

CHAPTER 4



3838 WALNUT STREET

FICTION

Rawly Rawls

3838 Walnut Street 4

Illustrations by SatanicFruitcake

Written by RawlyRawls

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Chapter 4

There's Something Glowing Down Here

January 22, 1940: Apartment 14B, the Norwood family.

Snarling and howling came from the Norwood bedroom. There was silence for a moment, and then a loud crunch of breaking furniture sounded through the closed door.

Floyd and Natalie eyed one another out in the hall. Their faces were ashen and pinched from fright.

"She sounds like a wild animal." Floyd clutched at his suit jacket, his fingers wrenching at the expensive wool fabric.

"Shall I send for the doctor again, sir?" Natalie worried her lip with her teeth.

"The doctors know next to nothing, and they incite her to higher levels of destruction." Floyd shook his head. "No, Mrs. Creech. I fear it's time for you to summon a priest. The devil has made a home in my wife. Have you seen how her wonderful, slender body has bloated? Have you seen the feral look in her eyes? Did you see ...?" He lowered his voice. "... the way she leapt onto the wall yesterday? It was ... unnatural."

"Yes, sir." Natalie agreed. She steeped her hands and said a quick prayer. "A priest then."



"It's either that or an asylum, Mrs. Creech." Floyd nervously took a step back when the door began vibrating as if someone were running wicked claws across it. "Run along. Find me a priest who can handle possession."

"Yes, sir." Mrs. Creech turned and ran. It wouldn't be difficult for her. She had a priest in mind. She had known this moment would come for more than a week, and she had done her research to be ready to help her mistress.

October 23, 1993: Apartment 9B: Diary of Rosalin Eklund.



I haven't talked to Brian since he kissed me in the basement. Since then, it has been so unbearably awkward seeing him in the building, walking around with his Walkman and trumpet case. I don't know why, but I can't stop thinking about his strong arms holding me and his brash tongue. I shiver even writing that. It's been almost a month and still my mind wanders back to that hormonal teenager constantly. The only reprieve I get is when I'm with Dave. Which isn't as often as I'd like. But my sweet man does help me take my mind off things.

I have made some progress on the case. Marjorie Breaming is a friendly woman down the hall in 9A. I've managed to befriend her. Her husband works in the building as a janitor, which is ... odd. I haven't been able to get more than a few words out of him. Her oldest son still lives with them, although he keeps mostly to himself, too. They also have two younger children.

Mrs. Breaming has confirmed that there is a chapel in the building. From what she's said, and from what I've managed to eavesdrop from the Brown family in 7B, I have deduced that the chapel is on the thirteenth floor. Apparently, much of the building attends regular services there. I've never heard of anything like it in New York or ... anywhere else for that matter. It's almost cultish for a building to have its own services. The evils of cults have been in the news lately. The chapel, and whatever goes on there, certainly seems like a clue.

Mrs. Breaming says that I'll be invited to services once I've been here long enough. I asked if everyone in the building was invited. She said, "If Mrs. Creech approved your rental application, then you will be welcome to attend services." Apparently, religious tenants have a key to the thirteenth floor. I will have to see about finding Mrs. Breaming's key and copying it with a casting. Just like I did on the Bloomfield case.

Finally, the book I ordered from the library came in. *Early Pagan Art* by Artur Victorovitch Siyankov has a section on what I think is depicted in the lobby. In Eastern Europe, there was a myth of a goddess of the forest. The story involves the hunter, the hunted, the mother, and some sort of betrayal. Mr. Siyankov painted quite a few illustrations of the tale, but he's written few words about it. I'll study it more when I have some time.



Brian ... Brian ... Brian. What would have happened if I hadn't pushed him off me? What would he have done to me in the dark with that eerie carmine glow pulsing all around us? Being down there, it was almost like being in 3838 Walnut's belly. Can you imagine creating new life in the building's womb? Brian, Brian, Brian, Brian. He must have had to summon all his courage to kiss me. And I tossed it all away. I need to take a break.

I'm not sure where that came from. As you can see, Brian is still on my mind. How strange!

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January 22, 1940: Apartment 14B, the Norwood family.

"How did it go, Father?" Floyd wrung his hands nervously.

"She seems to be doing well, Mr. Norwood." William McCaffery stepped out of the bedroom and gently closed the door behind him. "The room is a bit of a mess. While it's fine to be firm with your wife, I recommend watching your anger, Mr. Norwood. Perhaps if you came into the church more often -"

"I didn't destroy that room. She did." Floyd's face darkened.

"I very much doubt that. She's a mild woman with a mother's look and disposition." William frowned right back at Floyd. "Even if she had a violent temperament, which she does not, how could she possibly smash your dresser or bedframe like that? I know man's work when I see it."

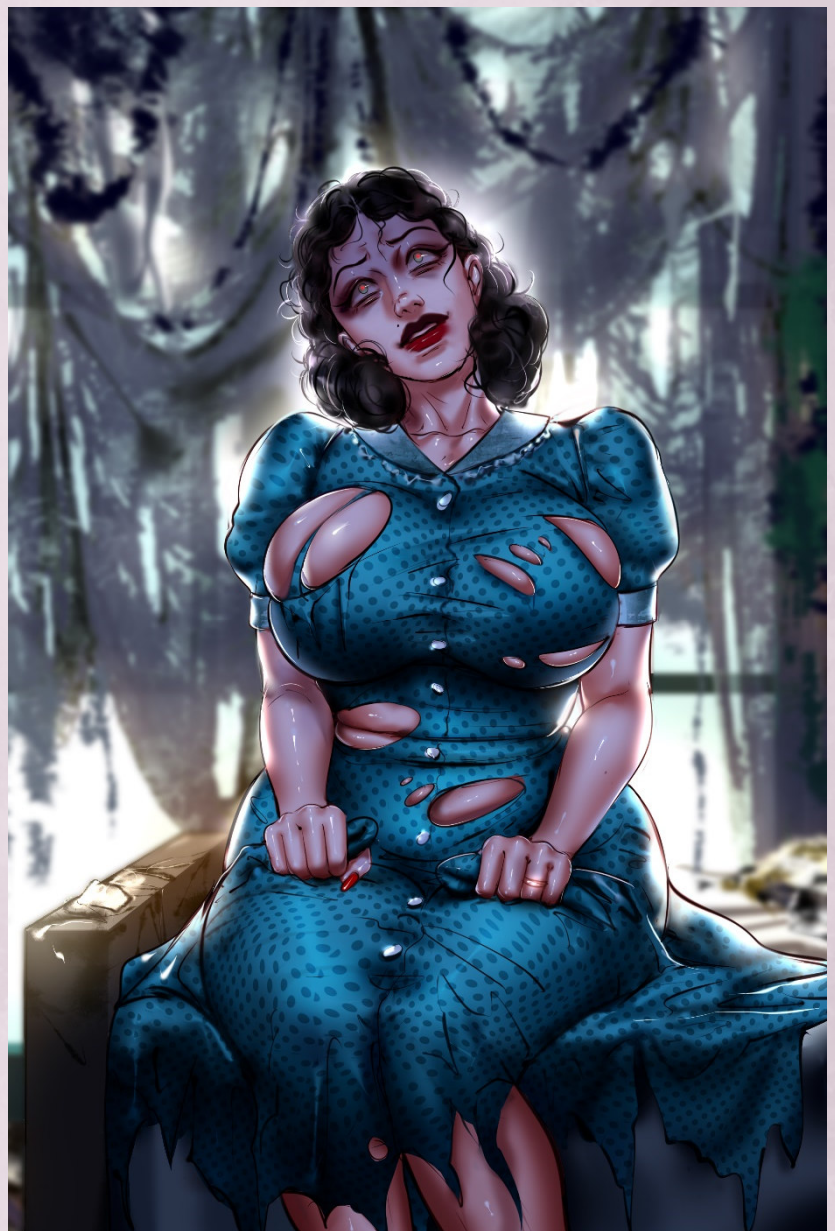
"A mother's look and disposition'? We have no child." Floyd's cheeks turned crimson with anger. "Not long ago, she was slender and graceful. But she's been eating like a cow. And now she looks like one. Those udders are -"

"Mr. Norwood, please stop." William looked at the wayward man with pity and compassion. "I urge you to come to His house with me now and seek His light. You are quite obviously troubled, and I'm worried what you may do to your wife."

"That's enough." Floyd grabbed the clergyman by the collar and dragged him to the front door. Without another word, he tossed the man out and slammed the door. He returned to his bedroom and looked inside. The place was a wreck. The curtains were torn and hanging askew. Detritus consisting of broken wood, torn bedding, and clothing littered the floor. Feathers from their mattress puffed into the air and fluttered as Elizabeth turned to look at her husband. Her smile was beatific.

"Did you not think I could fool a simpleton like Father McCaffery?" Elizabeth clasped her hands on the ripped fabric of her dress.

"Liz ..." Floyd stared at his wife. In the gloom of the room, she looked terrible and beautiful. Horribly captivating. Her pale skin almost glowed, and her eyes seemed to reflect red light from somewhere, but he couldn't determine the source. "I'll send you to an asylum to recover."



"You'll do no such thing. I won't be separated from Her." Elizabeth's voice was calm and even, but there was threat in her posture and gaze. "It's silly, really. I can't be separated from Her. Not even if I wanted to."

"The statue again?" Floyd teetered between rage and cowardice. His anger won. "I'll destroy it."

"No!" Elizabeth let out a vicious snarl and leapt eight feet in the air. She landed on the wall, and ... somehow hung there on her hands and feet, defying gravity. Her fingernails dug into the wallpaper. She bared her teeth. "I am the wolf. I am the stag. I am the mother. I am the sacrifice. I am the resurrection. You cannot ..." She blinked her eyes and shook her head. Suddenly, she lost her grip and fell to the floor with a loud thump. "Floyd? Floyd darling?" She reached a hand out for him.

Floyd could hear his wife's true voice return to her. He raced across the room and grasped her clammy hand, falling to his knees. "Tell me what to do, Liz. The devil has you."

"What have I become?" Elizabeth looked down at her ill-fitting, sundered dress. Her novel, Rubenesque body was practically spilling out of it. "What am I becoming?"

"We'll get you help, Elizabeth. I promise." Floyd held dearly to his wife's hand. She gripped him back with strength he would not expect from her or any woman. "You're ... um ... hurting my hand ... Liz."

Elizabeth pulled her husband closer. Her voice dipped into a growl. "You will be the first sacrifice. We will build an altar and your blood will paint it."



"Oh ... God." Floyd staggered back when she released his grip. He fell, rose, and hustled out of the room, slamming the door behind him. Natalie and her husband waited for him in the hall.

"How is the missus?" Natalie held her husband's hand. The Norwoods paid for their servants to live on the first floor, so they were readily available. This had seemed like a good idea to Natalie at the time. But now, she wished she might escape this situation. As much as she would like to, it was impossible for her to be unavailable to the Norwoods.

"What can we do, sir?" Bernard stuck out his chin in grim determination.

"Mrs. Creech, I want you to stay in the room with Mrs. Norwood. See that she doesn't hurt herself." Floyd was having difficulty forming a plan. He knew he needed to book an asylum for his wife, but the thought of doing so repelled him in a way he couldn't quite put his finger on. "Mr. Creech ... you'll keep watch out in the hall tonight. Tomorrow, I'll see about finding the right help for Mrs. Norwood." Exhaustion settled in his bones. "But for now ... I will sleep in the living room." He thought briefly of smashing the fertility statue with a fire poker. But he couldn't seem to find the courage to do that. "I ... need to sleep."

"Yes, sir." Mr. and Mrs. Creech said as they exchanged a look.

"I don't want to be in that room with her," Natalie said when Floyd was gone.

"Never fear, darling. I'll be right here. Call out if you need me." Bernard fetched an armchair and sat in the hall. He gave his wife a reassuring smile. "It'll be okay." He watched her open the door with a trembling hand.

"Why, hello, Mrs. Creech." Elizabeth's voice was downright jaunty, as if meeting a friend at the park. "Don't be shy. Come in. I won't bite."

"Okay, Mrs. Norwood." With apprehension, Natalie gave one last, baleful glance to her husband and closed the door, shutting herself in with Elizabeth for the night.



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November 15, 1993: Apartment 12C, the Kwon family.

“Brian! Brian!” Darby pounded on his door. “You’re playing too loud. The neighbors are complaining.” Boisterous Trumpet music resounded out of her son’s room. He was usually so good about not playing at home. But here he was, blasting it in the middle of the day. “Ugh! Can you hear me?!?” The last time she’d heard him play, it had been a wonderful Jazz medley. This sounded like that horrible rock music he liked to listen to. *How did he even learn how to play Nirvana on the trumpet?*

The awful music continued. Darby turned, went into the kitchen, and poured a tall glass of water. How many times was she going to have to douse him? This had been the way she’d taken to controlling his erratic behavior the last couple months. “I thought they were supposed to get easier at nineteen,” she whispered through clenched teeth. Returning to her son’s door, she smoothed out her sweater, and wiped her clammy palm on her jeans. The hand that held the glass trembled. *Why is he giving me so much trouble?* She knocked again. “Brian! Brian? Stop it! Stop that music! Brian ... that’s enough.” The trumpet continued to vibrate through the door.

Darby put her sweating palm on the doorknob and turned. She pushed the door open and stepped into her son’s room. She was ready to throw the water on him, but her hand stopped, some of the water sloshing out of the glass at the sudden motion. Her eyes went wide. She inhaled deeply. Her son’s room smelled like the den of some animal. She picked up hints of sweat and something else. *It smells like date night with Greg.* Her eyes went wider. *I’m smelling Brian’s sperm.* And that wasn’t surprising. Because he stood by the window, completely naked. His penis was enormous and stiff. There was a strand of semen hanging from the head of it, bobbing in time to the music. His slender body was covered in perspiration. He continued to play the trumpet, even though his eyes were on her. Over his shoulder, outside the window, one of the apartment’s gargoyles perched on the wall. The cement thing almost appeared to be looking in at them with amusement. Darby took another deep lungful of the miasma around her. Her knees trembled.



Brian would have smiled, but he was playing music with all his might. It definitely smelled like Teen Spirit in the room.

“Brian ... what is this?” Darby was quivering. Her son was so vibrant. So full of life. *So ready to create life. It's lucky he doesn't have a girlfriend. He looks so potent, I'm sure I'd already be a grandmother.* Her eyes glued themselves to the knobby head of his penis and the dangling sperm. The penis looked hard as steel, and the veins on it were such a dark blue that they were almost black. Those raised ridges snaked about his long pole. She thought back to when she'd walked in on him all those weeks ago. Then, she'd thought that his member looked like his father's. *He must have disfigured himself with all his yanking, because it looks nothing like his father's tame thing now. It looks vile ... and wild. I wonder if I should touch it?* Darby caught herself contemplating the horrible thought and finally threw the cold water onto her son.

Brian removed the trumpet from his mouth. The sudden silence in the room was deafening. Slowly, he put the trumpet on his desk, and gazed at his mother. She was panting, her large chest rising and falling rapidly. Her expression was somewhere between elated and terrified. “It's time.”

“What?” Darby's voice squeaked.

“Things are going to change around here, Mom.” Brian took a confident step toward his mother. He pushed back his wet, black hair and smiled. “I can't hold back anymore. I've tried.”

“I'm your mother, Brian.” Darby's voice was soft and sibilant.

“What's that? ‘I'm your mother, Brian,’” he said in a mocking tone.

“Something's come over you, sweetie. You're ... not like this.” Darby trembled as her son moved closer and closer to her. Soon, the heat of his breath carried into her nostrils, mixing with the smells of sperm and sweat that permeated the room.

“Something is about to cum over you too, Mom.” Brian grabbed his now lengthy penis and jacked it with both hands. The cum under his foreskin squelched in the quiet room.

“Stop ... stop it ... Brian ... something evil has taken over you.” Darby looked down at his horrid penis as he pumped it. The motion was crude and distasteful, but it pulled at something primordial inside her. “Are you ... are you ... on drugs?”



Brian let out a long, frenzied laugh. "I can hear Her when I go to the basement, Mom. I am the one that will bring Her back. Me! Can you believe it?" Pleasure surged through him.

"What's happening?" Darby was so confused. She wanted to reach out and touch his awful, deformed thing. It was so close, she could easily do just that. Her hand moved, but hesitated. Her other hand released the empty glass and it dropped to the floor with a thud, unbroken.



"It's finally happening." Brian jacked himself harder. His balls pulsed. His whole body pulsed in rhythm with the building. He was making sweet, solo music. "Cumming ... Mom."

"What?" Darby felt like she was watching everything from a great distance. She knew she should run, but instead, she stood like a dummy and let her son spray her with his smelly, sticky stuff. There was so much sperm, and it launched from his penis with such force. He really was an incredible paragon of potency. Darby had never seen anything like the eruption before. Not by an order of magnitude. Her son covered the front of her sweater from her breasts down to her hemline. He also coated the front of her jeans. Darby trembled and inhaled, breathing in the scent as deeply as she could. The pungent, bestial odor corroded her mind. "Oh ... no ... Brian ... you're soaking me." And that was true in more ways than one. She knew her panties were a sopping mess. *I shouldn't respond to anyone but Greg. But ... but ... but ... Brian's tearing the civilization right out of me.*

When Brian's ejaculation completed, he stopped his feral

grunting, opened his eyes, and regarded the destruction of his mother's wardrobe. "So ... I think ... I have another one in me. Would you like to ...?" He pointed at his throbbing dick.

Darby dropped to her knees. The wild had entered their Manhattan apartment. They might as well be in the forest primeval. She reached out and grasped his penis. "It's so hot ... and huge." Her words were barely audible. *I came in here to douse Brian. To bring him back to reality. But he's doused me. He's brought me ... here.* She leaned forward and licked the knobby head of his penis. Her eyes rolled back, and she lost herself in the salty, life-giving taste of his stuff. "You've ... become a man ... Brian." She licked again. Quickly, her jaw was open as wide as could be, and she was bobbing her head on her son's penis.

"Not a man, Mom. I'm becoming ... something ... more." He laced his fingers in her silky, black hair. This is what he wanted. This is how it would be going forward. *My mother is on her knees serving me ... and serving Her.*



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January 23, 1940: Apartment 14B, the Norwood family.

"Natalie ... are you okay?" Bernard knocked softly on the Norwood bedroom door. It was the middle of the night. Floyd slept in the living room. Elizabeth and Natalie had been silent for hours, but he could hear muffled talking and scraping in the room. He recognized Natalie's voice, and she was speaking softly, but with urgency. He strained to hear, but couldn't make out the words. "Mrs. Norwood? Natalie? Is everything okay?"

"Don't come in here, Bernard." Natalie called loudly through the door. "We're simply ... uuuggghhh ... trying to ... oooohhhhhh."

Is our employer hurting my wife? Has the once regal Mrs. Norwood gone that feral? Bernard knocked louder. "Natalie ... do you need me?"

"She doesn't need you, Bernard." Elizabeth's tone was mocking, as her voice came muffled through the door. "Those days are past."

"Eeeeeekkkk ... Bernard ... I don't want you ... to see this ... I'll ... be okay ... I'll ... uuuuuggggghhhh ... ugh ... ugh ... eeeeeeeek ... aaaaahhhhhh." The rest of Natalie's words were incoherencies.

Floyd turned the knob and opened the door. He searched for the ladies, but saw only rubble. He stepped into the room. He could hear his wife still crying out. Her noises were accompanied by a terrible, slurping sound. He found their empty dresses on the floor. He knelt and lifted his wife's modest outfit. "Natalie?"

"Oooohhhhhh ... Bernard ... her tongue ... is reaching ... into my ... uuuggghhhhhh ... soul." Natalie said. She could see her husband was bravely looking around the room. This was her only chance at salvation. "I fear ... I fear ... she's put something ... inside me ... Bernard ... you must save me."



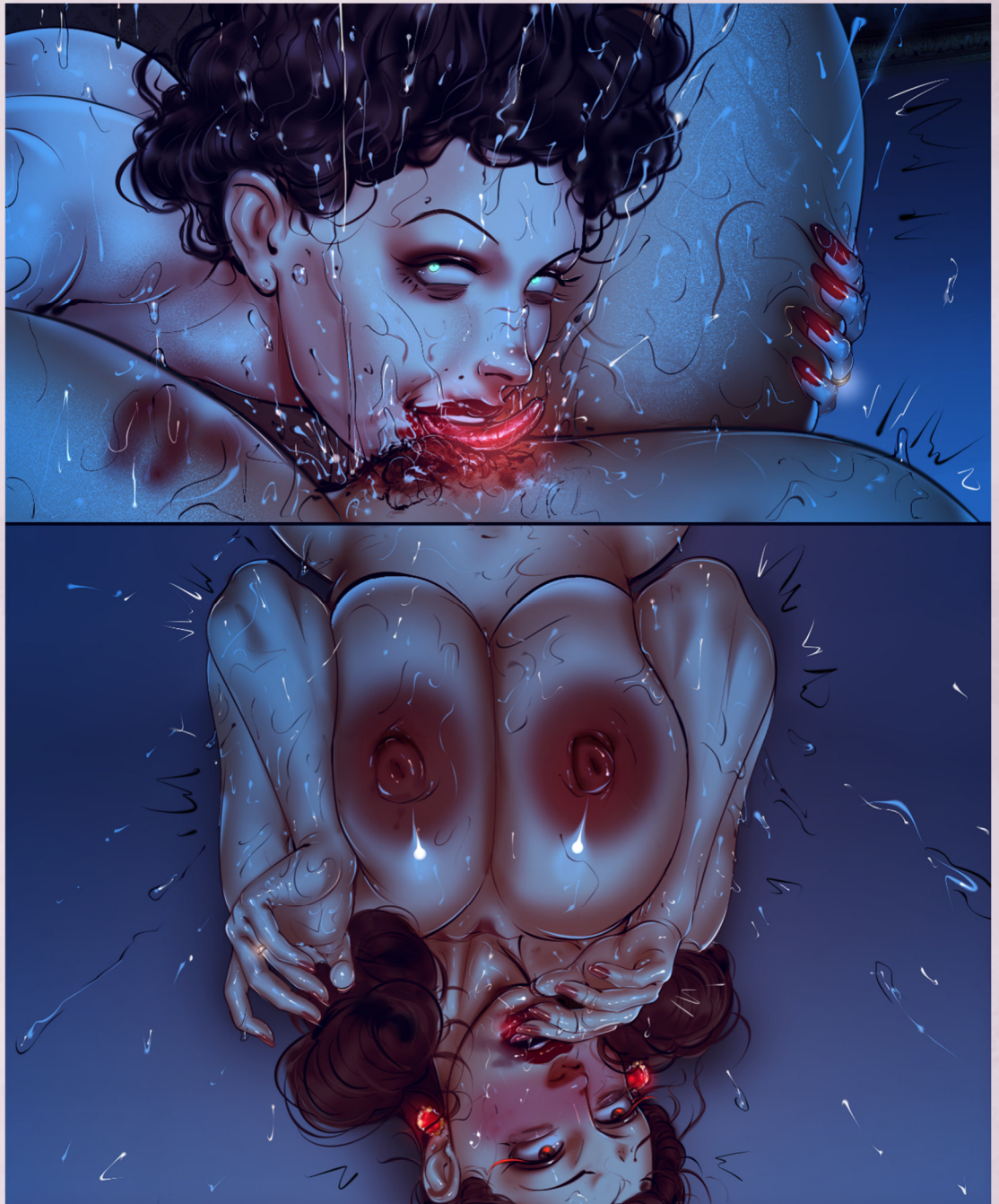
"Where ... where are you?" He spun in the gloom. The only light coming from the city through torn curtains. "I don't see you."

"Save ... meeeeeeeeeeeeeee." Natalie convulsed as ethereal pleasure ripped through her nerves.

A drop of liquid landed on the floor next to him. And then another fell on his shoulder. Slowly, Bernard turned his gaze upward. He gasped, stepped backward, and stumbled to the floor. The women were pallid, naked shapes twisted together. Elizabeth had somehow pinned Natalie to the ceiling. Elizabeth's heavy breasts and dark hair hung with gravity, but otherwise she seemed to have forgotten that force entirely. Elizabeth's face was buried between Natalie's legs. That was where the horrid slurping sounds were coming from. Bernard crawled backward until his head hit the wall, then he lay there, staring at the grotesque spectacle above him.

"Help ... me ... Bernard ... I can feel it ... feel it ... inside meeeeeeeee." Natalie writhed under her mistress's oral onslaught.

"Oh ... my sweet ... Natalie." Bernard turned away from them and crawled out of the room. He slammed the door and lay in the hall. His wife screamed and moaned for hours, but the noise never woke Floyd. Bernard, however, didn't get a wink of sleep. When silence finally emanated from the room, that sound was more terrible than the wanton noises from before.



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February 26, 2015: Apartment 12E, the Dahir family.

“Welcome home, Abshir and Hani.” Uba stood in the hallway when her eighteen-year-old twins arrived home. “Before you go running to your rooms. I need you to take the laundry down to the basement and start a load.”

“But, Mom.” Abshir desperately needed to fap. Then a thought occurred to him. “Hani doesn’t have to do it, why don’t you help me, Mom?”

Uba narrowed her eyes. She didn’t want to be alone with her son in the basement. She glanced at her daughter. Maybe Hani shouldn’t go either. “I have to go to the shop. They need me behind the counter this afternoon. And since you gave me lip, Abshir, you’ll have to go down to the basement by yourself. Hani, you’re excused.”

Hani pulled off her hijab, stuck out her tongue, and blew her brother a raspberry. “What’s wrong, you’d rather dirty your socks than clean them?”



“Hey.” Abshir frowned.

“Hani.” Uba shook a fist at her retreating daughter. Hani’s door slammed. “I told you not to slam doors.” Uba shook her head. “I want the laundry done before I get home at seven.” She shook her head at her son and walked off to get ready for work.

Abshir adjusted his glasses as he watched his mother’s ass disappear out of the room. Even under her draping dresses, his mother made his heart hurt. And his dick. He grimaced as another painful erection tented his pants. He pulled his penis up under his waistband. A tactic he used often now that it was long enough to rest against his belly. He thought about going to his room for a quick release, but the laundry wouldn’t wait.



In the basement, Abshir got the machines running and sat on the folding table. He watched the clothes spin for a while. Then he texted Joe. His friend wasn't busy, so Joe texted back that he'd come down to the basement.

Abshir opened his Bloodlines of Conquest game and started playing. It took five minutes to complete the chalice task and acquire the news that Prince Varthos was adopted. "Spoiler alert," he whispered to himself.

The lights went out. "Joe?" Abshir looked around in the darkness. The washing machines shook and rattled. He turned his phone at the blackness, using the screen to light up the room. Seconds later, his phone went dead. "Shit. Shit. Stupid battery." He shook the phone to no avail. "This isn't funny, Joey." His voice sounded frail and timid in his own ears. What if his mom had been down here with him when the lights went out? Would he have had the courage to ...?



There's something glowing down here. Slowly, Abshir got off the folding table and walked toward the wall with his hands waving about so he wouldn't run into anything. *It's beautiful.* A red glow pulsed slowly. He found the wall and put his eyes close to the light. The pattern of it on the wall seemed like some sort of plant or fungus maybe.

"Hear me, Abshir." Ogganse called from the other side. "It is your time. You are the stag. You will bring me back to -"

The lights came on. Joe stood in the doorway with his hand on the switch. He looked at his friend touching the concrete wall tenderly. "Dude, what the fuck are you doing?"

"I thought ..." Abshir adjusted his glasses and stepped back from the wall. "I thought I saw something."

"In the dark?" Joe gave him a wolfish smile. "Never mind, you do you, buddy." He laughed. "Do you need to babysit your clothes ... or do you want to grab something to eat? I'm starving."

"Me too." Abshir smiled. "Race you!"

Joe turned and ran up the stairs, with Abshir just behind him. His friend had been more portly when he'd moved into the building. Abshir was slimmer now. And fast. Something felt wrong to Joe as he looked over his shoulder. He stopped when they got to the lobby.



Abshir screeched to a halt beside him. "What's wrong?"

"I don't know. I feel like I should be chasing you." Joe glanced at a nearby relief. It depicted the wolf-headed man howling at the moon while the goddess looked on with approval. He shuddered and looked back at Abshir. "Go ahead. If I catch you, I get to eat your food. Sound good?" Joe said.

Abshir scuffed the floor with his shoe like he was getting ready to charge. "You'll never catch me. He bolted through the lobby. The doorman, Greg, opened the front door just in time as the teenager burst out onto the sidewalk, almost bowling over a woman with groceries. His instinct was to apologize, but there was no time for that. He sped down the sidewalk, heading to the Korean barbeque place a few blocks away.

Joe burst onto the sidewalk. Without thinking, he caught a melon dropped by a woman before it could hit the sidewalk. He handed it back to her and smiled. He could smell her gratitude and arousal. He thought about staying.



“Thank you.” The woman was breathless. One boy had nearly knocked her over, the second one had saved her produce. It had all happened so fast.

“I would love to stay and talk, but the chase is on.” Part of Joe marveled at his quickness and hand-eye coordination. *When did I get so good at using my body?* He winked at the woman and sprinted away after his friend. Zig-zagging through foot traffic, Joe realized he wasn’t going to win. The chase was already over. He’d stopped to help someone, and Abshir was probably already sitting at a table in the restaurant. Joe slowed his pace. His friend had probably upset that woman’s melon on purpose. He sighed, listened to the echoing clamor of the city, and smiled. He wouldn’t take Abshir’s prize this time. There would be more races in their future. He strolled the rest of the way to the restaurant.