moved into the bathroom to shower.

Fifteen minutes later she was clean and dressed. She'd tied her hair back in a wet ponytail, promising to dry and straighten it after she'd had some coffee. She followed Marsh's presence to a small glass door just off from the main sitting room. The door took her to a large wooden decking area with a huge balcony. He was soaking up the sun, typing furiously on his laptop. She smirked, seeing the pot of steaming coffee next to him.

"Something interesting?" she asked, peering over his shoulder at the screen.

"Lots of interesting, pet. Lots. Sleep okay?" He kissed her cheek, not taking his eyes off the screen. His fingers flew across the keys as he entered encrypted pass codes, hacking seamlessly into the website. "And I can't get a hold of Miranda. What was her mission exactly? A clean kill or to infiltrate?"

She grinned. She loved it when he produced a new talent from his magical hat. "Clean kill," she said automatically before frowning at something Kolo had said. "Well, at least it should have been. Miranda never takes infiltration, it isn't her style. You know how we have specialists for everything. But now you mention it, Ko said something about her not reporting back with the info." She shook her head as the memory refused to come to her. "I don't know; something about the guy's wife."

"Yeah, well this is getting stranger and stranger. Apparently a family member in the States filed missing persons with the Chicago PD and then retracted it three days later, supposedly, under duress. I don't know what the hell that means in a missing persons case, but shit. Something is fishy here. The guy's a public figure, you would think the paparazzi and news would be all over it. Honestly I don't get it." She rubbed her eyes. "Me neither. I think I'm gonna kill this fucker

purely on principal now." "I'm still trying to figure out why no one seems to think it's odd that this fucker has been married for almost a year and his wife, who is an heiress, is nowhere to be found."

"Stranger things have happened. But most likely it's magic. There's diversion spells that could cover it. In fact, there's far more specific spells than that."

"This doesn't reek of applied magic, and he doesn't have the Aura a magic user has, though I do want to

see him in person."

"Okay, he's a public figure, that shouldn't be too hard. Although I must say I'm leaning towards calling in a clean up crew, which is what I should have done in the first place."

"If this was a usual situation then I would agree with you, but nothing here sits well. Miranda's file doesn't say anything about her defecting or being disloyal. Something is afoot."

She sighed, knowing full well that her files wouldn't say anything about disloyalty. Any assassin's file marked with that would be taken out. "Which is why we're here and not following protocol. I do like Miranda."

He typed a few more strokes and shook his head. "Fuck. Another dead end. I'm telling you there's too many locked doors. I expected a few but this is ridiculous. The fucker is supposed to be a faith healer. So, we need a plan of action. I think we should go see Miranda, don't you? She's staying at the Urkino Park."

Janey considered it. "I'm not sure. If she is rogue or something worse then she'll panic knowing we're onto her. She knows me."

"Then maybe I should pay her a visit. No one in the organization has met me yet." A few well placed taps on the keyboard and he was into the Urkino hotel reservations. He smiled and whistled to himself. "And it seems Swanson is staying there as well. Interesting."

She nodded, not liking the situation at all, but she knew there was no point in telling him not to do it. "Did you say Mal was here? You should take him with you, the guy's a prick but he's good back up. Or we could go to Swanson, claim to need healing?"

"Oh, that's number two on the list, pet. Don't worry, I will be fine, and taking Mal isn't a bad idea. I was thinking recon on Miranda, and then go see Swanson after I have taken care of her." "Taken care of her how?" she asked, bristling. "Incapacitate her, love. Just keep her out of the way. Really, Hon, this behavior isn't like her, as per her file. I want to make sure she's not being tampered with."

"And how would you manage that, love?" she asked, sitting down and finally pouring some coffee for herself.

"I'm a Djinn. I have at tons of tricks you don't know about." He winked and handed her the sugar. "If there's something wrong with her, or if she's got some kinda of issue, I can deal with it. If it's some kinda magic or suggestion, I'll know."

She sighed, "Okay. But you should take that prick Mal." She took a sip of the dark, bitter liquid. "Then we'll get Swanson, I want to stay close by, though, and I'm going to have the crew on standby. Trent would kill me if he knew about this. Miranda can easily be replaced, we can't. Hell, even Mal can't. If that vamp even takes a bullet Cask will freak."

"Well, he being a vamp will help considerably. If she's in any kind of thrall, well, he'll be able to help me with that. So yes, pet, I will take him with me, though I think I need to remind you, I'm the closest thing to immortal you're ever going to see, and technically so are you."

She nodded, she kept forgetting. "True, but you're still worth more than she is, assassins are a dime a dozen. I have hundreds, and thousands in the making. However," she sighed, draining the coffee mug.

She only had one Marsh, and the thought of putting him in danger irked her. Although, she knew he'd hardly consent to being wrapped in bubble wrap and put on a shelf."I hate not knowing."

"I know, pet." He got up and stretched, going to her and kissing her on the lips. "I have been getting restless, pet, I think this is just what I need. So you just relax, take your shower, pamper yourself, grab a spa day while I'm out. We are going out tonight. I want you perfect, you hear?"

"Yeah, I hear." She kissed him again. "Be careful, baby, and have fun."

"Tonight is for fun, pet, this is business. Now, where the hell is Mal?"

## Six

The sun shining through the window was getting on Mal's nerves; he had to fight the urge to growl at it. It wouldn't burn him to a crisp like in the movies. That was the first thing he'd learned after becoming a vampire, although it did hurt his eyes like hell on fire. The second thing he'd learned was that vampires had a structure, a hierarchy the boss had called it, and this was not something that had agreed with him. Luckily for him the Boss, Sean Taylor, was still in the mood to keep him on. Working for a demon seemed to piss the older vamps off, but they never came after him. Never forced him to serve them, either, and for that Mal was eternally grateful to the demon that had saved his life.

The reception area for the orphanage was well air conditioned. Taylor had called him to check up on it after the court cases had fallen through last month and it had been placed back in the care of Taylor's company. Which meant it was his problem again. Not that it was ever much of a problem, but recently the staff had started to gain consciences, and that caused problems.

He pulled a cigarette from his pocket and lit it, ignoring the glares he was getting from the adopting parents. He took a long drag, enveloped in a cloud of smoke.

"Sir, this is a non-smoking facility. I'm afraid you'll have to step out side or put that out." The cute blonde translator said politely, thrusting an ashtray at him.

He didn't need a translator. Years ago the Boss had made him learn almost every language he needed to get by as his emissary. Mal soon learned that he had a certain aptitude for languages, and had taken to learning every one available to him. Once he'd finished with that part of his learning he'd began reading foreign literature, not that he'd ever admit to it. However, he liked to keep the translators close to him just in case; he loved to play dumb. It was amazing the things one could learn when people think one is ignorant of their language. Plus, it was a benefit that the girls were always hot. Even the Boss didn't give him credit for the amount he'd picked up over the years, Mal couldn't blame him for that; as a human he'd been the worst kind.

"Sir?" the blonde said forcefully, pulling him back from his thoughts.

He grinned wolfishly at her, considering stubbing it out on his hand. That always got a pretty reaction, but not the one he was hoping from the golden haired woman.

"Can I finish? I'm pretty much done." He grinned, taking his last few draws and throwing it in the ashtray.

"Mr. Frost, that's hardly a proper example to be setting. After the past few months we are trying to prove that Mr. Taylor is a fine upstanding benefactor and you coming in here and..."



"You're so proper, aren't you?" He grinned down at her, taking a step closer. He locked his gaze with hers, feeling the tiny pulse of her brain tinged with annoyance. He reached out to it with his own pulse, squashing it and drawing it in. "I bet you're a real dirty one once you let go, darling. I think you're a biter." His smile widened, showing a hint of fang. "I know I am."

She shivered, stepping in to him. His body stiffened as her tongue darted out, licking her lips. *Score*. He smiled, holding her mind. This wasn't cheating, he would never force her to do anything she wouldn't want to, but he had a feeling this one would want to do a lot. All he was doing was keeping her thoughts distracted from the task at hand, centering it on other things; the way his jaw curved, the heat in his eyes, the way his body bulged under the suit he was wearing as if it wasn't used to being in such a fine garment.

It wasn't, he hated the suits. Until a year ago he'd never had to wear them, that was when Taylor had come to his senses long enough to insist that he did. Mal, left to his own devices, was strictly a jeans man. Suits had never agreed with him, never.

The girl brushed her round breasts against his chest, her lips were inches away from his as his phone rang. His attention snapped down to the ringing device, cursing the day he ever thought that damn song would be a good idea. Now he was going to have "Funky Town" stuck in his head all day.

"I'm busy!" he shouted roughly down the phone, causing the other occupants of the waiting room to look round at him. The translator, now reminded of their situation and his behavior, slapped him as hard as she could, which was pretty hard considering she was trying to restore her dignity. He resisted the powerful urge to punch her back, physically stepping away from her angrily retreating form. He shouted a few expletives before slamming himself back down on the seat and lighting another cigarette.

"My day just freed up," he told the person on the other end of the line. "Fucking the staff again, Malcolm? You know the rule." "No shit, Boss. I know it, but it doesn't really apply to me and if it did, I'd ignore it. So, the Djinn call or do you just miss the sound of my voice?"

"Djinn? Is that what you're calling him? I thought you would have been a little more creative than that." Taylor said, amusement clear in his voice.

Mal shook his head, his nicknaming ability was widely known; what was even more well known was his ability to piss people off with them. "Nah, I was calling him *genie*, but he set me straight. I didn't know anything about his kind, and Djinn's a pretty cool word, I like how it sounds. Like gin, and I like gin." "I trust you now know more about them?" "All I'll ever need to, I hope." "Good. He called, looking for you, wants you to help him with something or another, I didn't ask." The demon lied. Mal knew he'd have asked everything he could, Taylor looked out for him, always had.

"Kay, so what do you want me to do with Swanson? I think he's a fraud." The demon laughed. "You think?" "Well, yeah, I do. I'm pretty sure he's offed his wife, at the least has

her imprisoned somewhere. She had money, his own personal bankroll." "Okay, well assess him. If he's worth our time then we'll use him,

see what he is. A talented con man like that deserves our recognition." "And if he's succumbed to the dark side?" "Then let little miss Janey kill him, but let her do it. I won't have

you doing her dirty work." "Oh, I'd do her dirty, but I get the feeling that that little girl doesn't

like me so much." "I get that impression as well. Just do as I asked, and try not to get on Marsh's bad side. He can be a real prick when he's angry."

"Okay, got it, don't piss off the immortal. So Boss, I was thinking, on my way back from this dive, I'm gonna stop by Russia. Kit said that the circus was in town."

The Boss sighed. "I'm not interested in anything Snow has to say, Malcolm. We'll talk about it when you're finished. How's business over there?"

"Things could be better. A few of the workers are thinking about causing problems, you might have to come over and see to it personally, you know, if you're feeling right."

"Why me? You're the one who deals with these things, Malcolm, that's your job."

"True, but you believe what you're telling them and that the whole scheme is a good idea, which benefits the kids. I have to admit that I'm just a smidge uncomfortable with the idea of selling the organs of orphans to the highest bidder."

The demon sighed, this was an old discussion. "It won't kill them, they are just paying for their keep. Look around the city you are in, Malcolm. This is the best place for them, they're not harmed or abused. I don't sell them for sex. They live perfectly normal lives, I take care of them when they are sick and they have a wonderful childhood. Now in return, as payment, I expect payment as any sane person would. I don't demand money or anything to that effect. All I ask of them is that they help another human being live, by donating an organ or two. They only need one kidney to survive, keeping the spare is just selfish."

Mal smiled, shaking his head. It was true, the demon had him do everything in Mal's own power to make sure the children had everything they could want. They had the best of everything, even the best of caregivers, which was where the problems had started. Caregivers who cared, did not want to stand by and watch the children be picked for their organs like lobsters in a tank. Eventually, they talked.

"Malcolm? Were you thinking of the lobster analogy again? You know how I dislike that. They are children, not seafood."

Mal frowned, not liking how well the demon knew him. "I know that. So, Djinn still at the Grand?" "As far as I know." "Great, I'm close by. I'll call when I get more info." "You do that." The demon hung up. Mal crushed out his cigarette and left the waiting room, heading into the bright sun. When he'd said he was close by he'd been exaggerating slightly, it was about a half an hour's walk away, but he doubted the demon would know that. Luckily for Mal he had his car with him, a beautiful canary yellow Lamborghini. It shouldn't take him long to get to the Grand.

An hour of bumper to bumper traffic a slight incident of road rage, which most likely sent the guy on the other end of Mal's fist in hospital and a speeding ticket later, he was knocking on the Djinn's room door. He growled, realizing that his knock faintly resembled the "Funky Town" tune on his phone. \* \* \* \*  
Janey had accosted him as they went inside, the ideas and command Marsh had given her to pamper herself forgotten as he couldn't resist his consort in the slip dress as she walked, or the fact that it clung in all the right places. She teased, and touched her self, her hips, her breasts, knowing full well it turned him on more than anything and he was lost. He grabbed her, turning her and pushing her up against the wall, his hands roaming, settling for brief moments on the places he watched her touch only seconds before. They kissed. His hands easily slid her dress up her thighs as he ground his erection into her, his efforts rewarded with a whimper. He reached up and kissed her, his hands at the nape of her neck, then toying with the straps of her dress and finally pushing them down to expose her naked breasts to him. He

pinched and tugged at her nipples, a moan his reward. He reached down and slipped his hands between her thighs and smiled at her. She was wet and ready for him. He stroked her a bit, teasing her and just as he went to open his belt, the small chimes that signified someone at the suite door tinkled and he groaned.

One thing he hated was getting interrupted, and this situation qualified. He thanked the gods they were only making out, though his cock was protesting the tease. He looked at Janey and kissed her again, moving his mouth to her ear. "Got to be Mal. Bastard has horrible timing. We'll continue this later, unless you prefer I finish this here and now."

"It would be him," she growled. "We'll do it later." Her hands went to her dress, smoothing it down as the knock came again in its irritating beat.

He pulled her to him and nipped her bottom lip. "Go get your stuff done. I don't want him to upset you unduly." He left her, walking to the door and opening it. The guy on the other side was in a dove grey suit, with a blue shirt and tie that matched the suit. He looked uncomfortable, his hair short and blond, his eyes hidden behind a pair of extremely dark sunglasses. Marsh smirked. "I thought vamps couldn't go out in the daylight?" The vampire coolly raised an eyebrow. "Really? I sure as hell

missed the memo on that one. Like you said, humans and their stories." "Indeed." Marsh stepped aside then looked at Mal, an amused grin

on his face. "I don't have to invite you in, do I?" "Nah, but it is the polite thing to do, me being your guest and all." Mal stepped past him into the room. "So, Djinn, the boss said you needed me? Or was that just sweet cheeks? Speaking of which..." He looked around. "Where is the sexy bitch?"

Marsh shook his head. "Oh, I sent her into the bowels of the suite. She doesn't like you much there, mate. And she is a sexy bitch, I will grant you that." He walked into the living room area and grabbed a bottle of water from the small fridge. "And trust me, you don't wanna see her right now. She's a bit worked up." Marsh smiled to himself, enjoying the fact that he knew Janey was listening and he was talking so candidly about their sex life with some guy she truly didn't like. "I bet." The vampire laughed. "So, what's the deal here?" "With Janey? Eh, she's pissed she didn't get fucked." He looked at the vampire and laughed to himself. *Yeah, she heard that, no doubt*, he thought as he heard a door slam. *So now she's pissed. Good. I can get to the task at hand.* He looked at Mal again. "Well, I haven't uncovered much," he said as he recapped what he told Janey only an hour before. "So I think we need to go see Miranda. She hasn't met me. No doubt she hasn't met you, so we can do some recon. Might be fun."

"Fun?" Mal sighed audibly. "Sure, why the hell not? Maybe I'll pick up a snack while I'm there. So, we go in all guns blazing or do you want to go for the more subtle approach? Cuz I'll tell you right now, I don't do subtle."

"Let's try subtle. Catch more flies with honey. We just need information."

"Sure, it's your show. So, you ready? Or do you want me to circle round the place a few times, give you plenty of time to give the bitch a good seeing to?"

Marsh laughed. "No, I think she's pretty taken care of now. Well, the way I want her taken care of, anyway. She can wait for anything else. Miranda's at Urkino Park. I'm thinking we show up, get to her and see what she says." He grabbed his jacket and cell, heading for the door. "My ride or yours?"

Mal laughed, his gaze wandering back to the door Janey had left through. "Oh, I know she wouldn't

agree to that." "To what?" "Never mind. My car's out front, but it'll stand out in a crowd." "Fair enough." They left the room quickly and headed down to the garage to pick up Marsh's burgundy Skyline. The drive was quick, Mal directing them on the shortest route to the other posh and expensive hotel. Marsh pulled up to valet and threw the keys to the attendant. "One scratch and you'll be shitting in a bag the rest of your life." The attendant blanched, and Marsh walked around the car towards

the lobby doors and grinned at Mal. "Nice." The vampire approved. "What room is she in?" "Seventeen forty-one. And it seems Swanson is up in Penthouse Two. I say we work our way up if we have to." They entered the elevator and Marsh turned to him. "Look, Janey is not all hot about you being around, which is why I think you need to be. Anything that pisses her off and gets her heated is fine with me, dig?"

Mal shook his head. "You're a sick fuck, you know that? I don't get her heated, but I do piss her off. It's a gift, I piss lots of people off."

Marsh laughed. "Thank you. And anything that gets under her skin is fun for me in the long run. She hates you almost as much as she hates Taylor."

"Really? Damn I must be losing my touch. She just hasn't seen me in a while. Let it come back to her."

"Deal." They stepped out of the elevator and walked down the hallway towards Miranda's room, and when they reached it Marsh knocked; he wasn't sure what was going to happen, so winging it was the only thing that came to mind.

Miranda answered her door in a robe and a smile, and Marsh figured this wasn't her normal daytime garb. "I think we might be interrupting something, and if we're not, we could help create something for someone to interrupt," he said.

She was pretty, very pretty. Tall, leggy, brunette, a full lush mouth he could imagine doing any multitude of scandalous acts. The only thing that was off was the look in her eyes. From her file picture he knew her eyes were a perfect vibrant green, but now they were dead, void of life, void of anything except lust. She looked them both over and licked her lips. "Well, you aren't who I was waiting for, but you'll do. How I won the stud lottery is completely beyond me, but get in here, both of you."

They walked in, Marsh glancing over at Mal with a quizzical look. "Miranda, whom were you waiting for?"

She blushed and giggled. "My date, but he's always late, or has been since I met him." Her eyes cleared a bit as if she was coming out of a fog. "Who the fuck are you both? Not that I mind. It's not everyday I get two gorgeous men at my hotel room door." Marsh looked over at Mal. "You wanna field this one, mate?" Mal looked her over, licking his lips. "Well, pet, we work for the hotel. It's our job to make sure beautiful guests like yourself are completely satisfied with their stay." *Smooth vamp, very smooth.* The woman reacted to Mal quickly, like a hummingbird to sugar water. Things felt off here, like something was pressing on the edges of the seen reality. He opened his senses and felt the room, and the air. It was sticky, with remnants of what could possibly be a spell, though he wasn't sure. The witch would know, but she wasn't anywhere close to where he could ask her.

Marsh looked at Miranda and things got even more odd. The woman had dregs of something coming off her, and it was still potent. Mal was working his subtle vamp magic, and whatever had its hold on her was letting go a bit, but not enough. He needed answers before the chit climbed into Mal's lap. He looked at the vampire and made a gesture. He didn't care if he snacked on her, but first they needed Intel.



Mal nodded his understanding, keeping his gaze locked on Miranda's. "We need to ask you a few questions about your time at the hotel. For research purposes, you understand."

The woman slinked closer to him and rubbed her hand on his thigh, her eyes glazing once again. "Ummm, never had a problem with talking and fucking. We can help each other."

"I bet, but I plan on keeping that lush little mouth of yours very busy, and I like to get the chat out the way first." "Ummm, okay, what do you want to know?" He smiled and nodded to Marsh, signaling for him to ask his

questions. If the chit wasn't as into the vamp as she was, this would be a lot harder, but as it was she was already touching the guy and trying to get into his pants. "Miranda, I need the truth from you, otherwise it just won't work out right, okay?"

"I'm happy to help," she said absently as her eyes trained on Mal's mouth.

"Wonderful." Marsh began asking her cursory and easy questions about the room and her stay in general, had she met any of the other guests, what she thought of the room service. She was accommodating, and every time she answered a question Mal relaxed a bit, causing her to relax as well. The guy knew how to work a woman for information, Marsh had to give him that. "About these guests..." She told him about people here and there, and when she mentioned Swanson Marsh perked up. *Bingo*. "You were up in the penthouse? Did you find the room satisfactory? Would you stay there?"

She gave him a detailed run through of everything in the room, which was most helpful if they had to go there and infiltrate. "It is very beautiful. The décor is modern, but with the traditional motifs scattered around the room. The couches are large, one white leather and the other black leather. The bar in the alcove is beautiful, and the rest of the furniture is top rate. There's a coffee table in the center with a fan etched in the glass, all frosted. Pretty classy, actually. The window treatments and carpets all match, and the lighting is perfect. The bedroom is enormous. Huge shelf bed, silk sheets in crème and crimson, doors that open to the balcony and garden. Mirrors everywhere and a bathroom with a tub you could swim in." She blushed when she mentioned to bedroom and Marsh looked at Mal. *Here's where you come in, Vamp. Pump the bitch for information.*

Mal drew Miranda's attention back to him. "The bedroom? My, someone has been a bad girl. How did the soft silk sheets feel against your smooth, supple skin?" Mal trailed his hands down her body, settling them at her waist. "Tell me, pet, which room have you been frequenting? Hmmm?" He pulled her tightly against him, gazing down into her lustfilled eyes.

She swallowed and licked her lips. "The bedroom, and the open air garden."

Marsh watched her as she leaned in for a kiss. Apparently either the vamp was this good, or she was under a compulsion spell.

Mal kissed her chastely, pressing his lips against hers. "The open air garden," he said thoughtfully as he pulled back. She growled at the loss, clearly needing more. "That would be Penthouse Two, would it not?" His grip tightened on her body, pulling her flush against him. "It seems our Mr. Swanson has indeed been busy." He laughed, his eyes still on hers to gauge her reaction.

She giggled and smiled at him. "Ummm, Gary has been very busy. I should be but..." she said absently as she shook slightly, Marsh watched the magic slipping. He motioned to Mal to keep on the line of

questioning.

His hand cupped her ass and squeezed, bringing her full attention back to him. "Busy, pet? Just what is it that takes up Mr. Swanson's time?"

She smiled. "Umm, well lately *I* do, though I don't know what he's up to when I'm not up there servicing him."

At that, Marsh arched an eyebrow. Miranda was supposed to know everything about her target, right down to when he picked his nose, and she was one of the best at gathering Intel that the organization had, which was why she'd been here in the first place. Now, with her own admission that she didn't know, he knew something was up. The magic pulsed as she spoke, seemingly growing stronger. If Marsh could taste the magic like a witch could, he would know better what he was dealing with. There were only two races he knew of that might be able to do this, and nothing here reeked of the Celo demons. He shook his head.

"Why are you here, Miranda? Why are you *really* here?" If his magic and gift of persuasion was as strong as the conflicting magic, Marsh could get the answer from her. Thankfully it was. "I was sent to kill him, on contract." she said, her voice emotionless. "Why didn't you?" "I went to, I did, but..." Her eyes glazed over again and Marsh saw the magic take hold again, this time locking tight. "I can't kill my lover. He's fantastic, and he's everything I need."

Marsh's eyes went wide, his suspicions confirmed and he nodded at Mal. "Now Miranda, I'm sure that's not so. I bet Mal could make you forget him, couldn't you, Mal?" He pointed to his teeth.

Mal rolled his eyes. "Of course I could, pet, he's nothing compared to what I can do for you. I bet I could make you forget all about him with one kiss."

Marsh nodded and moved out of sight, not wanting to watch this. He stood behind Mal and heard the girl giggle. "Umm, just a kiss? I was hoping for more." Mal chuckled. "Well, how about we start with a kiss and see where

that takes us?" Miranda leaned into him and rubbed against his groin. "Start with

the kiss, but I do want to scream for you later." Mal smiled and kissed her lips gently, before kissing down her chin and neck. "Oh, I have the feeling you'll be doing a lot of screaming later on, pet." On the last word he struck down, clouding her mind further as he drank deeply from her. He linked his mind with hers, chasing away what magic he could and setting her back to her proper mindset. He supported her as she slumped and he pulled back from her, setting her small body on the couch.

Marsh lit a cigarette. "How long will she be out? We need her out of the way. And good work, by the way."

"Thanks." He stood up, wiping his mouth. "I'm not sure. She'll be out for a while, two maybe three hours. I didn't take much but her head was fucked. I don't think I got it all, whatever it was."

Marsh shook his head as he looked at her. Mal had gotten a lot, but not all of it. "Well, you got more than I would have. Then again, I couldn't draw it out of her like that. But we aren't dealing with anything too out of the ordinary, though this fucker is almost as rare as me."

"Yeah? Do we get wishes? Or a pot of gold? Cuz I gotta tell you, this fucker is starting to get on my

nerves. I'm beginning to think there's no monetary gain here at all, and that's very bad for him."

"I'll explain once we get back to the room. Janey is going to wanna hear this first hand, and frankly I wanna see her head explode."

## Seven

"Excuse me, a *what*?" Janey all but shrieked, as her brain tried to

follow his words. Mal nodded to her left, keeping well out of striking distance. "Yeah,

I second that. What the fuck are you talking about?" "Darling, I understand you're not as worldly as some, but this isn't that hard to get your head around. I didn't think there were any left, but I have been wrong before. The only race that leaves that kind of energy signature is fey, though Hypno fey were some of the first to die out. Wonder where this bastard has been hiding."

"A Hypno fey? You *do* know how that sounds? Marsh, there are hardly any fey left as it is, and those that are left are very weak in power, barely worth mentioning. And I'm ignoring your not as worldly comment. I happen to be *very* worldly, I've just not been around since Christ was in diapers."

Marsh grinned. "True on all accounts. Last fey I knew of was in Ireland, owns a shop, and she's a royal. Strange girl. But, Hypno fey were the first to die off, along with the Star fey and the Liquid fey. That he's been hiding—and he has been, cuz no fey of that caliber have been born in the past two hundred years—I would know. I'm sure Swanson wasn't a favorite among his brethren and he's feeling now is the time to come out, cuz they have all scattered to the winds."

The vampire, who'd remained partly silent up until now, laughed loudly. "Okay, I gotta ask, what the fuck is a fey? Let alone a Liquid fey? Or a Hypno fey? This is all getting a bit too *Star Trekky* for me."

"Says the vampire." Janey glared at him, still not at all pleased with his presence.

"Yes, I am a vampire, Sweet Cheeks. Thanks for pointing that out. I'm also all about education." He turned to Marsh. "Educate me."

"History lesson for my fanged friend here. fey are the topside version of demons, they are the "ying" to the "yang" of demons. They can't reproduce with demons, the powers would be insane, it's kinda like an off switch so to speak. So where was I? So fey had their own plane of existence long before I was born, but came here once it started to die. demons have the Afterverse, and fey had a dimension called The Glimmer. Last I heard, there's only one entrance to the glimmer realm, and its whereabouts are coveted within the ranks of what's left of the fey. fey started marrying and breeding with humans, and they started to die off." "Human blood always does that. Can we kill them?" "Fey? Well, yeah, they are almost as close to immortal as a Djinn is normally, but like demons they can be killed. Fey power sets, well, they differ, like the demons, though they aren't races. They are more like subcategories. The fey I know in Ireland, she's a healer. There are a lot of different classifications of fey, and hypno fey are just one set. There's the aforementioned Star and Liquid fey, and Passion fey, Atmosphere fey." Marsh trailed off and looked at them.

Janey nodded to him. "Go on, we're with you. Although maybe we could just skip to the relevant parts."

"No, I'm interested. No skipping, and what the fuck is a Liquid fey?" Mal asked Marsh, ignoring Janey's

growling.

Marsh sighed. "Liquid fey is the name given to the fey that manipulate liquid. Ever wonder why some inland lakes are saltwater? Humanity gives the explanation that there used to be an inland sea, and that's true, because a liquid fey was making a habitat. Word has it they could breathe underwater, and had the ability to change into water dwelling creatures. Though none of that has been validated, aside from the water change thing."

Janey huffed, stamping her foot impatiently, but held her tongue. Marsh would finish when he was good and ready. Mal continued, grinning at her behavior. "And so passion fey would be like the counterpart to the incubus? And this Hypno fey, it's like the Celo, Illusion demon."

"Sort of. It's more a hypnotic suggestion. Celo fool the senses. Hypno, well the old books say they can fool the mind and hold it in thrall. I think it's safe to say that's what happened to poor Miranda."

"And what exactly *did* happen to poor Miranda?" Janey asked, hand on hip. She'd been trying to get that particular piece of information out of them since they'd shown up.

Marsh smiled. "Honestly? She's in thrall. She told us she went to take care of the hit, but she didn't. So I'm thinking she went into it like a lover and got fucked, both physically and mentally. Fucker probably knew what she was from the off, and twisted her to his ends, which, from what I can tell from what she said is his drooling fuck toy. I don't think he made very good work of the mind job he gave her, cuz she was trying to fuck the both of us. Well, Mal more so than me."

Mal grinned. "It's all about putting yourself out there, Djinn. I'll show you how, Sweet Cheeks."

Janey ignored him and continued. "So where is she now? Did you just leave her to be his fuck toy?"

"Hardly. I told you I wouldn't let anything happen to her. Mal bit her, drew the suggestion out, and she's on the couch there. She should be out for a few more hours. It's just damn good Mal is vamp enough to be able to take that kinda suggestion off. That fucker is truly in his power."

She sighed, not wanting to give the vampire credit for anything. "Okay, so how do we kill him, assuming that all parties here are in agreement that he has to die." She looked at Mal. "You don't have to run off to Taylor begging permission like the good little servant you are?"

Mal shook his head. "Nope, Boss won't wanna know. I don't think this Swanson guy could be easily controlled and he's pissed off my entire week's plan."

"Then it's settled." Marsh said. "Contract sticks, the fucker dies, and we save Miranda. Speaking of which, we need to decide what to do with her. She's going to need something to keep her mind occupied, especially if this fucker is as powerful as I felt. And I wanna know what the fuck happened to the wife."

"I'll keep her occupied." Mal grinned, flashing fangs. "That is, if you guys don't need me. Or Sweet cheeks, you might be better off doing it." He turned to Janey, looking her over. "You're as close to human as you can get, most likely if you get too close he'll zap you, and I'd pay good money to see you wrestling around on the floor with that fox Miranda." He leered, staying way out of her reach.

Marsh stifled a laugh. "Mal, I think it's a good idea if you take one for the team on this one. She did take a shine to you."



Mal grinned, ignoring Janey's icy glare. "Okey dokey, it'll be a hard job, but I'm sure I'll manage. My point still stands about her, though."

"I will not get zapped, Malcolm." She cut him off angrily, wishing she was wearing her gun.

Marsh walked past them and got a drink from the bar. He turned to Mal. "While you're there, pump her for as much info as you can. Anything remotely interesting, give me a jingle." He held his cell phone up. "I'm thinking we'll let the fucker sweat it out tonight, if he even suspects anything. Tomorrow I'll send him a letter to meet us at the Imperial Gardens. Janey, pet, we might have to do a little un-wishing." She looked at him blankly, forgetting all about Mal. "Un-wishing?" "The asshole claims to be a faith healer, correct?" "Correct." "Then I think we need to un-wish your ailment, so to speak." Her eyes grew wide and she shook her head. "Oh, hell no. I'm not going to be ill again. Never, that was the deal." She crossed her arms defiantly. "No, I'm not wishing that. We'll just kill them all."

Marsh rolled his eyes. "Calm down. I said wish the *ailment* back, not the sickness. Darling, you're immortal now, how the fuck are you going to get sick again? It's not possible. But, if your body holds the ailment, then if he's looking for it, he'll find it and think you are the real McCoy. You think I would put you in danger?" "No, I don't think you would, not intentionally." "Never." "Okay, and we'll get rid of it after?" "Obviously. Like I would do that to you. I'm sadistic, yes, but I'm not into that kinda torture." Marsh went to her, took her face in his hands and kissed her on the lips. "Your life force and mine are bound now, pet." He turned to Mal. "Pop back to Miranda's?"

"Sure, I'm off before I see anything that kills my mood. I'll call you after I've pumped her for information." He left silently, closing the door behind him. Janey sighed, leaning into him. "I really hate him." "Yeah, he knows. Though he grows on you, like a fungus. He handled everything very professionally at the room before, and I like him."

"You would, and I'm sure that's exactly what Taylor said about him. Although I can't see him growing anywhere near me."

Marsh smirked. "I could, but I'm not going to subject you to that. You and Miranda can gab about it when she's all right in the head."

"Yeah, because I can see that happening. Miranda isn't that type of girl. At least, she wasn't. She'll be mortified and vengeful when she comes to." "Maybe. Or Mal might grow on her, too." "We'll see. With any luck she'll blame him for the whole thing and

kill him." He laughed. "It's possible. So, did you miss me?" he asked as he pulled her to him and nibbled on her neck. "Think you'll be ready to go out in a few hours? I'm thinking about napping while you go get pampered."

She sighed, relaxing into him. "I can do that, I'm already halfway through the pampering process." She held up her beautifully manicured nails for him to inspect. "Unless you need some company for that nap of yours, finish up where we left off this morning, when Malcolm so rudely interrupted?"

He chuckled. "You'll get your fucking, pet, don't worry about that. Make sure those adorable tones match those nails. And I think you should go get your hair done. Yeah, go the full nine. We are going out tonight, you know." "Mmm, where are we going? Somewhere nice?" He chuckled, giving her cause to be suspicious. "Yeah, pet. Somewhere nice. Be sure you put on the outfit I lay out for you will you?"

She laughed, shaking her head. She wasn't so sure if that was the answer she wanted to hear. "Oh, I will, all right. You always have the most interesting surprises." She kissed him. "I'll go finish getting pampered, and you get your well deserved rest."

"Indeed, love. Enjoy yourself. Anything that strikes your fancy, spare no expense. I want you well and relaxed tonight."

"Oh, I will be, just you get some rest. I don't want you falling asleep on me, there's no surer way to spoil the mood than that." She giggled, kissing him. "No we can't have that, pet."

## Eight

Mal left his suit jacket in the car, feeling much more comfortable now. He jogged up the hotel stairs, rolling out his shoulders to ease the tension. With any luck Miranda would be just waking up, and wondering where he was. He grinned at the thought of her, wearing the small slip and pressing against him. She had smelled amazing, like freshly cut rose and sex. Her whole essence reeked of it, exuded it, most likely because that's all she'd been doing for the past few days. Either way, he liked it.

He could still taste her. Soon there was a very good chance that's he'd be tasting a whole lot more of her. He licked his lips, coming up to her door. A quick listen and he could tell that she was still alone, but moving almost groggily around. *Poor chit, proolly has one hell of a headache judging by all the directions her minds been pulled lately.* He straightened his shirt, wishing he'd had time to change into his jeans. He knocked on the door, waiting with a smile for her to answer. The door opened and Miranda looked at him, a smile slowly creeping across her face. "I wondered where you went. Why did you knock?"

"I had to ditch the stiff. I'm not one to share." He stroked a stray hair from her face. "So, pet, where were we?" He stepped in the room, kicking the door shut behind him.

She giggled and walked backwards away from him, looking him over. "Ummm, you tell me. I don't even remember you leaving." "That's right, I believe I was helping you forget Swanson." "Who?" she asked and moved closer to him, her hands going to his

belt. He grinned. "Exactly." She went up and kissed him, her fingers teasing on his belt buckle, her left palm on his groin. "I don't think you're very ready to do anything." "I'm sure you can fix that, pet." Miranda's gaze faltered and the cloudiness cleared, but only for a moment. She closed her eyes and giggled. "Umm, I do think so." She turned and took off the robe, walked towards the couch, and sat down, crossing her legs.

He smiled, cocking his head to the side. Now this is interesting. "What's wrong, pet? You don't want to play?"

She got up walked back to him. "I do. Very much. I just thought you would want to be comfortable on the couch. You want to stand, we can stand." She giggled and touched his shoulder. "You going to give me a name? I don't remember if you gave me a name."

He thought about it for a second. What's in a name, and if she was playing him he could take her easily. *Yeah, I can handle a highly trained assassin up close.* He shook his head. "Call me Mal, pet."

"Mal it is, then. So, Mal?" she asked as she hooked her fingers in the top of his pants. "I'm dying to see

what's under these clothes." "I'm not stopping you." He pulled her into a crushing kiss. She moaned and fit her naked body to him, giving over in complete surrender. Her hands went to his shirt around his waist and pulled it out from his pants, quickly touching his skin. She wiggled her belly on his groin, her hands going between then and working quickly on his belt, still kissing him.

He let her undress him, hiding his amusement in her kiss. "God, you're eager, aren't you, pet? You always this willing?"

She looked up at him, her eyes partially glazed. "No, never, you just do it for me," she said as she opened his pants and gasped. "Someone dressed as nice as you and not wearing underwear? I'm impressed." He laughed. "I find it's quicker, not that I'm all about speed." "I hope not." "You'll soon see, pet." She moved closer to him, her hand on his cock. "I like so far." She

pulled her had away and rolled her hips. He grinned; his face inched closer to hers. "Oh, I promise you'll love

it all the way through." She nipped his bottom lip and palmed him, squeezing slightly.

"Yeah, I have a feeling I will." He grabbed her lightning fast and pulled her into a deep, searching kiss which left them both breathless. "I bet."

She moaned and rubbed against him, most insistent. She moved towards the door to the bedroom, backwards, her eyes still foggy and glazed. "So, pet. Tell me a bit about yourself." She licked her lips. "I thought we were going to fuck, not talk." "Can't we do both?" He asked, his hand slipping up her thigh. "Only if the words coming out of your mouth are dirty, baby. Talk

dirty to me?" "Only? Slut, you're not in any kind of position to be making demands." He turned her around, sitting himself on the bed and pulling her over his knee. "Now tell me, pet, are you a good girl or a naughty one?" He slapped her bare flesh experimentally. "Do I need to discipline you?"

Miranda shuddered and gasped, clearly liking his actions. "Oh, God."

"You can call me what you like, but answer my question." He slapped her again.

"What do you want, baby? A naughty or good girl? I'll be anything you want." Her eyes closed and she sighed, wiggling on his lap.

"Now that's not an answer either, pet," Mal chided, spanking her harder; Her skin turned deep pink. "Now, are you a naughty or good girl?" She sobbed and shook. "Naughty. Very naughty." He grinned, pretending to process the information. His fingertips drew lazy circles on the reddened flesh. "And how is it that a sexy bitch like you managed to become so naughty." She giggled. "I kill people for a living." "Oh yeah? What kind of people, good ones?" His fingertip traced

over her skin, growing ever closer to her parted legs. She moaned and shuddered. "Good, bad, anyone you're willing to

pay me to kill." "Well, that is handy. Remind me to get your card." He slapped her

hard, the sound crackin in the room. She gasped and purred, enjoying the spanking. "I'll remind you." He hit her again, his hand lingering on her ass. "You better or I'll be

back to do this again." "Umm, maybe I won't," she whispered. "I'll come back anyway, I don't need an excuse." Mal whacked her

again; Miranda gasped at the contact of flesh on flesh. She whimpered and licked her lips. "Anytime. Ummm." "Anytime I want." "God, yes," she breathed and shuddered. He squeezed her. "So, you're a bad girl." "Verybad." He grinned, slipping a finger into her. "Well, you're gonna have to

be treated like one." She moaned. "Anything you want, baby. Just don't stop." He spread her legs wider, inching his finger up further. "Mal, " she whimpered and shimmed on his lap. "God, you're so fucking wet." She whimpered and nodded. "I liked the spanking." "Yeah, I thought you might. But I have the feeling that you'll love

being seated on my fucking cock more." Please...please." Mal pulled out his hand and drew her off his lap and into a kiss.

"Yeah, I think that's a good idea." She whimpered, her nipples puckered and straining towards him. Mal lowered his head to her, nipping hard with his front teeth on one of them as his hand cupped the other. The sweet, coppery taste of her blood filtered into his mouth, and he moaned. Sucking harder, he manipulated her nipple with his tongue, drawing as much as he could.

She gasped and threw her head back, her hands going to into his hair. "God, that's good." He growled softly, his tongue working her in small circles. "I know, I know you're not touching me, but God, it feels like you are. Like a string being pulled. Oh, God." Her hands still worked in his hair.

He buried his head deeper into her chest, sucking the tiny wound clear. Resisting the urge to make a fresh cut, he pulled back to look up at her with half-lidded eyes. "Like a string, pet?" He pinched her other nipple.

Her knees buckled and she sobbed, the sensation making her shake. "Yes. God, like a string, pulling. I felt you everywhere."

He smirked, knowing the effect his bite would have on her during full intercourse, especially since she was already in the thrall of another. "Not yet, pet."

She looked down at him, the lust in her eyes overriding the fog. "Please, anything," she begged.

"I already know you'll do anything, pet." He licked his lips, trying to decide how to take her. Taking her on her knees was protocol when fucking someone potentially dangerous. However, he really wanted to watch her tight body above him. Shrugging, he shook off his warring instincts; he'd take things as they came.

He shimmied back on the bed, working off his pants and pulling his shirt over his head. He patted the space on the bed next to him. "What are you waiting for, pet?" She climbed eagerly onto the bed and next to him taking in his body

"Yummy, Mal." She smiled, looking him dead on, waiting for instructions.

"Well, I could say the same about you, pet." He grinned, the prospect of a full feed and fuck playing high on his mind. She blushed and moved, her fingers trailing down his defined chest. He kissed her gently at first as he guided her down onto the bed. His hands on her body, Miranda just moaned and arched into his touch, her eyes closed as he rolled her.

He kissed down her soft cheek to her neck, laying a promising kiss on it as he made his way to her nipple again; he would come to that later. Taking her other nipple into his mouth, he positioned himself at her slick opening. It was true what he'd said earlier; she was soaking, and she had indeed enjoyed the spanking. He teasingly pushed himself into her an inch, his hands on her hips stopping her from moving them.

She whimpered and arched, looking at him. "Please, please don't tease, baby."

"Got no intention of doing so." He sank deep into her heat. She cried out and closed her eyes. Her hands bunched in the coverlet.

"Mmm, that's it, pet." He pumped himself in and out of her faster and harder. She whimpered and sobbed, throwing her hands back and gripping the other side of the bed. He smiled down at her, pleased at her reaction as he worked smoothly in and out of her. She looked at him and gasped. "Don't stop, please...so close..." He lifted her hips higher to meet him, driving himself into her from a higher angle. She shuddered and turned her head, purring and moaning low in her throat as she came, whispering his name.

He moaned with her as she tightened around him. "Fuck, that's good, pet." He dipped his head to her neck as she shuddered, and sunk his fangs deep into her neck. Her blood rushed into his mouth and he once again found himself warring with his instincts. He wanted to take it all, but instead held back just enough to keep her alive. His body pounded even harder as he drank deeply from her, locking his mind firmly on hers and eradicating the last of her mind control.

She screamed with another orgasm, her arms and legs wrapping around him. "Fuck! Mal!"

He smiled against her soft skin; she'd be like that for a while. He wasn't one to get his nuts then just leave. Miranda would be coming hard for a long while, at least until she passed out from the blood loss. He moaned onto her neck. She tasted divine, but then they all did, every last woman he'd ever taken. His grip tightened and he sat back on his knees, pulling her onto him.

She giggled and kissed him recognition apparent in her eyes. The panic was quick, and died just as soon. "Well, aren't you a surprise. Just don't kill me, okay?"

He bucked himself into her. A little blood flowed from her wound, causing him to frown at the loss, but he quickly smiled again. "I could say the same thing about you...Miranda." He used her name instead of the thousand or so fruit-related ones that sprung to mind.

She grinned and nipped his bottom lip. "Umm, we can talk later about why you're fucking the hell outta me when the last thing I remember was going into a restaurant. Come on, vamp, show me what you got."

He grinned at her; he liked this new Miranda. "Well, it seems to me that I've been doing all the work, pet. Tedious as it may be." He winked then lay back, bringing her on top of him. "It's your turn." He pulled her arm to him, catching a few drops of blood with his tongue.

She shuddered and rode him, starting slowly, building her momentum. Soon she was riding him hard, her head thrown back, her hands slowly working their way up her body. "So deep. Fuck, you're fantastic," she moaned.

His hands slid up her thighs, his fingers playing with her wet clit. "Mmm. God, you're good." She cried out as he touched her and fell forward, shaking for the force of yet another orgasm, her mouth finding his.



He kissed her hard, his tongue exploring her. He grabbed her hips, grinding deeper into her. She groaned into him and broke the kiss, throwing her head back once again and screaming his name. She gasped and panted, her eyes closing as she did.

"Oh, fuck, baby. I'm nearly there." He pulled her down to him, locking his mouth to her wound and sucking hard on it as he bucked wildly into her body.

She leaned into him fully. "Oh, fuck, that's it. Mal!" She came hard as he drew from her, fingers digging into his sides.

He growled as his body released itself into her, following her over into bliss. Pulling his head back from the wound he'd made, he rolled them over, pumping the last few into her, trying to keep the sensation going. He held her hands securely to the bed, then collapsed breathing heavily. She giggled and purred. "God, I think you fucked me blind." "I might have just. Apart from that, how do you feel?" "Deliciously sore. So tell me, how the hell did I get into this position with you? Don't get me wrong, I'm not complaining, but I'm not one to normally get sweaty and naked with a guy. Well at least not with one I haven't been with before."

"Well." This was the tricky part. "I must say I did formally introduce myself, but you might not remember that, you being under the fey's spell and all."

She nipped his shoulder and sighed. "Okay, see, you lost me. Fey? And why the hell are you here? I mean, I'm still in Beijing, right? What fucking day is it?"

"Okay, we'll go slowly. The day is Tuesday. You've been here for a week a half and yes, we're still in Beijing."

"Shit. The last day I remember was Sunday. Where the fuck did the time go?"

"Well, that's the fun part. Not for you, I guess. We figured that Swanson was on to you." "Swanson? That fuck!" He nodded. "Yep, that's the one. So, your boss realized that something was wrong, so her and her consort came all the way over here to find you and crack the mystery. It's all pretty Scooby Doo-ish if you think about it, but I see myself as Fred."

"Funny, I would have pegged you for Shaggy, he was always my favorite." She frowned. "So, let me get this straight. I have been hypnotized? And that fuck Swanson is still alive? Fuck. Janey is going to have my heart on a platter. Shit, has the deadline passed?"

"Eh, I wouldn't worry about it too much. Janey is a pussycat, and I'm pretty sure her genie is on your side. They're taking it on personally now."

"Still, the contract is under me. I'm fucked if the fucker doesn't die by midnight Sunday."

"I don't think he'll last that long." Mal smiled. "My name's Mal, if you've forgotten. Well, Malcolm, but nobody calls me that."

"I remember your name, odd that it is." She looked him up and down and sighed. "Were you and the one to break the hypnotism?" "Pretty much, I have a knack for that sort of thing." "You seem like the kinda guy to fuck a girl into a stupor, not out of

one." "True, it is normally reversed. But, I like you better this way, and

this guy Swanson is pissing me off." "I don't like knowing I can't remember days of my life. And this is me, though, truth be told, I don't think you would have gotten this close if I was in my right mind. I think I would be worse off for it. What now?"

He shrugged. "Now we sit tight. Swanson is still at the penthouse, but we have to wait for Marsh and his bitch to give us word."

She nodded. "Oh, she would love you calling her that. Well, I guess I'm out of action for a while. What shall we do?" She ran her fingers down his chest and smiled.

He grinned. "We could stay here and have some more fun, or we could go to my place and fuck till we pass out, eat, then start again." "I'm game for anything, as long as you don't drain me dry." "Not a hope in hell. You're more useful to me alive." He kissed her

briefly. "You should maybe call your boss." "Good idea." She turned and grabbed her cell off the nightstand and hit a speed dial number, waited, then spoke. "Boss, it's Miranda. I guess I'm back to normal, thanks to the vampire. Thanks for sending him, by the way. Call me when you get this." She closed the cell and looked at him. "Not answering. Lord knows what they are up to."

"Hmmm. I don't think we even want to know. Let's head back to my place get you well out of the way of any Hypno fey..." "Deal."

## Nine

With Janey away at the spa, it left Marsh with some time of his own before taking a nap, something he desperately needed. Janey was coming along nicely, and she was learning to trust him even more, which was essential to their shared relationship. He did love her more than anything, but she needed to be kept in line, and oh, how he loved to keep her there.

The night's festivities would be an exercise in that philosophy, from where they were going right down to the underwear, or lack thereof, that she would wear. Janey was a vision in red, and tonight the after hours crowd of the Beijing underground would see just how perfect. He grabbed the garment bag he had sent from the exclusive boutique downtown he had ordered from and opened it, taking out the pieces of the outfit she was going to wear.

Her body was perfectly curved, and the corset would be stellar on her. The red satin brocade with the dragon motif was the exact length and style, and her pale skin peaking above the top, pushing her breasts into a sort of shelf, was exactly what he wanted to show off. The short little skirt in black with the red lace trim was just this side of streetwalker smutty, and the thigh highs attached to the red garter belt would set the outfit off nicely. Just thinking about her long, shapely legs encased in the black silk hose made him groan. She would be a wet dream for any man who saw her, which was exactly Marsh's intention, as he was a firm believer of showing off perfection.

Their destination was an auction at a very high class bordello, one that Marsh had attended ages ago and had always wanted to enter someone in. Janey was going to be that someone. These things were a gold mine, and nine times out of ten you weren't buying the company of the woman for the night, you were buying a new slave. This intrigued him even more, though he had no intention of letting anyone outbid him, and he wasn't going to let anyone there know it was he who entered her, and it would piss her off to no end to be entered in the contest. Of course, there was the off chance that she would like it, as she was

becoming more and more the wild and slutty girl he knew was really there. Once he won her, what they would do was another plan all together. He was sure she would enjoy that, even if she never expressed an interest in what he had in mind.

Had she had a normal childhood she would probably have been one of those horny housewives in *Penthouse Forum*, and odds are he would have stumbled across her one night while her husband was away on a business trip. As much as that idea appealed to him, he was glad they found each other the way they did.

He looked at the outfit laid out in her dressing room and decided she would have the choice of shoes. He walked out of the room to the bedroom to get undressed. The idea of bringing back her ailment, the dreaded cancer, didn't sit well with him. Truth was, he didn't want to expose her to that again, but if they were going to get close to the fey, they needed a believable cover, and the arrogant prick pretending to be what he was would relish the idea of meeting a very wealthy couple who want to believe in a miracle.

Marsh stretched and growled, grabbed his cell phone, and flopped down on the bed. Hitting his speed dial, he got his international secretary, Judith Baker. Judith was a human who knew what he was, and was smart enough to never play the wish game with him. She worked with and for him, setting up things he couldn't do himself, with deadly precision. She was dedicated and discreet, and not even Janey knew about her, which was better for Judith in the long run. He smiled when he heard her voice on the other end. "Marsh, do you have any idea what time it is in New York?" "No, but it should hardly matter, Jude. I don't pay you to sleep. Now, I would feel bad if I got you and your voice was all breathy. I need you to get me a meeting with that evangelist, Gary Swanson."

She ignored his comment and went straight to business. "Marsh, why the fuck would you want to see that con artist? You suddenly found God?"

"No, he's a hit. And I need to see exactly why we are having issues filling the contract." Judith knew everything about Janey's business, and Janey, Trent, and anyone else of consequence. Telling Judith what was going on was insurance, so that should anything happen, other people, like Janey's adopted father Trent, would be able to deal with the situation. Judith was backup and, more than that, she was a friend. "Just get a hold of his business secretary, tell him the usual." She gave him a sleepy laugh. "Can do, boss. I'll use the Richard and

Trina Rockwell alias." He grinned. "Fab. Set it up for tomorrow, Imperial Gardens at three.

If they give you a problem you know what to do." "Got it. Sizable donation to Swanson's ministry. Anything else? Or

can I get back to my eight hours?" "Nope. I'm about to pass out myself." "Janey out?" "Yeah. I sent her on a spa day." "I would say to tell her I said hi, but that defeats the purpose, doesn't

it?" "Always on the ball, Jude. I'll talk to you after if I need anything." He hung up and sighed. Things were working out well enough for now. Now for his nap, then some playtime with his consort. He relaxed and closed his eyes, letting his exhaustion finally take him. \* \* \* \* Janey managed to get her much-needed haircut, keeping the length at the back but bringing a few more choppy layers into the style. The girls at the salon had even managed to synchronize her nails and makeup. She stopped to check her reflection in the mirror; she looked rather good. The eye make-up was darker than she normally wore with her eyes perfectly lined with black powder and smudged to perfection. A small tint of reddish brown was added to the mix, making her green eyes almost glow. She wrapped the soft toweling robe tighter around her and padded to their room, thankfully their suite had a direct route to the salon so she didn't

have to worry about meeting anyone in the halls.

She opened the door, feeling refreshed and ready for whatever Marsh was going to throw at her. He'd taken care to mention tonight's activities a few times without actually telling her what it would be, so she knew it was going to be fun. Most likely she would hate whatever it was, but then he'd make her do it and she'd love it regardless. That was his way. She shook her head. Boy, they had some fucked up relationship, but it was worth it and it worked. She needed to be told what to do, to be kept under tight control. Hell, she loved it, craved it. She would blame Trent, but there was no point; he took the blame for a lot of things in her life, but this was all her.

She could feel him sleeping in the bedroom. She considered briefly going to wake him but he needed some sleep, especially if she wanted him fighting fit. Tonight was going to be a long, hopefully pleasurefilled, night.

Peeking into the dressing room, she found it just as she supposed he'd left it, soft lighting and her clothes laid delicately out on the table. She nearly blinked a few times as her eyes adjusted to the light, trying to piece together the outfit. After a minute she gave up, there was no more material going to come into view. She snapped on the rest of the lights.

"He can't be serious," she muttered angrily, holding up some kind of silk corset thing over the top half of her body; it barely covering her breasts. "That's not even..." she trailed off with a snarl, clenching the silk in her hands and marching into the bedroom.

She flipped the light switch, flooding the room with a harsh bright light, no longer caring whether he needed the sleep or not. "You are kidding me!" she said forcefully, waking him up. Marsh sat bolt upright, his eyes on a stormy and purpling Janey that subsided as he focused on her. A small smile played on his lips. "What did I tell you, pet? About waking me up like that? I could have had a piece under the pillow and shot you, then where would you be? Standing there with a hole in your perfect stomach, that's where. You look fantastic, the make-up suits the night. Now, what are you bitching about?"

She narrowed her eyes threateningly. She knew he was right, waking people up suddenly was a good way to get shot. Not that she'd ever admit to him being right; in fact, that just irritated her more. "This!" She threw the red silk at him. "I won't even fit into that. You're out of your mind to even suggest it."

He glanced at it nonchalantly, then back at her. "Pet, we had a deal, and I think it's going to fit you perfectly, exactly how it should. What time is it?" He looked over at the clock. "You were there longer than I expected; did you get that massage? And the purification bath?"

"I did, but don't change the subject. It's not going to fit, I wouldn't even know how to begin squeezing into it. We weren't all alive back in the day when women tortured themselves into clothes, now we just use shoes for torment purposes. I'm not wearing it." She crossed her arms defiantly over her chest.

"Pet, it ties in the back, and I never said I would be making you put it on yourself. Corsets are beyond sexy, and on you it's going to make my eyes pop out of my head. So can the theatrics. Lord, if you had any sort of powers, I would probably be a dead man right now. So you will wear it, and you'll enjoy it, and I will, too. And it will fit you, I had it tailored," he said, his voice soft and gentle.

She glared at him; his calm manner was beyond irritating, yet so sexy. She wondered if it was the voice the Devil used to coax Eve into biting the apple, it was the voice of reason. *Damn him.* She ground her teeth, there was one card left to play. "But it'll restrict my movement to hell, I'll be left defenseless, where will I put my gun?" She repressed a wince, it sounded weak even to her. She hadn't worn a gun for a

long while and never in front of him, although she always did when on a job. She just tended to be surrounded by men and women who could protect her without such things. Yet another thing that would make Trent shake his head. "I wouldn't even be able to hide a knife in that thing." She fixed, she always wore knives.

"No weapons tonight, pet. You have me, and I daresay I'm a bit more deadly than a knife. And your movements won't be restricted, pet. Let's put it on, and you can tell me I'm right." She pouted. "I don't want to tell you you're right." "But you will." She sighed. "I might, but I could be right as well." She liked the idea of her being right far more. Her face turned serious. "I'm not going anywhere unarmed."

"Tough. It just won't do you to be armed tonight. So you have a choice, pet, a night out to play or a night in with your weapons." "I like my weapons." "And I like you sexy." He got up off the bed, drawing her gaze away from his face. *God, he's perfect*, she thought to herself. All ripples and warmhard flesh, silk like to touch.

He moved to her. "You really need to stop being so obvious when you gawk, pet."

"And you need to stop being so obvious with your manipulation. I can't argue with you like that." She gestured at his naked body. "It's not fair." "Since when do I deal in fair?" She looked him up and down, licking her lips. "I guess...you'll be

armed then?" "I never go anywhere unarmed, especially when I'm with you, pet." He bent his head to kiss her, distracting her from asking just why she was expected to go out unarmed. He then turned and picked up the corset. Watching him move, she worried her bottom lip between her teeth.

"And you'll stay close to me? All night?" "I would never let anything happen to you, you know that. You're

my consort, and I love you." She wasn't quite sure that was the answer that she'd been looking for, but she ignored it and took it for a yes. "I love you, too. I just don't always trust your motives. Where are we going?" He kissed her sweetly and smiled. "Get dressed and we'll go." She sighed. "Help me into it then. Do I get to pick out a spiffy outfit

for you?" "I suppose, though I was going to wear the Gucci suit." "No corsets?" she quipped, walking back to the dressing room, a

grin on her face. "No corsets, pet, I'm not that lunatic from the *Rocky Horror Picture Show*. And I don't think it would look good on me. I don't have your curves." He walked up behind her and ran his hands over her stomach, then up to her breasts and squeezed.

She moaned, leaning into him. "I hated that film...and no, I would have picked out the Gucci suit regardless." "Great minds think alike, pet. Let's get you strapped up." "Strapped up? I like that sound of that, but now, unfortunately, I know what it entails." She dropped the robe on the floor and turned in front of him. "Okay, dress me. This reminds me, sadly, of the Barbie doll I never played with."

"You're better than Barbie, pet, nothing on you is silicone." He turned her and fit the corset to her, strapping up the back and pulling the strings tight enough so that it accentuated her tiny waist and pushed her breasts up to where they ought to be. He turned her to the mirror and grinned at their reflection. "Look how fucking hot that looks, and it feels good, doesn't it?"

She looked at herself critically. She had to admit, if not to him, she looked good, damn good. She



moved experimentally; it wasn't as bad as she thought it would be. She wouldn't be partaking in any gymnastics with it on, but she didn't think she was competing in the Olympics tonight. She leaned forward as far as she could go. "I can't even touch my toes."

He groaned and rotated his hips into her exposed body. "Umm, not that it matters."

She lost her balance, holding the wall to steady herself. "Enough of that, if you want to go anywhere you'll have to behave." She laughed, looking over her shoulder at him. God, how she wanted him to carry on; her body already burned for him.

He grinned and kissed her shoulder, moving away from her body and grabbing the skirt. "Put this on and then the stockings, the garters are part of the skirt. And, pet, no underwear."

Suppressing a sigh, Janey rolled her eyes, looking dubiously at the skirt. "Like I have to be told that." She took the skirt from him. "I think it's missing a few inches."

"No, it's all there. Get dressed. I'm popping into the shower quick." He walked out of the dressing room and she heard the shower turn on in the bathroom, saw the steam waft out of the open door.

She shook her head, she needed him now. What kind of mess was she going to be in by the time they actually got round to doing anything? She looked at the skirt again. Maybe she should just go in and force his hand; they could fuck like rampant bunnies, *thengo* out. The thought was quickly dismissed. Marsh kept utter and tight control of every situation, and damned if it didn't drive her crazy in every way imaginable. He was the one person she couldn't manipulate or push around, and damn, he made her hot!

"Stupid Djinn," she muttered under her breath, half expecting him to hear her. She would have been fine if it weren't for that vampire; she would have gotten hers and her body would be less wound up. "Stupid vampire." Cursing louder this time, she held the skirt up and got back to the matter at hand.

It took a while and a lot of complaining into thin air, but eventually she got herself set up. The skirt was short enough that she would have to be very careful moving up stairs and in and out of cars and even something as simple as rising up on her tiptoes. Then again, she figured that it was tight enough that people would know she wasn't wearing underwear anyway. She did look good, though, in a slutty porno kind of way. "I look like a prostitute," she observed loudly, knowing that this time he would hear her. The water had stopped running a little while ago.

"Yes, you do. Perfect for tonight." He walked into the room, towel drying his hair, completely naked and smelling of the woody soap he favored.

"How exactly is it perfect?" He hands went to her hips. "If I die, you are *sonot* choosing my funeral clothes." Panic stabbed through her. "Oh, my God. Promise me Malcolm will not see me in this." She'd never live it down.

He smirked. "No, Malcolm is thoroughly ensconced with your assassin, or so your voice mail said. You should really remember to check it."

"I've been busy. I was going to check it in the morning. Ko would have called here if there was any real emergency. Besides, why should I when you always do it for me?" Her voice dripped with sarcasm.

"Well, now you don't have to worry, pet," he finished, ignoring her question and putting on his suit. Sometimes she wondered if Marsh even listened to her, but she knew he heard everything, only ignored

her, and damned if that didn't turn her on even more.

As he was buttoning the last few buttons on the lavender shirt and fixing his cufflinks he smiled at her. "You look like a wet dream, Janey. A very vivid, erotic, wet dream."

She stalked over to him, moistening her lips. "I bet, but that's your plan all along, isn't it?"

He kissed her and looked at his watch. "We should get going." He grabbed his shoes and socks, walked into the bedroom, and sat on the bed, looking at her while he finished getting dressed. "Bring my jacket, will you?"

She grabbed the jacket, handing it over to him. "What's the hurry?" She smiled and sat in the chair across from him, crossing her legs.

"If I told you, pet, it wouldn't be a secret." He stood to fix himself, and looked her over. "It seems all you need is shoes, love, and then we can meet the limo downstairs."

"I'm surprised you don't have them picked out already." She walked to the selection of shoes she'd brought.

"You need some control of this situation. I figured whatever you found comfortable would be best, so you choose."

She rolled her eyes. His idea of control and hers were very different. Eventually she picked out a pair of black four-inch spike heels. "I think this'll do nicely, we seemed to have ditched the practical a little while ago and these, believe it or not, are kinda comfy. Plus the fuck me look completes the outfit." She strapped them on, then stood to her now extended height, her legs seemingly going on forever.

"Luscious. You'll fetch quite a price," he said absently as he handed her a coat. "Come, pet, the limo is waiting."

They left the room and went down the elevator to the garage. Marsh played the gentlemen, letting her into the car before he himself got in. He sat next to her and smiled. "Here's the deal, pet," he said as their journey into the Beijing night beyond began, "you're going to get out of the car where I tell you, walk into the door with the red dragon on it, and hand the gentleman at the table this envelope. Don't open it, or I'll know. You're to do everything he tells you, and you are not to speak once. Dig?"

She opened her mouth but couldn't think of the words she wanted to say. Staring at him speechlessly, she shook her head. "Dig?" He moved in and kissed her on the lips. "Do you understand?" She took a deep calming breath. *Just breathe, Janey*, she told

herself. *Just breathe*. "Not in the slightest." "Just do what you're told, pet. That's all you need to do." She growled, not liking the situation one bit. "You want me to get out the car, unarmed, and go into some fucked up back door, again unarmed, and give some guy a letter. By myself, like this, with, and I mention this again because I find it a crucial point, no fucking weapons what-so-ever?"

"Do you trust me?" he asked, his reasoning tone coming to play again.

"I did, but recently you've been making interesting choices, like giving me cancer and trying to get me raped."

"Then what's the problem?" he asked, once again proving her point that he only listened to what he wanted and ignored the rest of her most valid points. "You trust me, you know I wouldn't ever put you in harm's way. So quit your bitching, and you won't get raped. Where's your sense of adventure?"

"This is not my idea of adventure," she growled helplessly under her breath, then sighed. "Okay, but this better be worth it, and if I have to kill some folks without getting paid for it I'm going to be upset."

He grinned and they stopped at a corner, the lights in this area of town a bit dimmer than the rest. He looked at her and handed her the envelope. "Time to go, pet. Don't worry, I'll be close by the entire time."

She nodded and kissed him deeply, her hands cupping him and squeezing gently. "You better be." He opened the door. "Your evening awaits, pet."

## Ten

She stepped out of the limo, straightening herself out as the car sped away with her consort inside. *He's lucky I trust him*, she repeated in her head.

She crossed the street to the door with the red dragon and knocked. She looked at the envelope; it wouldn't open easily. She sighed. He said she wasn't to speak to anyone, but she sure could glare at them all. It wasn't that she had no sense of adventure; his was just way beyond her comfort zone. Her idea of adventure involved big guns and assailing down sides of cliffs, traveling to unknown villages and convincing the locals not to kill them. She'd had plenty of adventures, now she just wanted to sit at her desk and order around people. She'd at least earned that.

"Obviously these sexual adventures are a little too adventurous for my sense of adventure," she muttered under her breath.

The door opened and a woman ushered her inside. The man at the table whom Marsh said would be there sat just ahead of her. He looked at her in an appraising fashion and nodded, sticking out his hand. She gave him the envelope and he tore it open, read the message, and pocketed the money. "This way, miss. I'm not sure if your master told you," the man spoke in a cultured voice, "but you will not speak until you are paid for. Do as you're told, miss, and you will enjoy your evening." *Master? Paid for? Oh, hell no.* She smiled politely at the man, nodding like a good little girl. *Well, at least now I know why I wasn't allowed any weapons*, she thought to herself angrily. If worse came to worse, she could always improvise. She stalked after the short slightly bald man, glaring at everything that moved.

He led her down a long brick corridor and into a lavishly appointed room where several girls were waiting, all in a state of sexy dress, like her. He motioned her inside and looked at them. "I think this is the lot for the evening. Ladies, please be ready to be presented in ten minutes. The bidding will start in the Crystal Room then."

He closed the door, the sound of the lock sliding into place deafening in the quiet room.

Her eyes widened and she went to the door, testing it and finding it more than secure. "Bastard," she muttered under her breath. The next time he questioned her trust she'd have to say no. Her heart beating faster, she felt her adrenaline kick in. She bent slightly to check the lock type until she remembered her skirt. Bolting upright, she cursed under her breath then turned to survey the other girls. \* \* \* \* The Crystal Room held a lot of patrons for the auction this evening, as it seemed functions like this were

getting more in fashion with the uber-rich. Marsh walked in and planted himself near the side. A servant girl dressed as a French maid brought him a glass of champagne. He took it graciously and looked her over, deciding she wasn't perfect enough for what he had in mind that evening. The mansion they were in was one used for extreme debauchery, one he frequented in his youth before it became an auction house. Once he came into his powers, though, sex was too binding for a one-night stand and he abandoned his wild ways.

By now Janey was in the back room and probably seething, and this only made him enjoy the night more. He knew she would be furious to start with, and no doubt Reinhold, the collector and auctioneer, had let it slip about being sold off. She was going to be hopping mad and he couldn't wait.

The Crystal Room was as lavish as the rest of the mansion and the perfect place to hold an auction. Leather and velvet covered divans and couches were strewn here and there, the large mahogany bar placed off to the side, and there were numerous alcoves with their heavy velvet drapes and mood lighting. Whoever owned this place was a true sex connoisseur. The room got its name from the enormous chandelier hanging in the center of the room, giving off low light and just the right amount of ambiance. Marsh sipped his drink when he heard the tinkling of tiny bells, an indication that the auction was about to begin.

The girls, six in all including Janey, were walked out. Reinhold grabbed a petite blonde and turned to the crowd. "Bidding starts for this perfect slip of a woman at five thousand."

There were many silent bids. Reinhold dealt with a certain look or facial touch, and Marsh watched the festivities. The blonde went for twenty five thousand, not a bad haul for her keeper. The other girls went by quickly, apparently they were changing hands for the second and third time. He wondered what it must be like to be a concubine, to do this for a life choice; not that it mattered, he would never find out or let Janey, either. She was his and he had every intention of keeping it that way.

Reinhold got to Janey and smirked. "And, we have a new edition. She comes to us from Italy, and her bidding starts at five thousand." Marsh watched as the price went up quickly to forty five thousand, then bid. "Fifty thousand in the back. Do I hear fifty-five?" "Sixty," a woman on a divan said, eyeing Janey. She was pretty and sexy and just perfect for his needs. Now to outbid her and offer her a taste of Janey. \* \* \* \* The bidding reached sixty grand. She didn't know whether to be appalled or slightly flattered. She was definitely seething; she had too much self respect to be bartered and sold. The other girls stood smiling, almost. Well, different strokes. She just wished they would get on with it.

She was going to kill Marsh, or at least hurt him a hell of a lot. Being bartered for sex was not her idea of fun, at least not like this. Her hands itched for a blade.

The short man asked her to turn for the crowd. She towered over him, glaring, still trying to decide if she should have him marked for even considering that she was some kind of sex slave. She felt naked— well, she was practically. Not that the whole situation wasn't a huge turn on, depending on whom she ended up with. She hated the idea of having to kill some guy who paid a hell of a lot of money to screw her, and she was on a raised stage without any underwear on, most likely flashing the whole crowd of perverts.

She longed for her suit. If she was dressed properly she'd have knocked the cheeky fuck's head right off his shoulders. *Auctioning me off, oh, he's so dead.*

Eventually she smiled and turned slowly and smoothly, mostly because she couldn't figure which would be the most fitting way to kill him. More bids shot up and she thought she heard Marsh's voice, but couldn't be sure. She could feel him here, but had no idea where he was. The bright lights were shining

directly at her, so it limited her vision. She supposed that it was for the girls' own benefit, but to her it was just annoying. *I should have the place burned down*, she mused as the bids got eyebrow-raising high. As her total reached one hundred thousand she was starting to think she was in the wrong line of work. She wondered what type of commission the house would take off of that.

By one hundred and ten thousand she was starting to enjoy herself, or at least had most of the money spent. Not that she needed the money at all, but it gave her something to do, she was dragging Marsh out shopping. She did another twirl. It wouldn't be fun shopping, either; it would be for comfy, practical clothes. Or maybe she'd take him to a film festival, make him watch some obscure independent films about religion.

She grinned as the bidding reached one hundred and twenty thousand. Trent, she'd introduce him to Trent. *That's bound to make anyone's life hell. I'm sure Trent would love to torture him with all kind of things that Marsh would find irritating.* And, she'd be sure to introduce him as Nicodemus.

She tried hard not to burst into fits of giggles at the thought; the situation was becoming comical. She was worth almost more than all of the girls put together. Not that she wasn't already aware of it, but it was always refreshing to have it pointed out. The other girls glared over at her as the bidding stopped. She'd been so lost in her thoughts of vengeance that she'd completely missed the total amount. The last number she'd heard was one hundred and thirty thousand.

Shorty ended the auction and guided the girls off the stage with the ease of a circus ringmaster; really all he needed was a long stick. They were marched down another long corridor. She bit the inside of her mouth to stop a snicker escaping her as she imagined breaking the damn thing over his bald, fat head. He waited for her to leave the stage, stomping behind her, muttering about insolence. \* \* \* He had won the bidding, but just barely. Sure, Janey was worth the hundred and fifty thousand he just paid for her, worth that and more, but it truly did intrigue him that the chit on the divan started a bidding war with him over her. He did expect a guy to, and a few had. But, once it hit one thirty, they all backed out. Clearly the woman knew a right piece of ass when she saw one, and that alone demanded his attention.

He walked over to her and bowed, his eyes fixed on her considerable cleavage. "That was a right war we had just there. I'm Nicodemus Marsh, and you are?"

"Risa Montrose," she answered aloofly. "It was a war, indeed. I despise losing my prize, Mr. Marsh. Have you changed your mind about the winning offer? I'll be more than happy to cover it for you."

"For that beauty? Never. Though, I am intrigued as to why you bid so high. A woman like that is not meant to play as a house girl, so please indulge my curiosity."

She smiled. "And why should I do that? You'll have to forgive me but I'm not in the mood to discuss the matter."

"Pity. I had hoped we could discuss it, and perhaps come to some sort of an agreement." He moved closer to her and licked his lips.

She smiled, clearly showing some interest in his words. Her gaze wandered over his body, taking in every inch of him. "Well," she licked her own lips, "I have no need of a house girl. But that has fire. I could have taught her much about enjoying her body and I think I would have enjoyed it, too. She's never been with another woman, I can tell. I wanted to show her what she's been missing. So there you have it, Mr. Marsh, my plans were very similar to your own, and now you speak of an agreement?"



*Bingo*. He loved it when his plans worked out just from the sheer workings of the universe. His mouth went to hear ear and he spoke low. "I would kill to see the two of you together, Ms. Montrose, and you're right. She does need an awakening, more then you know. So what do you say I go and collect my prize and you meet us in the Jade Room? I assume you're not adverse to anything fun?" He looked her up and down again, his hand coming up and touching the line of cleavage she displayed.

She smiled, leaning into him. "Oh, I think you can guess that I'm willing to do pretty much anything in the name of fun." "Brava. So, Miss Montrose? The Jade Bedroom? Ten minutes?" "I'll look forward to meeting you both." He took her hand and kissed it, then straightened and walked towards the room to collect Janey, knowing full well she was not going to be happy with him. But, in order for the game to be played right, she could do anything until they were alone.

He found her waiting for him in what probably used to be a pantry, because it was only large enough to fit the table, the banker, and the girls. He walked in and bowed, turning and doing business quickly, writing out his info and waiting as the electronic transfer took the money out of his Swedish account. He looked at her and grinned, then went back to playing the part of the affected millionaire and got his receipt.

He turned to her and offered his hand, which she took as he led her through another door, this one leading to a grand staircase. When they were alone he pulled her to him and kissed her hard, his hand stealing under her skirt. "Knew you would be wet, pet, I knew you would enjoy this. No-no, no harsh words, the night is just beginning and I just paid one hundred and fifty thousand dollars for you. I think it will be money well spent, don't you?" His thumb traced circles on her clit and he looked her in the eye. "Go on, pet, tell me you're not liking this. Tell me you're not curious as to what is in store next."

She groaned. "What, am I allowed to talk now? Damn right you paid that for me. I'm worth more." She grabbed him, kissing him again. "And you should have let me punch that short bastard. Where the fuck are we? Oh, and the whole trust issue...never gonna happen again. I don't trust you at all, you sold me!" She pushed him.

"I sold you to me. You think I'd ever let anyone else buy you? Do you honestly think that I didn't plan this all along? I knew how fucking hot it would get you, Janey, knew how wet you would be when I touched you. I could feel your excitement on the stage, pet. You like to be watched, just like on the plane, remember?" He pulled her close again and nipped her bottom lip, her hot breath mixing with his.

She growled, kissing him. "Not the point, selling does not incur trust. What if someone else had outbid you?" She clung to him. "Your life is going to be hell for a long time; you're going to wish you never met me." She kissed his lips again, forcefully. She suddenly pulled back from him, looking around. "And where the hell are we?"

"No one would have outbid me, but that happens to be part of the allure. Admit it, you liked that you didn't know who bought you. And I don't answer questions. It's not important where we are, it's where we are going, and who we are going to see." He grabbed her by her ass and guided her up the staircase, to the left, and down a long and highly decorated hallway. They stopped in front of a room door that simply said 'Jade Room'. He turned her and kissed her. "God, you're sexy."

"And you're irritating," she retorted with a glare. "Wait, who are we meeting?"

"The person I outbid." He didn't wait for her to reply, but put his hand to her mouth. "Be good. You'll enjoy this if you let yourself." He opened the door and led her in, to see Risa sitting on the couch in nothing but a black teddy and stockings. He looked at Janey and winked.

## Eleven

*Oh, hell no.* She sighed, rolling her eyes discreetly. All she wanted was to go back to the hotel and get the fucking that she should have gotten when they first arrived in this godforsaken city. She didn't do girls. Of course she had offered, but that had been then. This was now, and now was pissing her off. She didn't even know what she was playing along to. Still, the prospect was a little alluring; this woman had been willing to pay well over a hundred thousand for her. At least, that was what she'd been led to believe.

She stood in the center of the room, feeling only a slight discomfort as the woman's gaze moved appraisingly over her.

Marsh smiled. "Pet, this is Risa. I outbid her by only two thousand. Since it was such a close margin, I figured I would invite her to join us."

At his words, Risa got up off the couch and grabbed a glass of champagne, walking to Janey. Marsh winked at her and settled back in a wingback chair, a gin and tonic already in his hand. "Her name's Janey."

Risa went to her and offered her the alcohol. "You don't look happy to see me here, maybe I'm not what you expected? Did your master tell you that you would be enjoying the delights of another's company? Were you hoping for a man?"

Janey smiled, taking the glass. "No, it's just from what I've gathered so far from my...master. I suppose I expected worse." She lowered her voice, leaning into the woman. "He seems quite mean," she whispered, knowing that he'd still be able to hear her. She pulled back, smiling awkwardly and gulping from her glass, playing her part perfectly. After all, if she was stuck here she may as well enjoy herself.

"I heard that, pet. You know better than to fib. Unless, you don't want that spanking I promised." He turned his attention to Risa. "She does enjoy that." "So you have had her before?" "Of course, she's always been mine." He took a drink and motioned for Risa to continue. Risa walked around Janey and touched her arms in a loving and seductive manner. "You're very beautiful, aren't you? Are those real? They are too perfect to be real," Risa said, her hand skimming the top of the shelf Janey's corset made of her breasts.

Janey pouted sullenly at Marsh from across the room; he was mean. "Thank you, I can assure you they are quite real."

Risa smiled and moved closer to her. "I would love to find out." She moved back around so that she was behind Janey and whispered in her ear, "You know, watching you onstage, with your little twirls and twists, I saw you weren't wearing underwear. The first thought that came to my mind was, I wonder what the chit would taste like."

"Oh?" She felt her moist body tighten, and she glanced with panic at Marsh. This was way outside of her comfort zone. In fact, comfort was back at the hotel with her guns. Hell, maybe it was still in Rome.

He got up and went to her, touching Risa first, then Janey. Risa moved off a bit and they were left together in relative privacy. He smiled at her, and slipped his fingers between her legs once again. "Yeah, I figured that would get you hot, pet, and while I would never make you do something you didn't want to,

I know you'll enjoy this. You offered once, didn't you? Make your consort proud, pet, and if you're a good little girl I'll even come and play. Would you like that? Watching me fuck her while she eats that sweet pussy of yours?"

Janey wasn't so sure what she would like anymore. Her gaze slid to Risa, and her ample cleavage, but all she could see was a woman. Nothing sexual at all, and yet seconds earlier, when Risa had touched her there had been something.

She looked up at him. "I trust you." And she did; if he said she'd enjoy it, she would. Although, he was hers and she didn't share him. "The thought of you fucking her does irk me slightly."

"Then I won't, pet, though I would love to see her face deep in this." He stroked her with long, purposeful movements. "Don't do anything you don't want to do, love."

She bit her lip and her knees buckled as his touch spread a fiery sensation through her. "Mmm...oh, I won't." She brushed against him. "I suppose it would be a good vantage point, and since when have you ever cared what irked me?"

"Touché, pet. Now go play, I know you want to." He pinched her clit and pulled his fingers from under her skirt, bringing them to his mouth and groaning. "She's going to love the way you taste, pet." She nodded, her body shaking with need. "I bet she will." Finally,

she turned smiling toward Risa. Risa, gave her a lustful look and stalked towards her. She walked around Janey again, this time wrapping her arms around Janey's waist and letting her hands rest on her thighs, slowly moving her hands up and in.

Janey closed her eyes and leaned into her. Risa's touch was gentler than Marsh's. "So, what would you have done with me had you have won?" she asked, a little breathless.

Risa's hands found what they searched for, and she slipped a long finger into Janey's wetness. She purred into her ear. "Exactly what I'm doing right now. So wet for me already; I haven't even touched you."

Janey gasped. "Not yet, but it's anticipation. That and being on stage, being bartered for." She leaned back against Risa's soft breasts, her hips moving of their own accord.

"So eager, and so fucking pretty in your outfit. I'm dying to rip this corset off you. Bet you have perfect nipples." She nibbled on Janey's neck and turned towards Marsh, who was watching intently. "Tell me, Janey, Would you like it if I pushed you up against the bed's column and got to my knees? Would you scream for me?"

"I might. It would depend on how...skillful you were." She opened her eyes, meeting Risa's.

"A challenge, then?" Risa asked as she turned Janey ever so slightly and kissed her, her tongue invading Janey's mouth, her hands still partially working on her body.

Janey growled, chasing her tongue into her mouth to catch it. Risa tasted of peppermint. Her eyes flickered closed and she moaned, pressing her body against Risa's supple one.

Marsh watched his consort with the other woman, enjoying every minute of it. Risa broke the kiss and turned so she was in front of Janey, and kissed her again, walking her backwards slowly. Soon Janey

was against the bed's leg column, and Risa grinned. Looking at Janey, she said, "I can see why he keeps you. I would keep you, too, that mouth of your can no doubt do wonders."

Risa sank to her knees and turned to look at Marsh. She winked and looked up the line of Janey's body, the index fingers of her right hand playing soft circles on Janey's clit.

The column was hard against Janey's back, and she held onto it for support. She forced her eyes open and down to the woman. "God, keep that up and you'll find out."

"This? Umm no, Janey, I think you'd much prefer this." Risa moved in closer, taking her into her mouth, replacing her finger with her tongue. She flicked and sucked, moaning into Janey.

"Oh, fuck!" Janey cried out. It took all of her will power keeping her legs straight. Her nails cracked on the wood as she gripped it hard. "Mmm... You're right I do..." Marsh groaned from across the room. Risa pulled away from Janey and grinned. "Ummm, you're yummy, Janey," she giggled and rose to her feet, kissing Janey, her fingers once again playing on Janey's clit. Risa then moved scant inch and they fell backwards onto the bed. "I don't think we need these clothes, do you?"

"Nope, I've been dying to get out of this thing all night." Janey laughed. "And I've never been called yummy before." She caught Risa's lips with her own, thrusting her tongue into her mouth and moaning as she tasted herself on the woman. She swallowed hard. "But, it is quite an apt description."

Risa giggled again and they wrestled each other out of their clothing, ending up as a pile of limbs on the bed. Risa took a nipple into her mouth and tugged, her hands all over Janey. Marsh got up from his seat and walked closer, drink in hand, to get a better look.

Janey's hands explored Risa's body lustfully. She was soft and all curves. She kissed and nipped at her neck, sucking gently. She smelled of sweet honey, which Janey was willing to bet would carry through onto her taste. She lifted her eyes to meet Marsh's and groaned.

Such a slut, Janey. Don't let me stop your exploring. I'm enjoying this way too much..."

She slipped her hands down the woman's body, finding her thighs, and squeezed. She moaned as Risa bit gently on her nipple, worrying it between her teeth. She swallowed hard, opening her legs further for Risa's fingers. Her own fingers found Risa's soft wet folds of flesh and started mirroring the woman's actions, drawing soft circles on her clit. "Mmm, seems I'm not the only one who's sopping wet." Her voice was husky.

Risa whimpered slightly. "Umm, well, you are very sexy, I'd be a fool not to be turned on." She kissed Janey again and moved her hand. "You know, I just can't get enough of you."

Janey, now on her knees was in the perfect position. Risa lay flat in front of her and grabbed her hips, positioning Janey's sopping pussy over her mouth, and she moved as she darted her tongue out to taste her. Janey, now sitting on Risa's face, was in a prime spot and Marsh took advantage and kissed her.

She grabbed onto him, pulling him down into a deeper, searching kiss as she moaned, riding Risa's face.

He nipped at her. "God, you're hot, both of you." He kissed her again and nibbled her ear. "Make her come, Janey. I wanna see you two scream."

"Mmm..." She moaned breathlessly, writhing. "All my pleasure." She pulled away from him, kissing and

licking her way from Risa's knee to her inner thighs. She parted her legs, and paused to look at her, "God, you are beautiful. I bet you taste of sweet honey." She nuzzled her for a moment before licking Risa slowly and deeply.

Risa gasped into her and Marsh moved back, getting the full scope of the sixty-nine. He groaned and started to take his clothes off, knowing it would be mere minutes before they were both begging to be fucked. Janey whimpered into Risa, her tongue parting her and slipping inside, only to slip back out and greedily latch onto her clit. She sucked it into her mouth, whirling on it with her tongue and moaning deeply. She slipped her hand around Risa and pushed her finger inside of her.

Risa groaned and came hard for Janey, arching up. Marsh watched, most pleased with his consort. She broke from pleasing Janey and cried out, panting. Marsh was impressed. "Good girl, Janey. Though, you still have to come, don't you?" Now fully nude, he walked to her and growled. "You do deserve your good fucking."

She lapped up Risa before smiling up at her consort, her face glistening. She licked her lips. "I have been good." "So good. Your choice, pet...you want top or bottom?" She thought about it. "Bottom. I've been on top enough tonight." He pulled her off Risa and positioned her on her hands and knees. "Risa, darling, scoot over. I don't think my sweet fuck slave is finished with you yet."

Risa did as he asked, and Marsh moved Janey by the hair to where he wanted her to be. "Now, Janey, be a good girl and finish what you started with Risa." With that he slipped inside her fast and hard, seating himself into her to the hilt. "Oh, fuck, that's good. So fucking wet." Janey cried out as he filled her, her mouth latching onto Risa

once again, sucking and moaning on her. Marsh worked her relentlessly, his own lust fueled by Janey's. He had told her he was going to take Risa instead, but it was all fun and games. He'd never want another woman, just Janey. She was the only thing that satisfied him now. Of course, he wouldn't tell her that. His right hand reached around to play on her clit. "That's it, pet, that's it. Come big for daddy."

She screamed into Risa as he touched her, coming and bucking hard under his sweat slicked body.

Risa followed her over, arching up into Janey's mouth. The scene was too much for Marsh, who lost it, unable to continue in the midst of something that sexy. He came hard into his consort and hissed, his fingers digging into her hips. He panted and leaned forward, planting a kiss on her back, licking off the sweat.

Risa shuddered and panted. "She's fantastic." She moved over and kissed Janey, licking her own come off her mouth. "We should do this again some time."

The next thing Marsh knew he was alone with Janey in the large bed, a small smile playing on his face. She had indeed enjoyed herself, he knew. She was sated and it was all that mattered. "Happy, pet? Told you you'd adore it." "And you were right...who the hell was she, though?" "That's a question for a later time, I think." He motioned to the side table where a note card rested, a lip print traced the front. "I am sure, however, she wasn't human."

"What gave it away, the disappearing?" Janey rubbed against him. "I'm going to have to put on those clothes again, aren't I?"

He shook his head. "Just the coat and the shoes, love. That should get us to the hotel well enough." He kissed her. "I love you, pet, and you were so good tonight."



"It was fun, but let's not sell me again. How about you? Hmmm? Is there a Guy Night on Friday? I could sell you to a nice handsome man" She giggled, kissing him.

He laughed. "Pet, don't joke, though if you want to have a little game with another guy I won't stop it. Might be fun to get you stuffed from all angles."

She chuckled heatedly. "Well, that certainly is something to think about." "Yeah. Now pet, I think it's about time we get back. We do have a

day ahead of us tomorrow." She yawned. "We do, that. Are we un-wishing tonight?" "In the morning. And it will only last until we need it to, like a

glamour, so don't worry." "Okay, I'm not worried...not too much." She kissed him and stood, pulling on his jacket. "You know, I should have wished for that disappearing power. Would have come in handy."

"Well, I don't know what your powers are now that you're my consort, so it's very possible you could do that. We will have to explore that as soon as possible. I am interested to see what you can do."

She frowned. "You never mentioned powers before. Why would they be any different from yours? Do Djinn have different powers?"

"I don't know, though I'm sure I can find out. I never have had the reason to know. It wasn't like I was looking for a consort, pet, or to have the prior knowledge of other Djinn powers." "True, but don't you even talk to others of your kind?" "No. What reason would I have?" He got up and got dressed quickly and looked at her. "I'll have to make some calls, but like I said I can find out. Though, I'm not looking forward to speaking to my parents." She blinked. "Whoa! What?" "Look, baby, this is a conversation for when I'm not still riding the

coattails of a fantastic orgasm." She blinked again, bristling at his harsh words. "Of course." She nodded briskly, sulking to herself. She eventually pulled herself together and sighed, wrapping the jacket further around herself. "I take it the limo is still outside?"

He turned and looked at her. "Now, don't be upset with me. Talking about my parents gives me gas." He brought her closer to him, completely dressed now, her in his long jacket. "And I love you."

She smiled. "I love you, too, but having parents isn't really a bad thing, nor is knowing where you came from. As far as I can guess." She grinned, hiding her discomfort. "Let's get back, shall we?"

He nodded and cursed his insensitivity. Janey deserved a family and everything that came with it. It was the one thing he could give her, despite the discomfort to himself. Calling his parents didn't seem like a bad idea. At least that path was clear to him. Tomorrow was another situation.

## Twelve

For once she was actually up before him. Maybe it was her nerves that woke her up, or it could have been that she'd barely slept all night. Whatever the reason, she was glad of it. She'd crept out of bed at the earliest opportunity and showered, dressing in a comfy pair of low-rider jeans and a pale blue cami top. It felt good to be back in normal clothes. She'd even considered dressing in one of the suits that she'd brought; however, she'd decided against it. No matter how much better it would have made her

feel, she didn't need comforters and Marsh would only have made her change out of it later on.

She sat out on the veranda, sipping perfectly brewed French coffee and waiting for him to rise. They hadn't spoken much on the way back from the auction, and they'd spoken even less as they went to bed. She hadn't known that he had one parent still alive, let alone both of them. Not that she should have known—Marsh kept his secrets well—she only ever knew what he told her, and she knew better than to question him on it as he never answered questions.

Sighing, she lifted her coffee to her lips, sipping the bitter liquid down into her already churning stomach. She heard the bathroom door close and the shower running, which would give her just enough time to call Kolo and see how things were running on his end.

It took her all of ten minutes to discover that everything was fine, although Trent had been getting himself into a little bit of trouble with the locals in Moscow. She rolled her eyes at that; even Trent should know to stay out of there, especially in his retirement. He seemed to be taking up treasure hunting in his elder years, although what in Russia had sparked his interest she didn't know.

Kolo had assured her that everything was taken care of and that Miranda had called in. She was currently bunking up with the vampire, so all was well. She'd just hung up her cell, sitting it back on the table when Marsh walked out in nothing but his robe and his usual sexy smile. He kissed her sweetly on the cheek, then sat and grabbed a

strawberry off the platter on the table. "Now, I don't enjoy that." "Enjoy what?" She sipped more coffee. "Waking up to an empty bed." She smiled. "Ah, I'll try not to let it happen again, then." He crossed his ankle over his knee and smiled at her. "Look, you won't hear me say this a lot, but I'm sorry for snapping at you last night about my parents. It honestly never occurred to me you would even be interested in that part of my life, so I'm sorry. I was insensitive."

"Thanks, though truthfully, I don't even know why it's upsetting me. People have parents, it's how things are. I just didn't expect you to, I guess."

"Well, I didn't pop out of a lamp, pet, though I'm sure if the thought of that gets you hot I could figure out how to..." He wiggled his eyebrows, then leaned in. "Still, they are truly insane."

"Aren't we all a little? You sold me at auction, plus they must be pretty old."

"No, I'm kinky. My parents, well, they are way off the mark, and you're right, they are old. Though, my mum looks about sixty and Pop's about seventy. It's kinda creepy."

"Yeah?" She wanted to know anything he was willing to tell her. Family fascinated her, mostly because it was the one thing she'd truly lacked, the knowledge of where she was from. Parents, aunts, uncles and siblings were all foreign concepts. Sure, she knew what the words meant, but they were only words to her. All the money that the company possessed and she still couldn't find anything about herself. Even her true birthday and age was unknown; all she had was Trent's estimations and halftruths.

Marsh looked at her and smiled. "My mum, she's just wacky. Dresses in the height of eighties fashion, I think that was the last decade she was truly coherent. Pop looks like Mr. Rogers from Hell. I'm still trying to figure out how the fuck they got together. This one time..." He shook his head. "You know, the only way I'm going to do them justice if you meet them."

She choked slightly on her coffee. She hadn't been expecting that. "Really?"

He shrugged. "Why not? Personally, there's no purer hell for me. Well, except maybe being without you, but I'd be willing to endure that if you were a good little girl." He crooked his finger at her and she got up, his arms pulling her into his lap. She grinned, kissing him. "I love you." "I know you do, pet, though meeting those lunatics I share genes

with might change your mind." She laughed. "Nah, I grew up with my fair share of lunatics." "Darling, homicidal lunatics are one thing, psychotics? Again, one thing, but my family, being that they are *way* older than Christ...let's just say they aren't all there. I don't think there's much left." "Sounds a tad daunting. Are they still together?" "Yeah, they are. When we mate, pet, it's for life. So you're stuck

with me." "Oh, that's okay. I wouldn't want to be stuck with anyone else.

Maybe we'll be better than that in thousands of year's time..." "From what I gather, my mother was never really all there to begin

with. It was all downhill, I suppose." "But still, the eighties wasn't all that bad." She giggled. "She tight rolls her jeans. Enough said." He kissed her and ran his

hands up and under her cami, groaning. "Fucking hell, you're sexy, pet." She curled deeper into him, wrapping her arms around him. "You're

pretty sexy yourself." He smirked and nipped her bottom lip. "So, you ready for this today? The quicker we get this done the better; I do want to take this guy out." "I'm as ready as I'll ever be. I want to kill this prick." "We do have a meeting with him at the Imperial Gardens." "Okay, good. How did you manage that?" "I do have my ways, pet. It's for three this afternoon, and you and I get to play pretend." He pulled two passports out of his robe pocket. "Here you go, Mrs. Trina Rockwell."

"Ooh, falsifying documents?" She took the passport, opening and studying it. Where he'd even gotten the photo from she'd never know. "Mmm...oh, Nick, you know exactly how to get me hot, don't you?"

He nuzzled her neck. "Well, shit, if that's the way to do it, I'll bring you an alias every day, pet. So today, at least until the meeting is over, you're to call me Richard." She kissed his soft lips. "And what would you be to me?" "Your husband. We are a very wealthy couple from New York, and you're dying of cancer. Medicines don't work, and we have turned to faith. Simple and effective." "Okay, sounds good." "So you're okay with the glamour?" "I'm gonna have to be, and we can hardly give it to you. How will it

feel?" "You'll feel the same. You'll just not look very good, and you're going to have to play the infirm. I do suggest the scarf on the head thing, too, really play it up." "A scarf? I just had my hair done." "You wanna look the part, right?" "I guess." "Now, Janey, this has to be believable, so you'll do it and not

complain." She pouted, kissing him, letting her hands slip under his robe. "I'll

be good." "Yeah? Like you were last night?" "I was good," she defended. "Yeah, you were." His body was warm against her hand and still slightly damp from

his shower. "I'll be good today, and I will have weapons." "Yes, yes you will," he said. "Mmm, perfect. How do we plan on killing him?" "Well, it's a hit, right? You're the boss, love. Use your discretion, though I will say he's a fey, and is going to be hard to kill. Headshot is the only surefire way." "Now that I can definitely do, I'm a very good shot." He smiled and nodded, then moved to her neck once again. "I'm

looking forward to seeing you work." "Mmm..." She leaned into him. "Me too, it's been far too long."  
"You do know if we keep this up those jeans of yours are coming

off." "Yeah I do, but we have a while." He chuckled, low and husky. "True." She moaned and licked her  
lips, her hand finding him and squeezing. "It is..."

He hissed and closed his eyes. "I can't deny you, pet, not this anyway." He wrapped his arms around her  
and stood. She giggled, wrapping her legs around him.

"I do love you, pet, more than you know." he slipped his hand up the back of her cami. He walked them  
into the room, not missing a step as he kept her occupied with his hands and tongue.

"Mmmm, I love it when you say things like that." She kissed him, slipping his robe down his arms as he  
lowered them both to the bed. Their love making was passionate, rough and rushed, their clothes still on  
as he took her hard and deep. She cried out from the pleasure, her body shuddering for him as she  
wrapped her limbs around him. He kissed, and teased, nipped at her neck and suckled at her breasts,  
hastily exposed to him as her shirt was shoved up to her throat. She grabbed at his hips, dug her nails into  
his flesh, which only drove him to further excite her. When they kissed again, their tongues invading each  
others mouths like serpents, She came in a rush, his thrusts relentless. She moaned into his mouth and  
arched, his body finally giving over to sensation. His moan matched her own, at first muffled, then turning  
into a pant as the kiss broke. She smiled up at him and kissed him again, sucking his bottom lip into her  
mouth to nibble on it, then let it go.

"Feel better Love?" he asked as he rolled them over onto his back, his legs tangled in the jeans that  
trapped the bottom half of his legs. She giggled and kissed his chest, content for the moment, and drifted  
off, thoroughly exhausted.

## Thirteen

Janey lay in the bed across the room from where he stood smoking, and he smiled at her. She was  
napping, their lovemaking had been rigorous and satisfying. He watched her sleep, watched her breathe  
softly, and his chest ached.

The situation they were going into wasn't one he would rather do. He didn't want to see her ravaged with  
disease, not his perfect and beautiful consort. The glamour was something he didn't like doing, but it was  
necessary, and it wouldn't be for long. He was thanking the fates that it was only temporary.

He looked at the clock and sighed. They had at least an hour before they needed to meet the evangelist,  
and Janey needed the time to get her part down pat. He ground out the cigarette and strode to the bed,  
crawling onto it and settling next to her. His hand skimmed her exposed hip, the warmth radiating off her,  
the skin unmarred by a blemish or scar. She was truly beautiful, and he counted himself lucky that she  
was indeed his.

She stirred under his hand, which he placed firmly on her hip as he leaned in to kiss her forehead. "Now,  
pet, what did I tell you about sleeping the day away?" he whispered as her eyes opened. She smiled  
blearily at him. "Not to do it alone." "Exactly." He kissed her and hauled her against his own body. "So?  
We have a little time, and I think you need some rehearsal before we go, to make it believable." "I guess,  
although I haven't forgotten what it was like." "Well, walking slowly, I think we'll use a cane, the scarf on  
the head, hide your hair loss, and I think that revolting pink skirt suit you have will do nicely. Make you  
look hopeful of your situation in a way black never would."

She laughed against him. "I knew you hated that. You shouldn't have let me buy it, and it's not pink, it's salmon." She giggled. "Okay, I've never walked with a cane, but it can't be too far off crutches."

"Well, you were also heavily laced with magic when you were sick. Had you never had the magic I would imagine you would have required one. I do hate you in pink, so after this let's burn the suit, okay?" He grinned and kissed her again. "Ready to get up and start the theatrics?" he asked as he rolled her off him, getting up and grabbing his robe. "I think I'll shower, then we'll do this. Take your time getting up, pet." He padded into the bathroom, leaving the door open. "You got it," she shouted, settling back down on the bed. Minutes later he emerged from the bathroom, towel around his waist and his hair slicked back. "Now, pet, I did say to take your time, but this is ridiculous. Get your lazy ass out of bed."

"I'm getting into character, I slept a lot." She grinned from under the covers.

He laughed and turned toward the closet. "Okay, I'll give you that. We have forty minutes, and I'm not sure how long the glamour is going to take to be visible, so get out of bed."

With an eye roll she pulled back the covers and shimmied over to the edge of the bed. "Okay, zap me." She took a deep breath, steadying herself.

He walked out of the closet, dressed and fixing his tie, his gaze raking over her naked form. He shook his head. "No, I think you need to get dressed first. I don't want to see what that fetching body would look like with the glamour."

"Okay, can do." She stood, walking into the closet. "You know pink does suit me, at least it isn't yellow," she bitched as she dressed.

"I prefer you in colors that show off how sexy you are. Pink is not one of them."

"It's feminine." She came out fully dressed. "You should have said that I look like a giant marshmallow." He looked at her, horrified. "There are pink marshmallows?" She nodded. "Yeah, they're really long and called Flumps. I'll buy

you a tub one day," she snarked as she twirled. "So how do I look?" He cringed. "Well, you'll look the part, that's for sure. Now come

here, we need to do this." Sighing, she moved towards him. "On the bright side, I'm not going

to have to look at me, and I'll still feel okay?" "You will feel fine, pet, though you'll have to play like you don't." "Okay, so no tap dancing. Well, zap me now before I change my mind and head for the hills." He pulled her to him. "It's just a kiss, pet. No zapping, though I need

you to be open to the glamour." "So I just open myself to you. Okay, I can do that and if it takes one

or two attempts I'm okay with that, too." "It won't, trust me, love." He set his lips to hers without a second thought, and pushed his power into her. He could feel the change, see the air shimmer around her body, the skin that was so perfect and healthy slipping to a grayish yellow. He pulled away and winced as he saw how well the magic took hold. He still had it, and as much as it hurt him to see her like this, like she would have been without the witch magic, it grounded him. "Now, pet, it will last until I kiss you again, so we need to be careful." "Okay. I suppose I better look in the mirror." He shook his head. "I wouldn't. The scarf does complete the look,



though." "I'm going to sneak a look anyway, so I may as well do it here." She smiled reassuringly then walked to the full length mirror. "Fuck me!" she swore unhappily at her reflection. "Told you. Don't worry, it's temporary." "I'm never wearing this suit again," she muttered, turning away. "Wise decision." He looked at the clock and shook his head. "We

should go." "Yeah, okay, but you are so making this up to me." "I can live with that." He smiled and grabbed her jacket, then closed his eyes and a cane appeared by the doorframe. "Well, there's your prop. You ready to get close or what?"

## Fourteen

The Imperial Gardens was a national treasure to the people of China, and a must see when in Beijing. Not that it mattered to Marsh, but it was a well known spot, and a place where a visiting couple would choose for a meeting with someone they didn't know.

Built and planted as an addition to the Forbidden City, the gardens were lush and awe inspiring, and it was the perfect inconspicuous place to gather information. They entered the gardens and leisurely walked to the center pagoda, the building where they would meet Swanson.

When they reached it, Marsh helped Janey into the building and had her sit on a bench with a beautiful dragon covered padded chair, and turned to survey the rest of the gardens. From their vantage point, they could see the whole of the gardens, yet another reason why he chose the spot.

From the west, he saw a tall, blond man in a dove grey suit making his way towards them, followed by two men in blue suits. Bodyguards by the looks of it. He looked at Janey and nodded. "They are on the way in, love."

"Good, the sooner we get this over with the better. So what is the plan? Other than pretending to be searching for a cure. We can't kill him here..." She looked around. "No matter how much influence we have, it's too exposed."

"Well, odds are he's heard about our 'considerable' wealth," he said with air quotes. "So, we tell him we are desperate, and money is no object, and we'd be happy to contribute to his ministry, yadda-yadda. And if we could get the healing session right away, the donation would be considerable." He winked at Janey. "Showtime, pet."

"You're so making this up to me." She sighed, her shoulders hunching inward.

"Don't worry, pet." He smiled at her, then turned to the approaching men. He nodded. "Mr. Swanson? I'm Richard Rockwell, and this," he turned to Janey and helped her up, "is my wife Trina."

Swanson went to her and held her hands. Marsh was pleased that the glamour was holding up. Having only used it on himself before, and that was ages ago, the possibility that he was extremely rusty in the glamour department was prevalent. But, it was holding up well, even under another's touch, and that was truly a feat. The binding with Janey must have been fueling his magic to her, or possibly her own.

Swanson kissed her hands in a reverent way, which Marsh supposed was his way of kissing up for the money. He turned to Marsh and smiled. "I'm glad you have come to me, I can indeed help her."

*Yeah isn't someone full of himself? If you were half of what you say you are you'd know it's a fucking glamour, you dolt.* Marsh smiled and took Swanson's hand when it was offered. "That is good news, Mr. Swanson. With everything we have tried..." he let the words trail off, and looked at the "healer" sheepishly.

"One doesn't always turn to faith first, it is often a last resort." The man sat next to Janey and smiled. "We can take that pain away, Mrs. Rockwell."

She smiled gratefully, hope shining through in her glamour-dulled eyes. "Thank you, I can't go on like this...it's no life." She looked down, tears forming.

Marsh went to her and comforted her, pleased she played her part so well. He looked at Swanson, his expression grave. "We are very interested in your methods and the possibility that you can save her. I'll be honest, Mr. Swanson, all the money in the world is worth making her well, and my fortune is at your feet."

"That won't be necessary. Though, a contribution to the ministry, so that I can freely help others like Ms. Trina here, would not be frowned upon." He smiled at Janey. "Of course, if you choose not to it won't change my resolve to help you. I can see your beauty, Ms. Trina. I only want to help bring that back for you."

"You are most kind, Mr. Swanson. I could not, however, stand idly by and let others so afflicted like myself go on when you could help them. Money holds no meaning to me now. I just want to see my next birthday and maybe the next one after that."

He gave her a very genuine smile that Marsh assumed was for the promised money and less for the helping of a needy woman. "So you'll help then? Now?" he said eagerly, playing the affected husband.

"I will need time to prepare. This evening? At my suite? I don't have a ministry appearance for another month as I'm here on personal business, but I would be happy to work on her this evening, say eight?"

Marsh nodded, and agreed. The man's greed was showing. "Indeed. This evening would be wonderful." He pulled out his checkbook to see what the jerk would do and was surprised as he held up his hand.

"Please, Mr. Rockwell, don't do that. If after I have helped her you still want to contribute, then I'd be happy to accept."

Marsh nodded and looked at Janey. "We both thank you. The cancer, I just want my wife back."

"I understand, Mr. Rockwell. Tonight at eight, then." He handed Marsh a card and went to Janey. "Fear not, petal, you shall be whole once more." He kissed her on the cheek. "I am looking forward to seeing you healthy and lush."

She gazed up, almost reverently, at her savior. "That makes two of us." She smiled. "I cannot thank you enough."

He turned and shook Marsh's hand. "No thanks needed. I have a gift I'm to share with the world. I will see you both this evening. Will you need a car sent for you?"

"No, we have ours, and thank you for the offer. We will see you tonight." Marsh watched the masquerading fey nod and turn to leave, once again flanked by his bodyguards. When they were out of

earshot, he turned to Janey and smiled. "That was virtually painless." "Virtually. I don't trust him." She shook her head. "Nor do I, or the nagging suspicion that he wants you healthy for

some lascivious reasons." "Exactly, and why would a fey need so much money? If he's old then he should be wealthy; amassing a fortune over hundreds of years doesn't exactly take rocket science, and he seems like the fairly intelligent type." She licked her lips, watching him leave.

"No clue, pet, but something tells me he hasn't been doing that. So let's play the game, shall we? Let's get your feeble ass back to the room. We'll reapply the glamour later. But, I would rather not, just pop in there and take the fucker out. Though, I would like to know where his wife is stashed."

Dragging her gaze from the spot where Swanson had been, she nodded. "Yeah, you're right...plus I want to see how he 'heals'me."

Marsh shook his head. "True, though I'm sure it will be a sort of glamour." "Most likely. I'll call Kolo when we get back, see what he can dig

up about the others that Swanson has healed." He pulled her to him gently, in case someone was watching them from afar, and hugged her. "Always thinking, pet. Let's go, I think we have stayed long enough."

## Fifteen

Janey checked her appearance in the mirror just to make sure all the glamour was removed. She hated looking like a walking corpse; it had been the main reason that she'd turned to the witch magic. It was less harsh and, had her particular brand of death been less vicious, it could have saved her. Not that it mattered now, but bringing it all back up scared her, and she wasn't easily scared. It was only a small reminder of how desperate she'd been, but it terrified her to think that she could have been one of these women that Swanson prayed upon. He offered them hope, then failed to deliver, but even with that knowledge and disgust there was something about him, something that she couldn't put her finger on.

She walked through one of the empty rooms, settling herself down on a chair. Hitting speed dial on her cell, she waited for Kolo to pick up. After several seconds of listening to the ringing tone she left a short message that he was to get back to her. She'd barely hung up when he returned her call.

"About time, where were you? You know how I hate it when you don't answer."

"And yet you find it more than appropriate to ignore the phone when I call you," he growled. "I was in the shower."

"Really? Lord, you're almost as bad as Marsh. I swear he's had two showers already today and it's not even five."

"Personal hygiene and cleanliness isn't a fault, especially when you have a heightened sense of smell."

"Yeah, but when it gets like paper tissue box on the feet freaky, then you have to worry."

His heavy sigh came through the other end of the phone. "Did you want something? I've been out with Trent most of the night and we weren't having fun." "So he survived Russia?" "Only by the skin of his teeth, and I'm under the impression that he would not survive a return trip. I always hoped his retirement

would mean less work for me."

"Oh, how you were wrong." She smiled. "So, I need you to do something for me. I need all the info you can drag up on Swanson's past victims...well, everyone he's claimed to heal. I want their medical records, before and after, and I want it now."

He groaned. "Let me get a few hours sleep. I'll look at it with a clear head."

She laughed at him. "Whatever you wish to do in your spare time with Trent is your own business. You do, however, have a job with me, and I expect you to be able to do that job to the best of your abilities. It's why I pay you so much." "Actually, I work the payroll. I technically pay myself." "Only technically. Don't make me fire you." "Please do. Really, it would end my suffering," he quipped almost

gratefully. "Oh, stop whining and bring me my information. You have four and

a half hours." "Fine, I have some info on them already. It's only very general, but it should keep you occupied, I'll send it over and contact you with the rest."

He hung up before she could agree. She had to feel sorry for him. Trent was hard to say no to, but she should be his first concern. She popped her phone in her pocket, then headed back out into the main lounge looking for Marsh and his laptop. \* \* \* Marsh grinned as Janey walked in the room. He had heard a few snippets of her conversation before she signed off, and he swelled with pride. Janey kept her rule on the company with an iron fist, and it was beyond sexy, she walked in wearing jeans and a V-neck tank top, barefoot and she took his breath away. Now that the glamour was gone he was feeling better about the situation, though he wasn't looking forward to reapplying it to her. He sat back on the desk chair and swiveled so he was completely facing her. "So, pet? Everything okay?"

"It's fine, seems Trent took Ko on a little after hour excursion. Knowing that son of a bitch, there was most likely a sewer involved, and camouflage, there's always camouflage." She winced. "Especially since he's started Indiana Jonesing it across the world. With any luck there wasn't a ritual sacrifice involved...but then, it's very rare that that kinda thing happens twice, and I don't think Ko is the sacrificing type. Although, he is very large." Marsh laughed and shook his head. "Trent seems like a character." "Yeah, he's something alright." He patted his lap and she put her arm around him as she sat, her body melting into his. "You think your parents are bad. Trent's just..." She shook her head. "I don't even know what Trent is, but it's something."

He chuckled. "No, my family is crazy, Trent just seems like a lunatic, though I'm sure he's a riot at parties."

"No, Trent starts riots, but he's not crazy. I think that's the scariest thing of all...it's his cold, calculating sanity."

Marsh grimaced and shook his head. "Well, then we'll hold off on meeting him then. You devise a plan yet for tonight's meeting? And please tell me we aren't going in cold." "I'll have a jacket," she supplied unhelpfully. He leaned in and nipped at her throat. "Don't be cute, Ms. Duvall.

Answer the question." "Very well." She laughed. "I'm having poor Kolo send over everything he has amassed so far on Swanson's miracle people. Then he'll most likely nap for an hour or two, then he's getting me everything else he can find, including medical records. I trust him to be thorough." "Beauty. So what's the deal?" "Deal? Well, we want to know where Swanson's wife is, and we want to know as much as possible about him and his set up. To be completely honest, he poses very little threat to us; he's

a curiosity and a mild annoyance."

"I agree, but I still think he poses a threat to the people of the world." "True, but then, aren't we all?" "To varying degrees, yes, but he's a parasite." "Yes, but an intriguing one. And as far as parasites go, you're the

one who likes Malcolm." "Malcolm has his uses and is pretty much a good guy. This fucker

was leering at a terminally ill woman...that's just skeevy." "Yeah it was." She laughed. "But, that terminally ill woman was me, and that's understandable."

He let out a husky chuckle and kissed her. "True, you are sexy regardless. So what's the game plan then? This is your show, pet, your contract."

"Well, let's play it by ear. We have to get as much information outta him before the violence starts. It's always the best plan. We should get the room layout from Miranda, she doesn't remember much but she did have the plans before he got to her." "So we are stopping by Mal's then?" She scrunched her face with distaste. "I was thinking about a phone

call and an e-mail." "Once again, pet, good thinking. So let's get on it, then, shall we? We only have so much time before we end this."

## Sixteen

They had made the most of the time they were allotted. Once the files came from Kolo, they were printed and scoured for similarities, and any information they could use. It was all pretty standard faith healer hubbub, the whole description of being filled with white light, and feeling energized and empowered by the Lord. Marsh sneered at the file he was looking at, shaking his head.

It was his wife's file, with detailed documentation about her illness and the "miraculous recovery" she underwent after Swanson laid his healing hands on her. Seeing this, he did deduce a few things. One, odds were Swanson was a fey healer, just a weak one. That could have come from numerous things, but Marsh suspected it was because he was either an aged fey or a half fey. Either way he probably did truly heal his wife, and that made him a god to some, but odds were the others, the ones not swimming in money, were just hypnotized in the long term. The files he had in front of him that seemed genuine were people that were either major monetary players, or people who were truly part of his traveling congregation.

He looked at Janey. "So, basically the fuck has quite a racket going. Near as I can figure, the ones who contributed to his ministry got a real healing, the privilege of the rich, I guess. The normal people, they get a form of hypnotism, like what happened to Miranda. If they go to the hospital and find out their conditions haven't improved its all 'well, you had no faith and that's why it returned' kinda crap." "Prick. So we'll have to get him before he tries to heal me, then." "Exactly. Though it seems that he did heal his wife, odds are it was too much for him. The only way he'd be able to keep going with it is if her life force was suspended." "Can that happen?" "Well, I don't know. I know that the Ifrit, technically my cousin race, go into their carpets into a form of suspended animation till they are called again, so it's possible. I'm thinking he's either an old fey who is losing his powers or he's a half fey and only has a limited reserve, otherwise why wouldn't she be by his side as his greatest achievement?"

"Well, yeah, the latter would explain his lack of funds and his recent arrival. But, wouldn't the fey keep a



close record of those born?"

He blinked. "You would think so, but they are few. Lord knows there's probably a good amount of them running around that don't even know they are fey, but possibly psychic. It's not an exact science, you know. I mean, my people rarely keep tabs, the fey are usually too self absorbed. There are a few, but they only keep track of their own family lines."

"Okay, then there's the possibility that he's a full fey and his wife disagreed with everything, threatened to whistle blow so he had to take her out. We're just not going to find out sitting here guessing." She sighed.

He nodded. "So what did Miranda say, assuming that's whom you were speaking to while I was sorting these files." "She got me the floor plan. It's pretty standard, not like this place." "Well, I'm sure the fucker isn't paying what I am a night for his

place." "Most likely," she agreed, kissing his neck. "So, it should be a pretty easy job, though those two bodyguards are

going to be a problem." "No, they won't." She snorted. "I didn't get to where I am now because I was Trent's adopted daughter, ya know. I may be a little lax in my workouts, but I can still take out two bodyguards, especially now I have the layout."

He grinned and nodded. "Then I will leave you to that. The clock is ticking, get dressed." He set her on her feet and patted her ass. "I'm in the mood to get this over with." "Can I wear something less pink?" "Anything you wish, pet. He's already hooked, and I should think

your want to go for function instead of fashion tonight." "Perfect, I know just the thing." He grinned and got up. "Perfect." He put his suit jacket back on and

fixed the cuffs. She walked to the closet and dressed in a simple pants suit with a low cut red top. It was fairly easy to strap on a few knives here and there, and she placed her shoulder holster under her jacket. She'd carry another gun in her purse, but for now this would do. "Can you glamour these away when you make me ill?"

He nodded "I can. We'll have you in slacks and a large sweater. It will make it more believable. Ready?" "Yeah, I am." He grabbed her chin tenderly, looking in her eyes. "Make me proud, consort." He kissed her, repeating the glamour process, the magic coming easier this time. He pulled away and sighed, shaking his head. "Showtime."

## Seventeen

They stopped and had dinner on the way over; it had been Janey's suggestion. She always hated fighting on an empty stomach. Of course, she'd been expecting something more along the lines of a quick burger and a shake, not the three course meal Marsh had managed to procure from God-knows-where.

It had all been rather healthy as well, steamed fish and crunchy vegetables. Which normally would have been fine, but it was hardly killing food. What they needed was a few meaty burgers; it was the ritual, or at least how Trent had worked it. She'd told Marsh so; however, with a few derogatory comments about her gently increasing weight and a comment about how her breasts didn't quite sit where they should, she'd given up. She would have hit him, but it wouldn't have done her any good. The son of a bitch was only trying to get a rise out of her and she wasn't in the mood.

Now she felt bloated and sick, partly because of the meal and partly because her stomach normally churned before a hit. She yawned looking over at Marsh.

"Nearly there." They were in the elevator now. It was spacious and tasteful, not the type with the mirrors that reflect each other into oblivion and give you a headache.

"Yes, we are, love." He looked at her face. "You're not still pissed at the lack of dead cow, are you, pudgy?" He grinned and leaned back on the wall.

She gaped, considering shooting him right there. "You know I'm not pudgy and Mr. Swanson doesn't."

"Now, now, pet, you're getting pudgy. I blame myself, I should be working you more often." He wiggled his eyebrows. She shook her head. "You're disgusting." "Yes I am." He sobered and looked at the floor indicator. "You

ready to do this?" "Of course, it's what I do." "Then make Daddy proud." They got out of the elevator and turned the corridor towards Swanson's room, greeted with a nod by the two bodyguards standing at the door. Janey walked slowly, Marsh helping her, completing the illusion.

One of the bodyguards knocked on the door letting them both in. "Thank you." She smiled gratefully at them and they walked into meet Swanson.

Marsh nodded at the two as they closed the door and Swanson walked into the room and gave Janey a thousand-watt smile. "Ms. Trina. How are you feeling?"

"As good as can be expected, I suppose. I hope to feel better soon, though."

"I believe you will. Can I get you something to drink? Bottled water? Soda? I'd offer wine but something tells me you're not up for it, at least not yet."

"Oh, I can't wait to taste wine again." She blushed. "Sorry, water would be perfect, thanks."

He turned and went to the mini fridge and brought back a bottle of Fiji water and a wineglass. "Let's just say you'll drink the best water there is now, Ms. Trina. And after you're healed, you shall have a glass of the finest champagne."

"Thank you." She took the water and had a sip. Her step faltered slightly and she had to steady herself with Marsh's arm.

"Trina? Darling, you okay?" Marsh turned her towards a seat against the far wall and helped her to sit, then turned to Swanson. "Help her, please."

Swanson kneeled in front of her and took her hands. "Trina? How's the pain?"

She blinked, catching her breath. "It's constant. I'm sorry, I just need a few moments. I think the day's events have taken it out of me."

He nodded and let go of her hands, turning to Marsh. "Mr. Rockwell? Would you care to sit? I'm sure this won't take long."

Marsh nodded and sat at the side couch. "Take your time. She's worth it."

Looking over at him, she smiled then turned her head to Swanson. "So, will this hurt?" Her tongue darted out nervously to wet her lips. "Have...have you done this before? Forgive me; I'm just looking for reassurance." Swanson turned to her and smiled. "In my ministry I do it almost

daily. It's what God wants of me." "And are they all okay?" "Every last one. All leading productive and healthy lives." She nodded, sighing in relief. "Could you maybe explain how you

will work? So I know what to expect." Marsh smirked behind her and settled in, watching. Swanson smiled at her. "It starts with breathing, and putting the person into a meditative state, then just a question of lying on hands. Nothing is incurable, but you have to have faith. Do you have faith, Ms. Trina? Faith that my hands can heal you?"

She dropped her gaze to his hands then back up to his eyes, and nodded again. "Yes...yes I do."

Swanson smiled at her and stood. "Shall we begin, then? I would love to see you as the beauty you were meant to be."

"Yes, please." She took her coat off and sipped the water again, her eyes taking in the room. She looked at the remaining bodyguard and took a deep steadying breath.

Swanson nodded at the bodyguard and the man left, leaving Marsh and Janey alone in the room with the evangelist. "Now, Ms. Trina, I need you to relax as much as you're able..." "Okay, here? Or would you like me lying down?" "No, sitting is fine." He turned to Marsh. "Mr. Rockwell? Are you

ready?" Marsh nodded and smiled. Janey smiled at Marsh, then nodded to Swanson. Marsh stood quietly and went to the door, locking it, and giving her

the signal. Grinning, she dropped her bottle of water, her other hand fingering the butt of her gun. She waited until Swanson bent to pick it up for her then stood, smoothly bringing it down on the back of his head. He slumped to the floor and she caught him, lowering him soundlessly to the floor. She grinned over at Marsh, "And you called me pudgy, could pudgy do that?"

"Well, yeah, cuz pudgy means you're the same weight as our friend here. That was clean. So what's the next course of action?"

She shook her head. "You set Little Gary up in the bedroom and I'll take out the two uglies outside."

"Fair enough." he kissed her. "I'm taking that glamour off you before he wakes up." "Perfect," She kissed him again. "I'll need it off to distract the

guards." He turned her and kissed her full on the mouth, sucking the magic of the glamour back into himself. "Enjoy, pet, I'll get Gary all propped up."

"Great, I'll be back shortly." She walked toward the door. "Try not to miss me too much." He laughed and hauled Gary over his shoulder and winked at her. She made her way back through the room to the front door, pulling

her low top further down her cleavage. She opened the door confidently, smiling at the two of them. They looked at her from their card game and returned her smile, clearly not recognizing her. She was

happy to note that they weren't the best of bodyguards, which was a shame, really. She could have supplied Swanson with much better talent.

"You know you shouldn't be walking around, miss. He likes to keep your kind in the bedroom, you know that."

Well no, she didn't, but it was always nice when people volunteered information on such things.

Seems Miranda wasn't Gary's only female visitor. She grinned shyly, ducking her head. "Yeah, I know...but it gets lonely back there, waiting for him, ya know?" She cocked her head adorably, batting her lashes at them and licking her lips. "I just wanted someone to keep me company."

She adjusted her top and their gazes dropped to her cleavage. Taking that as her go she walked closer, her hand going to her side, feeling for the hilt of her knife. She slipped onto the lap of one of them, slinging her arm around his neck. He patted her ass squeezing, his face at the same level as her breasts. She waited for him to reach out to grab for them before standing, driving the knife hilt deep up into his throat and skull. She pulled her gun, training it onto his stunned partner's head. "You wanna live, then do as I say. No talking, you open that mouth

of yours and I put a bullet in your brain, understand?" The man gaped before shutting his mouth and nodding with an

audible gulp. "Good." She smiled, edging away from the twitching body. "Now, first off you lift him. I need him out of the way."

She instructed the man to carry his dead co-worker into a spare room in the suite, then shot him twice, the silencer muting the sound. "I just love it when a plan comes together," she told the dead guards.

A quick trip later to place the table over the sticky wet blood, and she was ready to play. She strode confidently into the room where Marsh had taken Swanson, who was now very awake and very angry. He pulled at his restraints as she looked around the room with a smile.

"Thank God for soundproofing, eh, Mr. Swanson?" She smirked. "Is that whom you would thank? God?" "Who the fuck do you think you are?" "Who do I think I am, or who am I?" Her question put a puzzled look on his face and Marsh laughed.

"Pet, he's not playing with a full picnic basket, I think." "Hmmm...so it would seem. Tell me, Gary, where is your wife?" "What the fuck do you care where the bitch is?" She shrugged. "Curiosity. See I get like that sometimes, curious." She pulled the bloody blade and sat next to him. "And sometimes I just have to know the answer, no matter what I have to do to get it."

He swallowed hard and shook his head. "In Tulsa, she's at my house in Tulsa." "Why?" "She likes it there," he said sarcastically and looked at Marsh, then

Janey. "You're not a rich couple, are you?" "Oh I'd say we were a very rich couple, but then you're hardly an

evangelist faith healer." "Says you. I have tons of parishioners that say different." "And what do you say?" "I say the parishioners are right," he snapped. "I bet you do. Do you know what Miranda says?" "Who?" he looked at her quizzically. "My assassin who was sent to kill you." "Ah, the chit downstairs? The one with the perfect breasts. I thought

she was here for a reason, not just scamming me at the bar." "Scamming you at the bar? So for that you hypnotized her and

turned her into your sex slave?" "Have you seen her tits?" She looked exasperatedly at Marsh. "Yes, I have, and they're not all

that impressive." "Not compared to yours." Marsh laughed and sat back on his chair. "Brother, you're fucked." She growled. "So tell me everything about your operation. I'm interested. Maybe you need a business partner." She sat closer to him, crossing her legs.

"As if I would share with a woman. You're really only good for one thing."

She lifted the knife, embedding it in his calf. "Stabbing you in the leg? Is that what I'm good for?" she growled, trying to hold her temper.

He bit back a curse. "You think a little pain is going to do anything? Shit, girl, that's foreplay." "Baby, I rather enjoy foreplay." She twisted the knife, smiling. Marsh cleared his throat. "Pet, as much as I'd like to see you get the

sadist off, can we finish this? We do have an early flight out tomorrow. "Hmmm..." She thought about it. "Well, is there anything else we

need to know?" "I wanna know what the fucker did to his wife that she's not here

and he's fucking every thing that moves." She nodded. "What he said, answer nicely and I'll slit your throat

nice and quickly." Swanson smiled. "You get that close and you'll be mine." "Then answer the question and we'll see..." She smiled back. "If you don't you'll force me to get creative, and I find that creativity stunts me as a person."

Marsh cleared his throat again. "Pet, I think you should just cut the fucker's eyes out."

"Why don't you? You're practically older than God, and I killed the guards. I kill...I have people who torture for me."

Marsh laughed. "Darling, I was saying for your own good. You get any closer to him and that Hypno thing is going to get you."

"Oh..." She glared at Swanson. "Fair enough. But my position still stands. You..." she pulled the knife out of Swanson's leg moving it from one hand then into the other, "You really should be doing this, my top is getting filthy and you're still immaculate. Plus, I've never done that before; torture or eye cutting out is not my specialty."

Marsh sighed. "Right cuz I go around cutting people's eyes out." He went to Swanson from behind and put his hands over his eyes. "This works much better." He murmured a few words under his breath and when he pulled his hands away Swanson's eyes were sealed shut. "Easier and less messy, and I'm still immaculate." She rolled her eyes. "Well, you could have done that in the first

place" "But it's what amuses me, don't you remember, pet?" Swanson groaned. "Fuck, I can't see. You



fucking bitch!" "Of course, how could that have slipped my mind, that is why we're

here, right?" She said, ignoring Swanson. He winked and smiled. "You do have a job to do." "So, Swanson. Will you tell me now what we need to know?" "Go fuck yourself, you psychotic bitch! How the fuck am I blind?!" "How? Because Marsh here blinded you. He's a Djinn, they can do

that...apparently." "I told you I can do many things." "And I believe that...although mention of specific things would be

even better." "And what fun would that be for me?" "Who the fuck are you! Give me my fucking eyes back, you sick fuck!" Swanson raged, trying to get out of the triple knot that Marsh tied him up with.

"My name is Janey Duvall, not that I expect it to mean anything to you."

Marsh just tutted the guy. "Now tell the lady what she wants to know and you get your precious eyes back." Swanson whimpered and nodded, Marsh looked at Janey with a triumphant glare. "Go for it, pet."

She sighed at his smug attitude. "Tell us what you did with your wife and why you're here, well away from her and your parish, fucking everything with tits and a skirt." "I told you, she's in Tulsa under heavy guard." "Yeah, but that tells us nothing...maybe we should just keep his

eyes." He whimpered and shook his head. "I just fucking told you!" "No, you told us nothing...why are you here? Why is she there? I

didn't ask *where* she was." "Why would I want the stone around my neck? I got her money,

that's all I wanted, the gimp." Janey raised an eyebrow over at Marsh. "Huh?" she mouthed

silently. "Didn't you heal her?" Marsh asked. "Yeah, for a while I did, once she was mine and her fortune, too, she

went back to what she was before." "Which was?" Janey asked. Marsh shut his eyes. "She had Cystic Fibrosis. You fucking

bastard." "Can we kill him now?" Marsh chuckled. "Yeah. Cut the fucker's eyes out." She nodded, grabbing him by the hair and cutting out one of his eyes, throwing it to the floor with a *swish* before moving onto the second one. "Damn, I knew there was a reason I wore red, and to think I was considering white." She told him as the blood ran over her hands.

Swanson screamed and whimpered, begging. Marsh scoffed. "You fucking prick, you deserve it. But don't worry, you won't be feeling much of anything after this. So tell me, before we kill your ass for being a blight on humanity, what exactly are you?" Swanson whimpered. "A fey. Please, please don't kill me." Marsh's voice went cold. "I figured that much, you fuck. What

kind?" She finished cutting out the other eye. "Oooh, we have a bleeder,"

she commented off-handedly. Swanson twitched and sobbed. "Half Hypno." Marsh nodded and

looked at Janey. "Fucking waste of powers." "Yep, he could have made a lot of money with us. I hate wasted

talent." Marsh shook his head. "Kill his ass. He's no good to anyone, and we

have five minutes till the contract is up." She shook her head, pulling out the gun and shooting Swanson inbetween his ruined eyes. "I'll call a clean up crew in, they'll blitz the place." Marsh shrugged. "Whatever. Fucking bastard, that poor woman." "Yeah, well, I'm sure it's not just her. Pity she didn't find her own Djinn, eh?" He nodded. "Okay, let's get the hell out of here before my team arrives. Maybe we can grab a burger?" She asked hopefully, putting her gun away pulling out her cell, calling up the number for her cleaning crew. They'd deal with the mess that used to be Swanson, pity they couldn't do anything about her top.

He turned and grabbed his coat. "I think you should get changed first. We'll order in, though I think your pudge can stand a salad."

## **Eighteen**

Mal glanced over at the sleeping assassin beside him and smiled. She really had given her all, but in the end he'd worn her out. She'd given him a run for his money, though, and those breasts of hers were perfect. Not as good as Janey's, but Mal had always secretly thought that they were fake, and he preferred them real.

He peeled back the satin sheet, revealing the pale flesh and feeling his body stiffen. She was a keeper, all right, but he wasn't in the market to buy, only try. Sure, he'd miss the late night to early morning romps that left her exhausted and him well-fed, but he knew he'd tire of it soon, and Taylor was not one for the extra company. Besides, he was going to Russia, and he sure as hell couldn't take her there. She wouldn't last ten minutes training or no. Russia's locals were not friendly to outside threats.

He'd take her card, maybe leave her his, depending on what mood he was in before his flight. He looked back over her exposed milky skin again; faint bruises marred the flesh where he'd feasted earlier. He'd definitely leave a card.

He jumped as his phone started to ring, spewing out the "Funky Town" tune that he'd now come to hate. He answered it quickly, pulling the sheet back over Miranda as he got out of the bed.

"Monroe's Morgue, you kill 'em we chill 'em. How may I direct your call?" he mocked in his best phone voice. He grinned, expecting Taylor's aggravated voice to sound loudly; after all, he had to get his thrills somehow.

"Contract is taken care of." Marsh sighed, his voice sounding tired. "How's the chit?"

"Ah, it's you," he said, surprised, coughing his voice back down to its usual gruffness. "Miranda will live."

"And how do you feel about that?" he asked, slight amusement evident in his tone. "Don't feel anything about it...although she's more convenient

alive." "Very true. I take it you enjoyed yourself?" "About as much as I'm allowed to. So Swanson's dead, how did that

go?" "I wish I could say textbook, but we weren't that lucky. The fucker

is going to have his own room in Hell, Mal." Mal laughed loudly. "Fuck, next to mine and the boss's?"

"Mal, trust me, Taylor plans to rule Hell with you by his side. No, this fucker is unique. You know he cured his wife only to marry her and then take the cure away? That's truly evil."

"Yeah, I guess," Mal answered, noncommittal. He'd seen and done worse. Although in his defense it could all be rationalized by Taylor; whether it could be justified in the real world, he had his doubts. Working for the demon sure did mess up his chances of ever seeing those pearly gates. Then there was the fact that everything the demon did was more or less his fault. Most days he could stab down the feeling of guilt he felt, most days. "So, when's your flight out?"

"Tonight. Janey is sleeping off her double cheeseburger, and I changed the flight so we would have more time. A courier just left with the bastard's eyes for the family." "Okay, you want me to tell Miranda anything?" "Just tell her that the contract is finished, and that she's getting fifty percent. She's lucky she's getting that much, but I convinced Janey it was for her pain and suffering, and for porking that sick fuck Swanson."

"Yeah, it's a good thing she doesn't remember...that sort of shit is just fucked. Never catch me doing that, I must not that bad after all. Though, I bet I do a lot of shit Swanson wouldn't dream of."

"Maybe, but the fucker doesn't dream anymore. Janey made sure of that." "Of that I have no doubt. And Taylor? What will I tell him?" "That the fey was a waste of oxygen, and he might wanna check out the wife, Lulana Tchi. She's hurting and I think he might be able to get a soul out of the deal...in exchange for taking the disease away."

"He wouldn't make the trip, but I'll see what I can do. I know some healers in that area. I'll work something out with them." "Shame, bet the girl's got a lot of vengeance he could use..." "Same should be said of you and sweet cheeks, but like I said, I'll look into it." "Janey's vengeance isn't something to outright use. It needs to be

bottled." "Indeed." Mal sighed, the Djinn was not getting his point. "Well, we don't have the time to be training vengeful upstarts. I have enough trouble with the ones I already have, coupled with trying to be a vengeful upstart all of my own making, and I just so don't have the time. I'll send the healer, make her sign something in blood, standard contract, but I'll prolly never get the time to call in the department." "Well, I offered. When is your flight out?" Mal checked his watch. "Soon, I should be checking in about now, but I'll phone over late. It'll hold up the plane and piss everyone off, so I got a few hours."

"Mal, you truly are a pain in the ass. Tell Miranda we'll be in touch with her."

"Will do, I'll leave it in my note. I gotta swing by the orphanage first, sign some release papers. Some of the lucky fuckers actually got adopted." "Some get saved, that's the way of it." "I guess, although we'll have to do severe home checks. The only orphanage in the world that uses mind readers in their interviews. It's one of his many good ideas..." He sighed again, this was going to be a guilty day. "So, I guess I'll be seeing you around then."

"Indeed. Stop by if you're in Rome. It will piss Janey off to hell and back and you know how I enjoy that."

"Will do, and if you're ever in..." He trailed off at the thought of Marsh actually talking to Taylor face to face. He shuddered fearfully, although fear for whom he wouldn't know. "Well, if I'm in Rome I'll call."

Marsh laughed on the other end. "Enjoy, Mal, I'm off to wake Pudgy up..."

"Pudgy." Mal laughed. "God, she'll hate that. I'll catch you later." He hung up and set off to write Miranda her note. \* \* \* Marsh walked into the common room of the suite to where Janey was perfectly curled on the couch, snoring softly. *See what happens when I let her eat beef? It is cute, though, and fuck if she doesn't look like an angel. A very deadly angel, but an angel nonetheless.* He sat on the floor near her head and smirked. *And shit if she's going to hate this.* He pinched her nose shut, and counted. *Five...four...three...* She sputtered and woke up, fire in her eyes, to which Marsh just

grinned. "You snore." She glared up at him. "And I'm fat...you thinking of trading me in?" He laughed and grabbed her by the waist, pulling her down to his lap, and kissed her. "I never said I didn't like the snoring, I only stated the fact that you do indeed snore."

"True, but waking me up so I don't do it anymore is a clear indicator, and I don't snore loudly." She pouted sleepily, her head weighing heavily on his shoulder.

"I woke you up 'cuz we have to get ready to leave. I pushed our flight back, but we still got dinner and packing to do. And you can sleep on the plane. I called Mal. Miranda is still alive, probably no worse for wear."

"Glad to hear it, although I would have enjoyed taking a hit out on him. I still don't see why we have to pay her half the money. She should get nothing and have to pay for our expenses."

"Now, Janey. She fucked that slimy fuck, not of her own free will. Where I come from, that gets reparations."

"Where I come from its called going in half-assed. She should have done her research, she's lucky to be alive."

"Very true. Still, for a girl that isn't at all familiar with fey, just demons, she couldn't know. But that's moot. She's keeping the money."

"Fine, but I'm giving her all the shitty jobs for a few years." Janey smiled evilly. "I'll transfer her to marital affairs. That should keep her out of trouble."

"You are one evil bitch, pet. So everything is pretty square. Calls have been made and I called down for dinner. Sushi."

"Ugh, you never order anything normal. I can't wait to get back home, get away from all the fish. And you're gonna make me eat it aren't you?"

"Damn right. It's good. You will like it, though I can't imagine how the hell you have lived this long and not had sushi."

She sighed, shaking her head. "It's just not something that appeals to me."

He kissed her and nuzzled her neck. "Now, pet, when have I ever lied to you about food?" "Well, never, really, but you don't like shellfish." "It's not shellfish, pet. It's salmon, tuna, mackerel, squid, clam...all good stuff." "You know, I could have sworn that clams are shellfish," she said,

amused. "Someone has been lying to you." She laughed, shaking her head. "Doubtful." He scooted her off his lap and stood. "Fine, you don't have to eat it,

more for me." "Good." She stood. "So that's Mal out of the way?" "Yep. And I mentioned Lulana to him. I think he's going to have

Taylor bargain her. It's probably the best thing for the woman." "I don't think thrusting Taylor on anyone is a good idea." "I think it's better than death." "I wouldn't bet on it." He turned and grabbed the phone. "So what am I ordering you?" "Pasta." She grinned. "Ooh, carbonara. I could kill for some." Marsh dialed down and ordered the meal to be added on to the already placed order, then hung up and turned to her. "I'm going to pack up, so we don't have to rush after dinner."

She nodded. "Sure thing. I'll call Ko and get him up to date, he should be up by now unless Trent's dragged him out."

He gave her a dismissive wave and walked into the bedroom to pack, which was done in all of five minutes. He never packed more than he needed, and he always kept everything neat enough that it could fit back into the suitcase quickly. His toothbrush and razor, an old-fashioned stropping deal, was safely tucked away in the inner pocket of his case as well. He finished zipping up his garment bag and waked out of the bedroom to Janey closing her cell. "Everything okay?"

"Yep, everything's all set to go back to Rome. Ko's paying Miranda and he's managed to avoid Trent."

"Beauty." The knock on the door came moments later and their food rolled in when Marsh opened it for them. They sat and ate in silence, Marsh devouring piece after piece of his sushi. The dinner was leisurely and in the end they had a little under half an hour before they had to leave. "Mmm...that was wonderful." She sat back, finishing her wine. "I'm glad you enjoyed. So? What's next? Home? Back to our

routine." "Yeah, I think...back to work as always. Papers and such, although

maybe more gym time." "Pudgy," he said as he sipped his sake. She sighed. "I am not...I'm just not as healthy as I used to be. I was

dying, you know." He laughed and shook his head. "You're perfect, Janey, and I don't

tell you that enough." "No, you sure don't." He smiled and patted his lap. "Come here." She smiled, standing up and easing onto his lap. He nuzzled her neck and breathed her in, sighing. "You are perfect,

pet, and you're mine." "And you're all mine, Nick. Although to call you perfect would just

add to your already over inflated ego." "My ego is not inflated, pet. I just know my own self worth." "Well, that's a very good thing." "I did enjoy this little trip." "Yeah, me, too. It's been good to get out of Rome." He smiled and slipped his hand around her waist. "And I still have

Risa's card." "Yeah, although I don't think we should trust her until we know

what she is." "Well, we can't find out until we see her again." "I know, but I'll maybe make a few calls first." He glanced at the clock, then patted her ass. "Limo will be her in

ten minutes." She kissed his cheek, standing and moving into the room. "So, we're

leaving the corset?" she shouted. *Over my dead body*, he thought as he relaxed. "You aren't being funny, pet." She murmured something that he couldn't quite hear. Eventually she



came out with her cases. "Wishful thinking." "Yeah I bet. Though I think the four others I had ordered and

shipped to our place in Rome would be lonely without their brother." She shook her head, shock, frustration and disgust warring on her

face. "Why does it have to be a boy?" she snapped after a while. "You'd prefer a woman caressing those perfect breasts of yours,

because I'm sure I can arrange that again." "No, I prefer you caressing them, and so do they. But it's only

typical that something so...revealing like that would be a male." He smiled. "That's the way it is. Cars are women, and corsets are

men." "Boats are women, too." "Most true." He laughed and got up off his chair and went to her catching his jacket with one hand while snaking the other around her waist. "All this talk about travel is making me homesick for our bed. Shall we, pet? We have a long ride ahead of us."

"We do indeed." She kissed him softly. "Lead the way, Nicky." She laughed.

"Call me Nicky one more time, pet, and you're going to get a good strapping."

"Ooh, promises, promises. You know I'll like that so you better make good on that last statement...Nicky" She picked up her case and walked out the door, leaving him to get the rest.

Marsh looked around the room once on his way out making sure he caught everything. Satisfied, he pulled the door shut on their pseudo vacation and looked towards the future. They had talked about his family and he had promised to take her to meet them, and he always kept his promises, especially to her. So he would take her to meet them, though he would do it on his terms. *Yeah, I think surprising them at Christmas would be fun. I can just sit back and watch the fur fly.* He chuckled to himself as he walked up to his consort, who was waiting for the elevator doors to open. *And speaking of that strapping, I know exactly what Janey is getting when we get home.*

## About the Authors

Stella and Audra Price are sisters who have always shared their love of writing, even as children. Now in their twenties, they have created a complete world from the voices in their heads which they have deemed the Eververse. They both have similar interests in makeup, horror movies, dogs and a love of a good bottle of wine; they rarely disagree, unless it's over the last glass of that wine.

They live in a small converted farm house which is home to their menagerie of animals including 10 huskies, three cats; a fish called Claude, Linus the English bulldog, Zorro the king of beasts and Stella's very Evil "the Moo."

They can often be found at their local wine club, tasting various vintages and bringing the finest home with them. Both are avid adventurers and love to accept any new challenge that's offered to them.

Audra

Although relatively young, Audra has enjoyed her fair share of life. Now engaged to her "high school sweetheart" she hopes to be married in 07. She's a fully qualified make-up artist and enjoys meeting new people. Audra has been showing and racing her huskies, competitively since the tender age of eight.  
Stella

Stella, the more experienced of the two sisters, has done many exciting things in her life. She's been a model, an ice cream slinger, a custom designer, and a tour manager. Throughout this all, art has always been an integral part of her life and she excels in sculpting, even though her drawing skills are somewhat lacking. Her knowledge of *Star Wars* and *Lord of the Rings* trivia remains unparalleled. She is a voracious reader who loves movie quotes and video games.

You can check out their website at [www.stellaandaudra.com](http://www.stellaandaudra.com).

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