



**A CUCKQUEAN  
HAUNTING**

LARAN MITHRAS



**A CUCKQUEAN  
HAUNTING**

LARAN MITHRAS

# **A CUCKQUEAN HAUNTING**

**By**

**Laran Mithras**

Model Photos by DepositPhotos.com.

*A Cuckquean Haunting* is a work of fiction. Names, locations and incidents either are a product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously.

Copyright © 2018 - All Rights Reserved

They say that shadows of deceased ghosts  
Will haunt the houses and the graves about  
Of such whose life's lamp went untimely out,  
Delighting still in their forsaken hosts.

~Joshua Sylvester

# CHAPTER 1

The fireplace was as cold and dead as a grave.

But it was big!

I shivered in the chill of the old Hollywood mansion.

The realtor sniffed in disdain, but then affected a particularly smug smile. "There's so much you can do with the place, Linda. So much history..." She looked away, showing me the back of her freakish hairdo. It was messy and spiked straight back.

I grimaced and looked back at the fireplace.

My husband, hands in pockets, was walking along the broad window, looking up at the ceiling. He muttered, "The window casements leak."

Patricia, the realtor, sniffed dismissively. "It hardly ever rains here—"

"It still needs to be fixed."

"The seller has listed it as is. There won't be any repairs done for the sale." She made a motion of dusting off her hands.

I was still marveling at the marble of the mantle. Though stained, it was gorgeously carved. The diagonal chessboard floor provided the only color in an otherwise bland room. Whatever fixtures had hung on the walls had been torn out – wires clawing out exposed like frozen spider legs.

Dan stopped looking at the windows. "This place is not worth one point three mill."

The realtor heaved her heavy chest. "This was home to one of the most famous directors of the nineteen thirties."

"So? It still isn't worth over a million bucks. This is a money pit, not an

investment at that price."

She swished her hands again as if dusting them off. "This is prime real estate—"

He laughed. "Like hell it is. Back behind the studio lot like this?"

"They would buy it in a heartbeat. It's definitely worth—"

"If the studio was all hot for it, then why haven't they?"

I gulped. My husband was an attorney - a corporate lawyer who advised businesses on what they could legally do and not do. He always seemed to be very sharp when it came to figuring things out.

I was a former book store clerk who had sold books to him. I wasn't sure what he had seen in my shy personality, but we had married after three years of dating.

Dan was standing, hands on hips, chin lifted and waiting for the realtor to make any kind of sense.

She blustered, but couldn't come up with a reasonable response. "The studios aren't the only ones who would buy this."

"Then why has it been on the market for over seven hundred days?"

She looked away, pursed her lips, and then looked the other way. She lifted her chin and walked out of the room.

I went to him and touched his hand. "Why would you want to make her mad?"

His eyes glittered at first with irritation, then he smiled down at me and held his finger to his lips. "It isn't worth one point three million and she knows it. But she has to represent the seller."

The mansion was her listing.

I shrugged.

He winked. "Watch." He walked out, following after the old woman. "Patricia."

I went across the entry and into the next room – the dining room. A corroded

chandelier hung from the center of the ceiling. The task of cleaning it looked daunting, if it could be cleaned at all.

The realtor turned to us.

Dan firmed his lips and shook his head. "This all requires extensive renovation. Roof work, fixtures. Probably new windows in some cases. Electrical is a mess and the plumbing is old." He held his hand towards the front window. "And the grounds..." He shook his head. "I can offer four hundred thousand."

She coughed an abrupt burp of scoffing laughter.

He gave her a fake, quaint smile and handed her his card. "Think about it." He turned to me and took my arm. "Let's go, Linda."

"But—"

His hand squeezed my arm, not roughly.

The realtor in a fit of exasperation mimicked me. "But, but..."

Dan led me out.

The front pillars were stained and bore graffiti. Two grand steps down to the overgrown gravel drive took us to our Mercedes. The black car looked so out of place in the drive of the dilapidated home and as much so behind the realtor's dusty Lexus.

She came out the heavy wooden front door and did her best to close and lock it.

We were inside the car by the time she accomplished her task. She jammed the key back into the electric lock box.

We pulled away.

I looked up at the place. It was boxy and two stories. The realtor had said it was built in the Tuscan villa style, but I thought it looked too boxy and straight for that. She had probably said it just to sound exotic.

It was gray rock and either cement or plaster – I couldn't tell. The trees around it

were dead. Around the perimeter of the five acre plot were old growth oak trees and provided incredible privacy. An overgrown iron fence leaning and tilting with a hint of too much to drink over time fairly secured the property from trespassers.

I said, "It sure could be beautiful."

"For four hundred, we could make it beautiful again."

I looked at his handsome French face. "Do you think she'd really sell it at that price?" I was hopeful. He knew better than me what was possible.

His lips twitched to the side. "It's not her decision, really. It's up to the family that holds it. If they're rich, they'll hold out. If they're hurting for money, they might grab for it. Seven hundred days on the market? Don't get your hopes up."

My shoulders sagged. "Oh..."

He reached over, grinned, and squeezed my thigh. "There are plenty of other places..."

I looked in the side view mirror, catching a passing glimpse of the house. Sure, but none are as grand as this. I didn't speak my thoughts.

## CHAPTER 2

The seller accepted our offer without trying to haggle.

Dan was beside himself, chortling and shaking his head at our good fortune. He had figured to settle \$50,000 above our offer.

We made our final walkthrough on a Thursday afternoon.

Nothing had changed.

If anything, the mansion looked just slightly sadder, as if the passing of the baton from the famous director's family to the next resulted in a sullying of the symbol.

I drifted through the halls and twirled about as my husband and the realtor looked on.

Oh, what grand ideas I had.

I could be my very own Scarlett O'Hara.

The old house creaked and popped, though most of the atmosphere was eerily quiet.

We made a complete inspection, including the attic and basement. The attic was empty and bright due to the many dormer windows. The basement was dim, despite the four small wire-grated windows high up on the wall.

The basement was not unattractive. Flagstone and rock, the expanse was large and airy. Curiously, a wrought iron gate halved the basement. It was a beautiful thing reminiscent of vines. The arched gate latched and held a ring for a padlock.

I thought it curious and I held back from passing through the gate.

*Why would someone need a locking gate in a basement?*

I watched my husband walk into the area to look at a small pile of debris that

included something that looked like a crumpled white sheet. He looked at the pile, up at the windows, and leaned way back to look overhead at the web of pipes that supplied water and drained sewage from the house.

He came out shaking his head. His eyes darted to the old furnace. "Is that a boiler?"

The realtor was quick. "Oil, as I understand it."

My husband grunted. He commented to me, "We're going to have to replace all of this. Furnace, water heater..."

The realtor stoically stood there saying nothing and not caring. She was simply there to allow us to see the place: her sales job was done.

Dan was a flurry of activity from his office over the next several days. He kept me up to date on the progress and just his briefing left me exhausted.

Plumbers, roofers, electricians, contractors to seal the windows, delivery men for the appliances... Only the barest basics. Most of the real renovation would be up to us. I was overwhelmed and I had nothing to do with arranging it all.

He arranged transport of our furniture from our rented condominium to the mansion. My days were kept busy by packing.

Move in day felt like a victory that had required an effort so enormous that I just wanted to sleep for a week. We stayed in a hotel for several days while the transfer and the work required was completed. Walking through the peeling front door felt so personal...

We were home.

Our forever home.

Much work was still to be done, but it was a life project, so my husband claimed. Now I really twirled joyously through the halls and rooms. It all belonged to me now – and him, of course, but it had that individual feel to it that made it mine.

I faced small piles of boxes that were labeled by room. I made my first priority the master bedroom and bath. The combo was larger than any other in the house

and we assumed the largest bedroom was the master. It sported a cozy fireplace and a balcony that looked out over overgrown grounds.

The tall balcony doors lacked curtains, but there was no one who could see through them into the bedroom. Trees and hills blocked anyone's view.

I unpacked the bedroom and filled the closet with clothing. I set up the nightstands with the lamps and our alarm clock. I arranged the Tiffany lampstand and leather chairs. I put away our personals in the dresser and positioned the swivel mirror just so...

That first day, I had most of the master bedroom done. I was starting on the bathroom when I heard noise. It seemed a little creepy after being alone most of the day.

Dan was home. "Linda?"

"In here."

"You've done a lot of work..."

"Does it look okay?"

He touched my arm and drew his hand down in a stroke of love. "It looks perfect."

I needed to hear that. I wanted everything to be perfect for him. It was his money that had bought the house. It was the abode of our life together – the symbol of all that we were. Yes, I needed it perfect.

Something unsettled me slightly. "Is anyone else here?"

He frowned. "Hmm? No."

"Oh, I thought you brought someone in with you."

He looked back towards the door. "No... did you hear something?"

I blew out a breath of relief. "I guess maybe our echoes. I just thought you might have come in with someone."

He shook his head. "What's on the supper agenda?"

I bit my lip, feeling the exhaustion. "Is chicken salad okay?"

He chuckled. "Sounds great." He kissed my nose.

I went down into the kitchen while Dan removed his work clothes for more casual attire. The kitchen was a white tiled large room that must have been beautiful and modern in the 1930s. Several tiles were cracked in a jagged line from the ceiling that drew the attention.

Except...

That wasn't the first thing that drew my attention.

Next to the modern refrigerator was the counter and cabinets along one wall. The nearest cabinet door was open. I went to it and gently tested the swing and spring catch. It was old and worn, but closed to my satisfaction. I gave it a gentle pull. It came open.

Frowning, I tried squeezing the spring catch together but it didn't make much of a difference in feel when I closed it. Still, it stayed shut, even after I watched it for a moment.

I prepared dinner.

Stabbing into the spinach we used instead of lettuce, I said, "There's a cabinet door in the kitchen that opens easily. It was open when I came down."

Dan dipped his chin in understanding. "Probably the house shifting as the temperature changes. Pops open the door." He twirled his fork in the air dismissively. "Add it to the thousand other things that we need to do." He chuckled ruefully.

"Do you regret buying—"

His head shake was sharp. "No, never. We're going to make this place come alive again." His voice echoed in the tall dining hall.

The silence in the house took over after the echo died.

## CHAPTER 3

I tossed through the first night – strange bed, strange place. I had done the identical thing in the hotel.

I awoke having dreamt of steam and machinery. I dreamt of flickering lights and horses. I don't know why. When I woke, I had a funny smell in my nose that reminded me of freshly ironed starch.

Dan was already up and coming out of the shower. He always liked to get up early. "Hey, Sleepy."

I scrubbed the side of my head where it felt like it had been pressed against a wool blanket. "I'll go make coffee."

Coffee – the best meal of the day.

I slipped into my slippers and cinched my robe around my nakedness. The house was chilly, despite the bland California temperatures. I pocketed my cell phone to check on emails while waiting for the coffee.

The steps creaked all the way down. The stairs were my only real disappointment that I did not share with my husband. I had imagined a broad curving staircase but instead found a straight, functional case that did not inspire grand thoughts of elegant dresses and men with slicked hair from a bygone time.

The kitchen was cold.

The cupboard door was open again.

Making a grimace, I pulled my phone and tapped a picture of it to show which door was the problem child that needed spanking. I put the phone away and closed the cabinet door. It stayed shut. Then I opened it again and took out our two favorite coffee mugs.

I stopped, looking critically at my husband's mug. A hairline glazing crack ran from the upper part of the handle down the side of the cup. I checked mine.

*Old cups run too many times through the dishwasher... I sighed. Another thing to replace.*

Coffee smells filled the kitchen while I tapped through emails from Facebook and a book review site advertising the latest alpha-male billionaire dom romance.

Dan's dress shoes made thocking sounds as he crossed the dining hall and entered the kitchen. "We need a little kitchen table."

"You don't like sitting in the dining room?"

"Sure, for dinner..."

I knew what he meant: coffee was cozy time.

He took his cup.

"I'll have to replace your cup. It has developed a crack."

He looked at it in alarm. "Oh? Where?"

I pointed.

He peered at it. "Oh, that's just a crack in the glazing."

"It'll get worse."

He hummed in answer and carried it into the dining hall.

The four-slice toaster popped and I buttered the pieces. I carried the plate and the jam tray to him.

He was using his cell, checking messages and emails.

I sat next to him and picked up a piece of toast.

He finished and put away his phone. Picking up his coffee, he settled back and relaxed. "What's your agenda today?"

I rolled my eyes over my smile. "Um... more boxes?"

"I'll be helping tomorrow." He didn't work weekends.

"Once we're done, what room do you want to start on first? For all the fixing and restoration?"

"That ballroom will be quite a project..." His eyes drifted to the back side of the house, even though he couldn't see the expansive room from where he sat. "But, maybe the kitchen?" He winked at me.

I pulled out my phone. "I grabbed a pic of the offensive..." I tapped and slid.

Then I frowned.

He looked at me curiously.

"I swear..."

"What?" He cocked his head at me.

The picture on the phone showed the refrigerator and all the cupboards near it closed. I showed him and shook my head. "I swear I took the picture while it was open..."

"Not fully awake?"

"I admit I was a bit groggy, but..." I slid through my recents. It was the only kitchen picture I had taken. "Strange."

"Take one when you're awake. Or maybe we'll just replace the entire structure with new construction and not bother refacing them."

"It would be nice to have as much original as possible. It seems so sad to come in and rip away the bits and pieces of the house that made it what it is."

He left for work a little later.

I headed to the master bath for my shower. This was my first morning in the house and I turned the porcelain knobs on the shower wall. The tub was enclosed with a curtain we had replaced and the shower head had been cleaned by the plumber.

The large round head spat and hissed, and then emitted some weak sprinkles. I twisted the hot valve and closed the curtain to let it heat.

Instantly, four knocks sounded: the first one faint; the next three loud – somewhere beneath me in the house.

I looked around at the walls. Banging pipes? Ugh.

I started brushing my teeth.

The banging came back, fast and loud.

Not wanting the pipes to bang until they broke, I adjusted both the cold and hot knobs in the shower until the banging stopped.

I finished brushing my teeth and got in the shower. The tepid water pebbled my skin with goose bumps. I twisted the hot water slightly.

More than before, the pipes began to threaten breaking out of whatever walls held them. I could feel the vibrations through my feet.

Had my husband taken a cold shower?

I decided to twist the knob to hotter in hopes I was at a precarious point of supply and more hot water might end the banging.

Instead of decreasing, the banging grew so fast and loud that the knobs and shower head were visibly shaking. The pipe supporting the head banged hard against the hole in the tile and I saw a crack appear.

"Good grief..." I twisted the hot knob back down until it was tepid again. The banging stopped after one last loud and solitary bang – as if it had been kicked.

Which was exactly what I wanted to do to the pipes.

The water and my breathing echoed hollowly in the bathroom. We need rugs in here! I winced as I rinsed my hair of shampoo. While looking at the ceiling, I wondered how Dan had tested the shower without waking me up with the horrendous banging. Trying it myself, I had heard the banging deep in the house downstairs.

*Weird.*

I glided out of the bathroom in my bathrobe with nothing on underneath. I didn't work anymore and Dan liked me wearing nothing under my robe. I would dress later in case anyone came by.

No one was scheduled, but mail? UPS? Some worker my husband forgot to announce?

I went down to the kitchen to finish unpacking what I hadn't in there. The cupboard door was closed. I scowled at it in challenge and began digging through the pots and pans we had packed.

The echoes played with my imagination; I felt as if I was being watched. Of course, I wasn't, but I couldn't shake the feeling. It was not a good feeling, either. I ended up just shoving things anywhere they would fit and breaking down the boxes to be done with it.

I opened the refrigerator and planned out dinner from what we had.

Then I fled the kitchen.

I wandered around to the ballroom and looked out the dirty panels of glass that made up the rear wall. Dead trees close to the house surrounded a backyard pool that was empty. Dan hadn't even wanted to consider checking it for usability – it likely needed extensive repairs just to be able to hold water – what with all the earthquakes California suffered. The pool was low on the list.

I spun lightly in the ballroom, wondering how many had before me. Two fireplaces bracketed the room and a slightly cleaner spot on the peeling wallpaper suggested an extremely large tapestry had once dominated the inner wall facing the back windows. What had it shown? Something romantic? A hunting scene?

A whisper brushed past my ear.

I turned, wondering at what I had heard. Something outside? The house settling as the morning warmed? I moved closer to the windows and slid my hands up my robe, feeling the fabric. What would a dancer have felt eighty years before? Silk? Sequins? Scratchy cotton? Or satin?

I twirled once more, feeling a desire to see better. I headed upstairs. The hallway that led away from the master bedroom was situated on the left side of the house and offered an impressive view of the overgrown grounds. I could only occasionally see the barest hints of the roofs of other homes through the aged oaks that ringed the property.

I was alone and in utter solitude.

No one moved down on the grounds. No one probably had for years, except maybe the kids that had felt they had enough energy to get past the high gate and come mark their presence on the pillars at some point in the past.

Decades before, most likely. Kids were lazier now, heads down in their phones rather than finding new and interesting places to vandalize. If it wasn't right there in their faces...

I reached down and slid my hand over my mound, feeling a little warm.

Yes, I was all alone and I could stand right here in the window and play. Outside of the ring of old trees, Hollywood bustled with importance and strict function – everything under control and you better behave or the police will be making you eat pavement.

But in here, I was in my own bubble of freedom. No one could report me for indecent exposure or lewd acts because no one could possibly see me. The privacy was perfect.

I played.

My heat increased as my fingers slid over my clit and rubbed sensuously at my pussy lips. Where the shower had failed to warm me, my fingers provided enough steam to make me squirm. I thrust over my clit and down, faster. The tease and ache grew stronger and I moved my fingers around my clit to spread the pleasure around.

A warm caress of air tickled my right ear and sent delicious shivers down my spine. I imagined someone behind me enjoying the view of me facing the outside world and playing with myself.

Would it be a man? Sexy, but no. My thoughts were running more on the

feminine side, for some reason. I was not lesbian or bi as was so very popular now, but was firmly heterosexual. I wanted to be wrapped by masculine strength and control. Except that right now I felt soft and silky, and sympathetic to the needs of solitary women who wanted to play in privacy.

Again, that caress across my ear.

My focus cleared from blurred reverie to attention to detail.

Was there a warm draft? A broken window pane? Why would there be a breeze in the enclosed hallway?

I let go of my pussy and bent to study the lower frame of the window. I straightened and looked up and around the case. Everything looked tight enough – what with several layers of old paint cementing the windows into place.

I walked into our master bedroom and made sure the balcony doors were closed. The window, too. The small bathroom window was closed and secure.

I went out and crossed the hall and opened the first door – a linen closet. No openings to a different level, such as might be made by sloppy carpentry, were in evidence.

I opened the door to the nearest bedroom. In there, the one window had a cracked pane, but it was solid, otherwise. The room smelled stale like a dusty cardboard box and the air was still. A few boxes were in there that held my old bedroom things we no longer really needed.

I decided to stay in there and set it all up. A spare bedroom for visitors who would never come. I set the metal bed frame down and moved the bottom box mattress into place with a thump.

A thump echoed elsewhere in the house, somewhere beneath me on the first floor.

A chill washed over me before I clapped my hand to my mouth and giggled.

*Goodness, I hope the vibration of the bed didn't knock part of the ceiling down...*

I snorted a few times, not able to stop the small fit of giggles from erupting.

I maneuvered the top mattress down and into place.

The warm caress of air brushed my right ear again and I smiled as a warm sensation ran up my legs, pussy, and chest. I looked fondly at the bed, not really smiling at it, but rather at the cozy feeling of sympathy.

The whisper was very quiet, "Linda."

I spun, expecting to see or hear Dan home early.

My nose tickled, but I was alone in the room. The open door showed only the hall.

The caress of air at my right ear had the effect of calming me and I took a shuddering breath and relaxed.

I was bending down to the box of bedding when I realized my nose was smelling something faintly flowery. Jasmine? Lilac? I bent farther down to the box and sniffed.

Laundry soap and cotton, fresh scent – not flowery.

I stepped to the bed and sniffed the mattress. Older synthetic smell like the carpet in a car, and dusty, too. I wrinkled my nose and fought back a sneeze. Nope, too late. My body convulsed with a sneeze spasm that released the tickle.

I growled and sniffed and shook my head.

A light pressure on my right shoulder reminded me of Dan's touch when he comforted me, except this was... Was it really there? I looked at my shoulder and rubbed it. Had I really felt that, or had my mind conjured his reaffirming squeeze?

Again, the smell of flowery... perfume.

I whirled, realization dawning on me that nothing in the room had smelled like it in the least when I had opened the door. I expected to see some woman there, crazy maybe, with a raised hatchet and sharp violins screeching with panic in the background.

But it was just me in the room and the only sounds my suddenly panicked breathing.

A whisper? A thought? Something dulled the panic with a single word: "Linda."

I walked to the window on weak legs and looked out. No one was down there calling up. I looked at the door and went out into the hall. No one. I moved over to the window looking out. No one down there, either.

My imagination was running wild.

And yet...

The perfume smell had followed me.

Warmth erupted in my pussy again and I squirmed in the doorway to the spare bedroom.

Sadness buffeted me, replacing the panic and curiosity.

"Linda." It was mournful and quiet and alone.

I looked around, knowing that I couldn't have imagined that, though it seemed surreal. It was definitely not coming from a distance – it was breathy close.

Was I really hearing something that wasn't there? A voice from the past?

My lip trembled, but I was sad, not scared. "Who are you?" My voice confirmed to me that there couldn't possibly be someone tricking me – it echoed loudly in the room though I had not spoken very loud.

Just faintly, I heard a tremulous response that seemed to drift away, "A... friend..."

As it left me, the sadness welled up and replaced everything else inside me.

## CHAPTER 4

Dan was home Saturday and intent on helping me unpack.

I came out of the shower in my robe and went looking for him. I heard movement – scraping – from somewhere in the house. He was already at it after breakfast.

I wanted to tell him, though...

He was downstairs in the parlor, arranging furniture. He straightened, put his fists on his hips and asked, "Does the couch look good there? Or should it be more out here facing the fireplace?"

I swallowed my intent for the moment and considered his question. This was the room with the enormous fireplace. I instantly imagined him and me sharing coffee in front of a roaring fire in the dark. "In the middle, facing the fireplace."

He grunted and moved the couch, scraping along the tiled floor with the same sound I had heard on the stairs.

When he finished, I said, "I think we might have a pipe problem."

He sniffed and looked at me with some irritation. "Something new for the list?"

"Yesterday morning I took a shower after you left. The hot water made the pipes bang really bad. So bad that it cracked the tile up by the shower head."

He grunted. "Yeah, I saw that this morning. They were banging?"

"Yes. They didn't make a racket for you? Were you taking a cold shower?"

"No, nice and hot."

"Yesterday, too?"

"Yep." He was frowning at me.

"What?"

He shook his head as if to clear it. "I don't know. Probably temperature changes. Maybe you hit it at the right temp and humidity..."

"I thought the house was going to shake apart."

He blew out a sigh. "I'll have a plumber in to see what he can find. All those pipes are exposed down in the basement."

"It sounded like it came from deep in the house." I rubbed my arms. It was chilly in here despite being a bit muggy.

He looked at the windows. "I have a drapery gal coming Monday for measurements and suggestions."

I felt instantly worried. "Do we really need them?" Blocking the windows would be blocking me from connecting to the outside world.

"Someone could hop the fence and come peeking. I'm sure you wouldn't want to see a face looking in the window."

"No... Have you... smelled any flower scents in here? In the house?"

His frown deepened in thought. "No, nuh uh."

No reinforcement there. Had I imagined it all the previous day? Or had there really been a comforting female presence? "I think I'll go work on your office."

"Don't mix up my papers."

"No, I'll leave those for you."

He had chosen the room behind the parlor for it. I wanted to be close to him, for some reason, though I felt better upstairs. Stepping into the darkened room, I stopped in confusion. It registered with me doubly that I felt better being upstairs and not downstairs.

Why?

The room's one tall window was overgrown with some dense, dead vine.

Eventually, it would be cleared away. I flipped on the old switch. It clicked loudly and a wan light came from the single small fixture straight overhead. It really was not enough light for the room.

I began sorting the furniture bits and arranging the large pieces.

I worked faster than I should have or normally did; the room felt cold.

I felt a hand on my shoulder.

Dan.

Except that as I turned to ask what he wanted, I caught a whiff of cologne. It was deep and interesting, smelling of rich leather and maybe cinnamon.

The only issue with that was Dan wore nothing like it. His cologne was very complex and tickled the nose. All of that occurred to me before I could finish turning.

No one was there behind me or anywhere in the room. I heard Dan shuffling in the next room, nowhere near the doorway.

I touched my shoulder, wondering if I had imagined it.

I turned back to pick up and place the lamp on the small table by the window. I bent to insert the plug.

Again, the impression of a hand coming down on my shoulder, except this time it squeezed, hard.

I bolted upright and fell over onto my butt. I twisted around onto my hands and knees. There was not a chance I had imagined it this time. "Dan!" My shout was strangled and panicked.

He rushed in and saw me. Immediately, he was down on his knees helping me. "Did you fall? Are you okay?"

I sniffed in a spasm of fear. "Do you smell that?"

He squinted at me. "What? Smell what? Are you all right?"

I drew in a loud sniff and picked up traces of leather. "That smell! It's like leather and cinnamon..."

He shook his head. "I don't smell anything but my cardboard boxes. Maybe the smell is from my leatherbound books?"

I got to my feet. "No, not that. Someone grabbed me."

He rose slowly, looking at me as if I was some scammer who had come knocking on the door asking for his social security number so I could send him a million dollar check. "Grabbed you?"

I touched the spot and tried to determine if I still felt it. I wasn't sure. "Here, on my shoulder."

"And it knocked you down?" he asked doubtfully.

"No, I was already on my knees – plugging in your lamp."

He stepped close to me and looked me in the eyes. His hand came up and pushed back my blonde hair from my forehead. "Are you feeling okay? Any dizziness? Pain?"

"No, why?"

He took out his phone and started tapping. He wore a worried look.

"What are you doing?"

"Seeing what symptoms include touch and smell."

I swallowed and stood next to him, looking around his arm at the screen. "That came up in a search?"

"Yes." He asked, "Have you heard any voices?"

*Yes... However, I didn't tell him the truth. He was looking at psychosis symptoms and a list about schizophrenia. My confidence quavered. You think I'm crazy? I stammered, "N-no."*

He firmed his lips. "Maybe a vitamin deficiency? Hmm..." He tapped on the

phone to return to his search page.

I had to stop him before he found some reason to commit me to a mental hospital. I shook my head and rubbed it. "Never mind, I think it was just your books – and a muscle cramp. I've really been moving stuff around."

He put away his phone and studied me critically. "That was my first thought and it makes sense."

That was my Dan, always practical.

The thing was, maybe he was right.

I said, "I'm okay. Sorry to interrupt you; just go back to doing what you were doing." I waved my hand and shook my head.

"You sure?"

I gave a weak attempt at a laugh. "Yeah. Maybe I just need a touch more coffee."

He gestured over his shoulder with his thumb. "Tell you what; I'll go make some? It'll just be a few minutes."

I nodded. "That would be great, thanks."

I heaved a silent sigh when he left the room.

His footsteps trailed away and out of the parlor. The kitchen was on the other side of the house.

I dropped down onto my knees and began pulling books out of boxes and stacking them. The shelves were near the back wall; they just needed to be arranged.

I detected a surge in the leather smell. A chill swept over me that made me shiver. A sound like rasping laughter came from somewhere. The dead leaves on the vine outside rustling?

My hair was gripped suddenly and my head forcefully turned. A rain of chills and fear descended over my body like the cold droplets from the shower. Heat

was in my face and it wasn't coming from me.

Then I heard it, small but very distinct. "Crazy bitch."

I gasped, wanting to scream for Dan, but all I could do was croak. Up in my face was anger and hatred, but somewhere in there, maybe distant, was fear.

"Crazy bitch. Crazy bitch. Crazybitch-crazybitch-crazybitch." Something touched my face – hot and soft. It dragged over my cheek and upper lip. "Crazy bitch."

Though I saw nothing, I had the very clear impression a man was rubbing his cock across my face. I recoiled backwards and the sensation ceased.

"You're mine..."

I scrubbed at my mouth and fought back a frightened sob. I got to my feet and fled the room. I made it to the stairs and was pounding my way up when Dan came out of the dining room carrying two cups of coffee.

He called, "Where are you going?"

Trying to keep my voice level and steady, I said, "Bathroom."

His answering chuckle told me he believed it.

I finished my business in the bathroom a few minutes later even if I hadn't really needed to go. The flush of the old toilet was predatory and slow.

I washed my hands and then my face. I was trembling.

Flowers filled the air, bringing a sense of impending contact.

I felt, rather than heard, "Linda."

My face was already up in the mirror. I could clearly see no one behind me. However, this wasn't threatening.

"Who are you?"

I sensed something come closer – much closer. Very clear in my ear, I heard, "A

friend."

I smelled the difference. "You're different from..."

Tingles ran up and down my back and arms as whatever it was said, "He is a bad one."

Despite not seeing anyone or hearing the echo except for my own, I knew I was in a conversation with... someone. "Who is he?"

"...He is powerful... be careful..."

"What do I do?"

There was no answer.

And yet, somehow I felt as if a struggle had just been initiated. A very important and dangerous struggle.

## CHAPTER 5

I don't know what awakened me that night. The room was deathly silent except for my husband's breathing and the pounding of my temple.

Something had awoken me from my dream. A noise? I strained to listen to... anything. Or had it been something in the dream? I recalled nothing of it and even trying to remember made the elements of the dream fade faster than I could grasp at them.

No, not the dream, and not anything I had heard.

Then I was struck by that which was not obvious. It wasn't sound, or sight, or thought; it was smell.

I smelled leather.

I also smelled flowers, faintly.

I smelled something about them that made me think they were near and struggling. I didn't like that I was smelling leather up here. The second floor made me feel somewhat safer from... the bad one.

The voice with the flower scent had said he was a bad one and dangerous. My impression of the flower scent presence was that of a female and sympathetic.

Could she prevail? Was the struggle like some kind of territory turf fight?

With a sinking feeling, the leather smell grew stronger.

My husband sighed.

No, he did not.

The hackles rose on my neck and arms. I sat upright.

No, Dan had not sighed – his breathing was deep and even. The sound had been

near and more like a sigh of irritation.

The smell moved.

I... smelled... movement. My ears pulled back in fright. I reached for my husband, but stopped. His back was to me. Would he believe me? Would he smell the aroma? Would he be oblivious?

Was he immune to whatever was in the house because he was stronger, mentally?

If I woke him, I would be exposing my weakness and giving him an excuse to make me see a doctor – a head doctor.

Schizophrenia? Psychosis?

I drew my hand back.

A harsh whisper sounded right next to me. "You're mine." It was followed by a triumphant chuckle.

I grabbed Dan's shoulder in panic, wanting to pull him over and wake him.

The male whisper returned. "He will not awaken." The confidence in the comment made me quiver in fear.

The heat approached my face.

My eyes went large in the darkness. The only illumination was the digital readout on the alarm clock and I could tell that no one was standing next to me. Except that... the back of my head was grabbed and something thick and hot forced into my mouth.

A cock was in my mouth; I knew what they felt like.

It was shoved deep without any attempt at sensuality. It hit the back of my throat like a punch and I gagged.

My arms flailed. I struck Dan somewhere in there, but he did not move. I made a keening noise amidst the choking sounds and suffered a rapid thrusting of the

invisible cock in and out of my mouth. It hit my throat each time.

Snot flew from my nose.

The unseen hands pulled harshly on my neck and the cock moved deeper down the passage of my throat as if it were heading to my stomach.

I couldn't breathe. I could barely move from the filling pressure of the thick shaft blocking my throat. Suddenly, the presence began humping hard, ramming the cock deeper back and forth.

I couldn't even scream.

The whisper came back, loud. "You're mine, crazy bitch. All mine."

The cock was gone without even the sensation of being pulled from deep in my throat. I coughed in spasms of pain and the need to breathe. Tears watered my eyes and ran down my cheeks.

Dan was unmoving, breathing deeply.

I was alerted to a different change by the intrusion of something new. The flowery smell was strong in my nose and I realized the leather smell was gone.

A comforting arm was placed around my shoulders as I sobbed quietly.

"I'm sorry you..."

Her aroma of jasmine calmed me somewhat. I sobbed, "What's happening to me?"

"He will only get stronger now."

"Stronger?"

"His move up here... is reaching... but he is stronger. I cannot stop him. He will continue coming at night... unless..."

I grabbed at the hope. "Unless what?"

"He draws power from your fear and the rape."

"What do I do? I can't even see him..."

"There is a way..." Her hand dropped down my back and moved. I felt a light touch dip down my front until making contact with my panties.

I gasped at the sensation.

The whisper said, "Your husband."

"What about him?"

"I can gain power through him." The touch pressed and moved gracefully – brushing against my clit underneath the fabric.

"What? How? Will it stop the bad one?"

"Do you want him to stop?"

"Yes. This is... horrible... in my own home..."

"If I become stronger, he will have to stay downstairs."

"How?"

There was no answer.

The flowery smell receded – moved.

Hairs that had chilled on the back of my neck now stood up again. I sensed the female presence moving around the bed.

In the dim light of the alarm clock's digital readout, Dan turned over to lie on his back. His breathing quickened.

*What is happening? What is she doing? Dan? I didn't know if something bad was going to happen. I opened my mouth to warn him.*

The whisper sounded... over there... on his side of the bed. "He will not awaken."

There was movement and the sound of fabric, but I couldn't make it out.

His breathing quickened again, becoming a pant.

Then I saw the covers, tented up at his waist and the fabric was moving.

My husband groaned lightly in his sleep. The covers moved up and down.

I watched in wonder. Is he doing that himself? However, his arms were not moving.

No, the presence was doing it. The sympathetic female presence, so nice and caring, was stroking my husband's cock while he dreamt of... something.

If Dan didn't believe in ghosts, would he completely dismiss my alarm as some episode of psychosis? If I woke him right now, would he reject my assertion that a ghost had touched him?

But I could see the covers moving up and down. I could tell his arms weren't moving.

I reached over and shook him. "Dan!"

The whisper was worried. "Don't."

"He's my husband."

"It is the only way I can gain power enough to resist the one from downstairs."

"But..."

"Your efforts weaken me..."

Dan woke up. He groaned and sat up. "What?"

My voice trembled. "What were you dreaming about?"

"I... Why? I... don't know." He sounded defensive.

"You were moaning."

"I was? I'm sorry."

"It sounded like sex." I didn't know what I was doing or where I was pushing this. Could a ghost have sex with someone and it be cheating? Was such a ridiculous thing even possible? And what if Dan hadn't really known – hadn't really dreamt it? Had I interrupted something that could've made us safe?

I sniffed the air for her scent; it was not there.

My shoulders sagged. I couldn't even ask him if he smelled anything and if I pursued the dream thing and mentioned the presence, he would be back to thinking I was schizophrenic.

I dropped over and faced away from him. "Sorry, I must have been dreaming. Go back to sleep."

He grunted and turned over.

Just before drifting off to sleep, I smelled the familiar and fearful scent of leather.

He was watching.

Waiting.

## CHAPTER 6

I suffered two more nights of terror and choking.

I didn't know what to do.

When the leather smell came, the flowery one always receded. He was stronger, and she... knew her place. When he came, she was neither comfort nor refuge.

Tuesday morning, I got up while Dan was in the shower. I moved through the house fearful of my own home. So beautiful underneath the decay, now it struck me as evil and twisted.

It hated me.

Except for the woman and her jasmine scent.

I went into the kitchen to make coffee.

The cupboard door was open.

The leather smell was strong.

I snatched my phone out to take a picture, but before I could tap the button, the cabinet door slammed shut.

A mocking laughter echoed in the kitchen – no longer a whisper, though a little faint as if far away.

The female presence was right; he was growing stronger.

Heat flared close to me.

I ran.

Laughter chased me up the stairs.

Trembling, I hugged my knees to myself in bed and pulled the covers up around me.

Dan was still in the bathroom, running the water.

I whimpered, "I can't do this anymore."

The jasmine smell drifted in and settled near me. The whisper was soothing but no longer enough to banish the fear. "Let me help you..."

"How?"

"Your husband is the key."

I blurted, "Doing things to him in his dreams?"

"In his sleep."

I was at a crossroads with not a clue as to which road to take – except that down one path waited the bad one.

I gasped at the image in my head and said, "I don't want him to win."

"Then let me help you, Linda."

I went numb; that the presences knew my name brought home that I was helpless against whatever it was. The female presence had whispered my name before. There was something sweet about it. The bad one only ever called me crazy bitch. But he knew my name too... he must have.

The whisper was insistent. "He will never use your name unless he intends to kill you."

Alarm crawled up my arms and back like a thousand spiders. "He... can... He will...?"

"Once powerful enough, he can force you to do the deed yourself. Your husband would find you—"

"No!"

Dan came out of the bathroom. "What?"

I shook with the covers around me, feeling no warmth at all. "Nothing, sorry. I... couldn't make coffee."

He frowned; it was our routine.

I said, "I just really don't feel well this morning."

He came to stand by me and reached for my head.

I still smelled the flowery scent of the female presence, but I didn't dare ask him if he did. What if only I could smell it?

He touched my forehead, placing his warm palm against it. "You feel fine..."

"I'm sure it will pass."

He gave my shoulder a squeeze – the same shoulder the bad one had clasped.

I flinched.

He frowned. "How about I make the coffee this morning?"

I looked at him hopefully; there was no way I was going back into that kitchen – even if I knew I had to.

"I have a gardener coming later this morning. He won't knock or need any instructions. He's going to be clearing the dead stuff away from right around the house."

"Oh, okay."

"I'll be back in a few minutes." He left the room.

I put my forehead into my hand and tried to calm myself.

The whisper was insistent. "I can help."

I think I was ready to give in to anything. "How? Like the other night?"

"Yes."

"Does he... know about it? In his dreams?"

"He may or may not, but probably."

I was torn. I didn't want to see my husband being sexually manipulated, but... On the other hand, I wasn't sure how much longer I could stay in the house.

I touched the bridge of my nose and felt the tremors in my fingers. I was on the edge. "Okay. Okay. Do it."

How bad could it be? Dreams? Could I blame him for them? Certainly not if I was purposely allowing them to occur. Yes, it was my doing, not his.

I could live with that.

If he got enjoyment out of those dreams, he might not even remember having them. Or most of them.

I had to take the chance.

The flowery smell was gone.

Replacing the absence was the aroma of coffee a few minutes later. Dan came in carrying my cup. "Here you go." After handing me it, he frowned in thought. "Were you down there earlier?"

"Yes..."

"Did you leave the cupboard open?"

Chills washed down my back and I bit back any response. If Dan had seen it, then I certainly wasn't imagining anything. Not only that, but the danger was real and not in my mind. I gulped. "Yes, I think I did."

He smiled reassuringly. "Okay. I thought it might be your trouble cabinet that needed fixing."

Only, I knew that no amount of fixing would ever stop it from opening. And if the bad one was opening it in front of Dan, then this was getting very serious,

very fast.

Yet, I felt the urge to take a chance with my husband. "Do you believe in ghosts, Dan?" I asked it gently and carefully.

His laughter almost mimicked the mocking laughter of the bad one. "Those are just movies, Linda. Just movies."

There was no point in pushing it.

When he left for work, I waited in bed, listening intently to anything in the house. A creak, a pop, a thump – none of it seemed out of the ordinary for any old house making noises as the outside air warmed and the materials of the house adjusted.

I sniffed the air.

Nothing.

I took my shower.

I even dared to take a hot one, twisting the knob with clammy fingers slick with fear.

Nothing. No banging pipes.

Perhaps my husband had been right. Perhaps the temperature shifts were the culprit.

As a skittish deer might tiptoe through known hunting grounds, I stepped gingerly through my day. By noon, I was standing on the second floor looking out the long side hallway window at the man working below.

Dead things were being cleared away.

Had I some... spell? An episode? Had my husband been right about possible vitamin deficiencies?

Not a whiff of scent or a hint of sound that shouldn't have been in the house registered on me all day.

I went into the kitchen to put away the coffee cups and make dinner preparations.

Nothing mocked me.

No cupboards banged open and shut.

It was somewhat of a comfort to hear the steady chopping sounds distantly outside as the man worked to clear away the dead brush and vines. It was so mundane and dull that a deep sense of normalcy descended on me.

I made dinner preparations and left the kitchen. I moved easily through the house as I had on the very first day we had seen it. I even twirled.

Maybe I had imagined it all and worked within myself in some sort of weird negotiation to put everything into proper perspective.

I hoped, anyway. But the peace that settled blissfully over me and the house seemed intertwined and integral.

It was my first almost normal day.

Days passed.

I felt in balance.

I even told Dan about it over dinner Saturday night. I laughed at myself to get his attention. "You know, I swore this place was haunted when we moved in."

He furrowed his brow at me. "You don't really believe in that stuff, do you?"

I shook my head. "I've never had any kind of experiences..."

"It's just a new environment."

"Right, that's what I was thinking. That and maybe the vitamin thing you mentioned. I'm eating better."

He frowned. "Was it bad? The whole moving in thing?"

"No, not really. But I guess enough to stab my imagination."

"The plumber who installed our water heater said he'll come back, but not until late this coming week. Thursday or Friday."

"Oh?"

"He said banging pipes can be hard to pin down, but he'll look for obvious pipes in the basement that can be secured. Anything in the walls we'd have to have someone tear them open..."

"Hopefully it won't come to that."

"It might anyway if the wiring can't handle our electricity load."

"Ugh." I didn't want my home all torn up.

"So no ghost stuff then?" He studied my reaction.

"Just the first couple of days. Just my imagination. Everything has been fine."

He gave a curt nod as if accepting a retainer from a client. "Good."

I was in control of my own self once again.

I was brushing my teeth for bed when something tickled my nose.

Jasmine.

I looked down at the sink. I looked at the cabinet to the side over the toilet where some of the colognes and perfumes sat waiting. Movement caught my eye.

I looked into the mirror.

Behind me, the bathroom door was closed, but something... moved in the air.

The whisper sent chills down my back. "Linda."

I rinsed my mouth with a shaking hand. This can't be happening.

The air moved again as if in a shape.

I turned around, leaning back against the sink and away from whatever it was. I

didn't feel panicked, only perplexed. I had thought this was all behind me now.

Heat increased near me in a soft way, not harsh like the other one. I felt a light touch on my panties, then a slide downward over my clit.

Flares and tingles shot up my pussy as the heat increased sexually and dramatically.

"Linda..."

I was gasping, trembling, and getting wet.

The air darkened near my face and began to...

The aroma of flowers doubled. The air around me chilled despite my heat.

And I saw hair.

I almost bit my tongue between clenched jaws as everything in me tensed up.

Long black hair. Bangs.

And then I saw a face.

I was not breathing.

Everything in the bathroom was still except for my trembling arms propped back against the sink as I leaned backwards.

It was a ruggedly beautiful face in a way – simple and soft. Her nose was large, but shaped as if someone had gently mashed the ridge of her nose with their thumb and created a flat spot. There was a very slight bulge on both sides of her nose, as if her nose had been clay and had bulged sideways on each side from the thumb press.

It was not ugly in any way, but it would have caused any Hollywood starlet to go get a nose job.

It was her eyes, however, that riveted me once they formed enough for me to see them. They stared at me, unblinking and unmoving.

Her lips parted as her hand moved ever so slowly over my panties – caressing my clit and lips through the material.

I shuddered.

Her shoulders formed and a hint of her arms before stopping. She turned her head a little to one side, then back – her eyes not moving from mine in the least.

I gasped, "What do you want? I thought you were gone."

"I never left. Neither did the bad one."

I gulped hard and began hyperventilating. "No, it c-can't be."

"It takes effort to make you see. We are here always." Her head moved fast, turning away as if looking at something. Her eyes came back to me. "He knows. He will make a move again tonight."

"No..."

"I will help..." The last word cut off abruptly and the entire image was gone before my eyes in a rush of air.

My back went clammy and my feet burned hot. The rest of me felt cold. I turned to the mirror to see my confusion and consternation as plain as the fine wrinkles around my eyes.

## CHAPTER 7

I went to bed and cuddled next to my husband. I lay awake for hours, wondering if I had imagined all that, too.

The house was quiet and Dan had long ago dropped into sleep. I sensed nothing; smelled nothing. Despite this, my heart continued to pound.

The clock read 11:41 when I sensed the change.

A mixture of leather and flowers drifted to me from somewhere in the house: I had the impression it was distant – somewhere outside of the bedroom. I felt as if they had been there all along, but I was just becoming aware of them.

It chilled me to think I hadn't sensed them over the last few days. Why? Because it took effort on their part to make us see? Or that we naturally shut down what we didn't want to acknowledge?

Ignore the snarling, vicious dog? Maybe it won't bite? Ignore the street thug approaching with a knife? Maybe he'll choose someone else? Had I known they were there and simply blocked them out?

The jasmine scent flooded the room.

I felt movement, though I saw nothing in the very dim light.

Dan's breathing changed. It slowed as if stopping, then resumed – a little faster. He shifted a little in bed and gasped.

Just barely, I saw the covers begin to tent over his erecting shaft.

He breathed faster, lips parted. Again, he moved. The covers were up and pointed; he was fully erect. The bed started to move as he began jerking his hips. His exhales became sharper.

What was happening? A ghost handjob? Was he dreaming it? A blowjob? Was he even aware? Or was he in the middle of fucking... someone in his dreams?

The ghost? Or some woman conjured from his daily work life?

He groaned distantly, as if the effort of translating dream to reality in bed was difficult. His hips moved with more rhythm.

Whatever he was experiencing was something he was very much enjoying.

I got wet and began to ache wondering what it was. Was the pretty ghost sucking him? Fucking him? I wanted on one side of my brain to be outraged, but the other side was strangely turned on. He was being sexed by something he didn't believe in and he was enjoying it.

The irony was as amusing as it was intoxicating. My hand slipped down and rubbed at my panties before dipping in and fingering my clit.

What would the ghost woman look like on him? She had appeared shorter than me.

Dan moaned in the throes of sexual lust. His hips jerked upwards.

I was certain he was going to wake up.

Except that he didn't.

I clamped my jaws hard to keep from making a sound as I made frantic circles around my clit. The heat there was spreading and increasing as fast as I had ever felt.

Dan's breathing stopped and he lifted his hips. He twitched several times, then collapsed onto the bed, turning away from me.

Satisfaction wrapped all around me but not from inside me.

Lips brushed across mine and then the flower scent was gone.

The heat faded, although I had been right on the edge of finishing. The orgasm receded, as if taken away by the ghost.

Dan's breathing settled into a deeper cycle once again and all went quiet.

My body tingled, wanting to cum, but knowing I would have to pull out my big

vibrating toy if I was going to achieve that.

I went to sleep unsatisfied, but still aroused that my husband had just had such obviously good sex whether he had dreamt it or not.

I awoke in the morning when he got up to take a shower. Peace was on me like a warm blanket. However, my pulse jumped to action as soon as he shut the bathroom door. I flung back the covers on his side of the bed and tried to clear my blurry vision. I blinked rapidly, spreading my hands over the inside of the covers to feel for a wet spot.

There was none.

Nothing.

Had I dreamt it? Had I fallen asleep and dreamed I was still awake and thus dreamed the whole episode?

Yet, it had seemed so real.

I smelled nothing in the air, although I wasn't sure my real-or-not friend's aroma ever lingered.

I sighed and went about my morning. I made the bed, got into my slippers and robe, and went downstairs to make coffee.

Over breakfast, I asked, "Did you have any strange dreams last night?"

He frowned over his scrambled eggs. "Uh... something about a bus, I think, and it blocking traffic."

"No, like strange."

He gave me a perplexed look. "Not that I recall. Why?"

"You were breathing funny and moving a lot."

"Huh. Must've been a nightmare. In any event, I don't remember it."

He didn't sound as if he were lying.

Was I making all this up?

More and more, it seemed like I was. The house became more peaceful. I became more confident.

Days passed again in sheer bliss.

I loved the old mansion and I spent the better part of the next week twirling around in the ballroom. All of the house was unpacked now. Only the wall decorations were in a state of transition: stacked along the baseboards, they awaited the time when the walls would be refinished and papered. Hanging them now seemed wrong.

I saw the woman ghost again, and again. Always upstairs. I was never startled because I always smelled her before she appeared.

If she was a real ghost and not a figment of my imagination, then she was a nice one. I liked seeing her – as if she were a special friend who showed up to share with me my joy of living in the old house. She was a reminder of a bygone era.

The bad leather ghost did not disturb me. Even the kitchen seemed safe.

The night before the plumber was due to arrive, the female ghost came again. The clock read 11:41.

I shook my head – I had been drifting in and out of sleep, dreaming of dresses and gowns and lights. I started to sit up. A dark shape passed by the foot of the bed, but I knew it was her.

I shook my head again. Was I awake? Or asleep? Was this another dream? I muttered aloud, "I need to wake up."

"You are awake..." Her voice was better than a whisper. "I have come again for your husband."

"But why? What does all this mean?"

"The bad one will grow stronger if I do not keep him away."

"How?"

"He preys off fear and sexual violence, but it is forced. I gain strength because you have relinquished claim to your husband, and moreso than he from forcing you."

"I haven't given up Dan—"

"You have allowed me to feed from him. Your permission is far more powerful than the bad one's forcing you. It takes him much more energy to acquire strength from you if you are unwilling."

Dan moved, his breathing changing.

I asked, "What are you doing?"

"Making sure the bad one cannot usurp my place up here. If I do not, you will be in danger."

The covers over Dan's waist began to stir.

I stammered, "Is th-this the only w-way?"

"Sex is the ultimate sharing and the most powerful tool we use. If I were to try scaring you or your husband, it might not work. The bad one is better at it than me, and it is a race I would lose. You have given me what he shares only with you. It is powerful."

The covers moved up and down. Dan sighed and shifted.

"What... are you doing to him?"

Dimly, her face appeared next to him. Her face was all shadow, except for her eyes. They shone as if lit from within. "I am touching his cock – stroking it."

I swallowed. I swallowed again and shifted in the bed.

She asked, "Does this excite you?"

I listened to the sound of my own panting. I felt the heat and moisture down there. I felt the tingle of my clit. "Yes..."

The word was chilling. "Good. I derive even more this way. I can keep the bad

one at bay."

There was movement I couldn't follow.

Dan shifted with a few jerks, and then his hands twitched outside the covers. His hips began lifting and falling.

The ghost's head began to solidify again. She was up over him, riding him. She was looking at me. "Do you want me to keep the bad one away?"

"Yes."

Dan groaned in his sleep.

The ghost gasped once.

I asked, "What is your name?"

Her eyes blinked at me. "I am a friend," her voice shifted to something a little harsher, "and I am fucking your husband."

The heat swelled up in me in a large wave. I jammed my fingers down my panties and diddled fast. I gasped at the tension inside.

Dan groaned again, louder, the entire bed moving to his jerking hip thrusts.

The ghost whispered, "Yes, give it to me..."

My husband coughed loudly, and then grunted several times as if having a very forceful and powerful orgasm. His voice was harsh, but sleepy. "Yes... Unh..."

I knew he was dreaming it. I rose right to the edge and wavered there, but my ghostly friend was done. The scent vanished instantly.

Dan collapsed onto the bed and rolled away from me. Already, his breathing slowed and deepened.

I reached over and touched his hip – around where the covers had been over his erection. They were dry.

Was it possible to cum in a ghost? It sure sounded like he had finished. The ache

in my pussy gnawed inside of me and I rose up to go into the bathroom. I shut the door quietly and leaned against the sink. Spirals of sensation swirled up from my clit and I began humping the corner of the porcelain sink. I rubbed up and down frantically, trying to draw back the wave that had receded.

Jasmine wafted through the bathroom and I felt hot breath in my ear.

I didn't see her in the mirror, but I knew she was there.

The whisper was light and distant. "He was very good..."

Something wet and warm brushed up my earlobe and I came with a sudden surge of release that doubled me over. I crammed the hand towel into my mouth and came so forcefully that water leaked out of the corners of my eyes.

Heat flared through me in a wash of utter satisfaction. My temples pounded and my face flushed hot. I gasped and jerked through my finish and let the warm tingles radiate up my body.

It was good.

It was very good.

## CHAPTER 8

The plumber was a portly man wearing overalls. He carried a toolbox and nodded at me as if guilty of something. "Banging pipes?" he asked.

I nodded and let him in.

"These old houses..." He stomped the dust from his feet on the entry mat. He looked around, then grunted, remembering his way. "I'll see what I can see."

"Okay."

He waddled more than walked, but it was a sprightly gait.

As I was shutting the door, I saw the man Dan had hired back for more clearing. Happy with the initial work immediately around the house, my husband had hired him back for more. He carried a chainsaw and some other gear.

I didn't wave. There was no need; we hadn't met.

Soon, the buzzing sound of the chainsaw droned outside.

I sat on the couch in front of the fireplace, sipping iced tea. I reflected back on the previous night and my embarrassingly steamy bathroom liaison with the sink's edge.

I felt safe. I hadn't been brutalized by the bad one in quite a while. If he was here, he was quiet. Other than a hint of his leather smell, I might have guessed he was gone.

Could the friendly ghost keep him at bay? Could she keep him away? Was there some option I could pursue that cleansed the house? A priest? Ghost busters?

The plumber came running out. "I... uh... Maybe found a pipe... uh..." He thumbed over his shoulder. "I'll need help. Be back in a bit." He wiped his hand back over his sparse hair and fled.

Amused, I got up to let him out.

After shutting the door, I heard the rattle of the chainsaw change and move. Closer to the house.

The plumber had left the basement door open and I moved to shut it. I had hold of the door and looked down the lighted steps. From below, the chainsaw sounded as if it were hitting the house.

I frowned back at the front door, but didn't want to go outside to confront the man.

There were windows in the basement and the sound was loud.

I went down the steps. The old wood was thick, but it creaked with every step. I finished the descent and stepped around the supporting pillar.

The basement lighting had been completely refurbished, and it was bright. The small, wide windows high on the walls also brought in light. The machinery of the house hummed and pumped quietly to my left. The two furnaces and two water heaters were brand new. The copper piping that led away from them tied into older pipes above.

A ladder stood there that we had purchased, under a jumble of pipes.

The chainsaw sounded different again, rattling and grating almost as if chewing through wood with nails in it.

Is he tearing into our house?

The sound was on the other side, through the decorative iron gate.

I stepped through and into the other side of the basement, looking up at the windows that were just above the height of a man.

In the corner was the small pile of cloth I had seen on the inspection. I frowned at it, wondering why anyone would leave it there. Why hadn't it been removed with the rest of the garbage in the house?

I took a step towards it.

The fabric on top was white and looked like lace – a curtain by the shape of it. What was it doing down here? The material underneath was brown and greasy.

The rattle of the chainsaw changed again, sounding strangled and... angry – from behind me.

A metallic squeal sent razors down my skin. The only thing that could make that sound down here in the basement was the gate.

I bolted, adrenaline pumping fast and hard. My heart trip-hammered in response and I heaved in a great lung full of air as I turned.

The gate was swinging shut.

The rattle of the chainsaw wasn't mechanical; it was a grating growl of rage.

I scrambled out of the gate but not before it slammed into my hip and spun me around and down. I crashed to the floor and split my lip on the cement.

The big iron gate rebounded off the frame and started to come back open. The metallic collision left my ears ringing. Then the door stopped and slammed shut again – this time latching closed.

Hot breath blew on my face. "Crazy bitch."

I got up and ran.

The plumber returned a half hour later with a young man in tow. We shared a look both wide-eyed and disbelieving.

That's when I knew he had heard or seen something down there.

That's when I knew I had to do something.

## CHAPTER 9

Her youngish voice was raspy in a smoker's way, but flat and without emotion. "I've kept him away from you." Her face floated over my shoulder in the mirror. It did not frighten me.

I said, "Thank you."

"He cannot challenge me upstairs..."

"Downstairs?" I finished brushing my hair out for bed.

As friendly as she might have been, her eyes were dead. Lit from within by whatever force gave her power, they regarded me without hatred, but also without love. They saw, and nothing else.

Lifeless.

Whatever was in her heart didn't reach to her eyes.

The ghost shook her head. "It is a struggle."

"I'm going to help."

In a rush, "You don't know what you're doing."

I had phoned a paranormal investigation team. They had refused to take such an early case at first. They wanted months of activity, not just a couple of weeks. They changed their minds when I offered to pay whatever full cost they decided was adequate for their time.

I said, "I can't live here with him. It's too dangerous."

"I warned you."

"You did."

"I can keep him from you."

"But that means he's still here."

The woman just stared at me.

I said, "Maybe they can remove him."

"They endanger me, too."

"Do they?"

"The people you bring might be ignorant. I can safeguard your life."

"Can you hide?"

Again, the stare. Slowly, she said, "It is possible." As if alerted to something at that very instant, she said, "I must go."

The image was gone before I even blinked. It left a cold sweat on my neck and made my teeth chatter. Even the scent of flowers had vanished just as fast.

Why did the ghost come and go so suddenly? Was someone playing a trick on me? Was I being gaslighted somehow?

But no, this was beyond simple parlor tricks and mirrors. This was real. The welt on my hip was real. I hadn't run into the gate hip-first, it had struck me down. I was still limping four days later.

Telling Dan had been a gamble, but I had shown him the welt and passed off my hiring of the team as an amusing whimsy – my interest being in what they thought of the house.

It hadn't sat well with him, but being that I presented it as an amusement, he had agreed and not sent me to be locked away in the madhouse.

The investigative team was scheduled the following week.

I settled into bed next to Dan.

Immediately, I sensed a struggle in the house. Flowers and leather created an

unseen heat that scorched my senses in the silence. I didn't know what was going on, except that it was a fight.

The leather smell was getting closer.

Dan's breathing deepened suddenly and slowed considerably.

I pulled the covers up to my eyes, barely peeking out.

The smell became overpowering. My hair was gripped and my head yanked up. Heat flared against my face as the ghostly cock once again began to force its way into my mouth.

"Crazy bitch!" The shout was loud and echoed in the bedroom.

Dan did not move.

I tried to scream, but my mouth was stuffed. It came out as a howl. Surely that would wake my husband, but it didn't.

Jasmine surged and surged again. I felt buffets of something I could not fathom – impacts unseen and unheard. Invisible flashes of force was felt inside my skin, but nowhere else.

The cock was gone. The leather and cinnamon smell receded. The bad one was leaving.

The head that formed wasn't as solid as last time. The raspy voice was back to a whisper. "He knows and is desperate to fight you. I thought I could hold him back, but I need more."

I gasped, "Can you keep him away?"

"I need more." The face vanished and my husband turned over.

*Yes, do it. Please protect us. I sat up excitedly. If this is what it took, then the ghost could do it every night.*

The covers rose over his erection. The covers moved as if someone had moved under there. Instead of a pointed tent, the covers bulged in the shape of a head.

I grew wet as my husband gasped and groaned almost instantly. He twisted and thrashed in his sleep, but did not awaken.

The covers rose and fell as the ghost sucked my husband's cock.

My hand drifted down and began to play.

There was a ghostly giggle and then the head moved faster.

Dan groaned and lifted his hips.

The covers were flung aside. His cock stood straight up. The bed shifted and a shimmer of darkness solidified slightly into the ghost woman's head. She climbed onto him and began riding.

I let the bed move me as my husband's hips pumped his cock upward. It was a strange feeling to see it straining in the air and only the woman's head floating above it – the rest of her body not being seen. He was inside her, but I saw his erection.

Heat flared wildly in my pussy.

He groaned even louder, calling out wordlessly.

I'm not sure when it happened, but the ghostly head was gone. Her scent was still in the room and growing stronger, closer.

Dan's eyes snapped open and he grunted as he lifted his head.

I pulled my hand out of my panties. Likely he couldn't make it out in the light of the clock anyway.

He turned to me, saying nothing. His breath came in gasping pants. He gripped me and climbed over me. My panties were torn down.

Jasmine and lilac filled my nose. I felt... something feminine touch and fill me. I felt strangely double. My nose seemed to feel that of another, wider nose.

Was I in the ghost? Or was she in me? I could even feel as if my hair was darker and straighter.

Dan entered me with his very stiff erection. His eyes were intense in the darkness and he wore an expression I had never seen – something like desperation.

I could feel the woman all over me.

He thrust into me with savage strokes, forcibly hammering his erection into my pussy in a brutal act of sexual gratification – his satisfaction.

I was being used.

Did he see her, as he looked down at me? Was he in her? Did he know?

My pussy was reamed by his driving lust, in and out, until I was almost bouncing on the bed to his force.

The brunette ghost on or in me or sharing space with me was taking it as well. I had an odd impression that the ghost and I were now sharing the last hurdle of permission.

My husband was fucking both of us.

I cried out as the realization brought a bursting explosion from the tension inside of me. I unraveled wildly, writhing about underneath him as his cock pistoned in and out of my pussy. Our pussies.

I saw flashes and fireworks. Stars shot across my vision and I saw pinks and purples in swaths of light behind my eyes.

Dan grunted rapidly on me until he tensed and pushed as far as he could into me – into the ghostly woman. His orgasm flowed out, wetting me with hot splashes.

Simultaneously, I sensed the supreme satisfaction from the ghost woman. I could feel her get stronger and thrive. I exulted with her at my husband's offering. Waves of feminine gratification flowed and reverberated within me and I marveled.

It was wondrous that our mutually occurring contentment had created something that was multiplied and magnified, not just added together. It was as if I floated not just on two female orgasms, but ten or a hundred.

Everything inside and out tingled in a joyous burst of elation.

Then it left.

The woman was gone from me – on me or in me or with me, however my mind struggled to grasp it.

The jasmine and lilac scent receded. A faint whisper nearby said, "Thank you."

Maybe it hadn't been in her eyes or the tone of her voice ever before, but after having shared the same... space... with the woman, I felt the appreciation and care.

Dan flopped over and almost immediately began breathing heavy in sleep.

*Wow, if this is what my safety costs, I'll take it. I didn't feel jealousy that he very well might have been envisioning the ghost as he had fucked me – us. I felt honored that she would use me in such a way that involved me.*

The bad one was nowhere to be sensed.

Once again, I was safe.

## CHAPTER 10

The day approached when the team would arrive for the initial meeting. I debated calling it off. I struggled against calling a priest in.

Whatever had happened with the female ghost was working. I was safe in my house.

Even downstairs.

Though I did not want to test the basement.

Her aura wrapped me wherever I went inside the old mansion. I could feel her. It was a warm comfort that shrouded me with care.

Having to allow her to have sex with my husband for that powerful protection did not bother me at all – it was a ghost.

I firmly believed in the paranormal now. This was no psychosis.

My days and nights were filled with urging the ghostly woman – she still had never told me her name – to have sex with Dan whenever she needed it.

What was the downside? She wasn't a real woman in the fleshly sense, he enjoyed it, and we were safe in our house. He claimed he remembered having sex with me, but not any other times in dreams.

I didn't press that issue.

I detected him trying to change the subject about his memory of having sex with me. That was okay. If he was actually seeing the ghostly woman when he made love to me, then I was glad I could be the real body for her when it had happened. I had become an integral part of the equation.

I was part of her and him and us.

If anything I viewed her as me.

Simple, inclusive, clean.

I was standing up in the hall on the second floor looking out the window at the grounds. No one could see me and I had my toy plugged into the wall. I smelled her around me most of the time now and her comforting presence brought me peace. I wanted to express my welcome in the most obvious way: I turned on the large vibrator.

I opened my robe and moved the big vibrating bulb down over my clit. I let the vibrations tingle through me and closed my eyes. I was one with her and one with the house. With my eyes closed, I could smell her, sense the house, and be a part of the bricks, stones, and plaster that had become my home.

I was proud to be the owner of such a historic place, even if those driving past beyond the trees had forgotten all about it.

Warmth spread from my pussy with the vibrations and I gasped as the tickle prodded the ache and caused me to squirm.

Had other women in the house before me had such pleasure at this window? Or another window? Had they embraced the atmosphere of the mansion and thrilled to sexual sensations such as mine? My mind floated free with the warming tingles.

Tickles ran down my inner thighs and I moved the vibrator around my clit in slow circles as the heat and tension built. The teasing tickle was sharp – almost too sharp – as if I had to pee. But I went with it, grinding my hips around as I worked the vibrator with the spirals of heat.

I felt her on me, then, much like she had done when my husband had taken me. I could feel something like a double skin, a double head of hair, and a double sensation of approaching satisfaction.

I smiled, pleased that she was making her presence doubly known by touch, not just smell. I lifted my chin, reveling in the dual impression of her within and on me. I moved my other hand up over my breasts and wondered what hers felt like. I could sense the difference as I touched mine and tried to imagine hers by the dual feeling in my fingers.

Her connection with me, as it was, was better than a hug – more intimate. More

personal. Richer and more rewarding.

I rose on my toes as the wave of emotion and heat drove me upwards. A slow rollover the top dropped me down into a very hot and explosive release. I cried out in passion as the orgasm took me and shook me.

I felt her pleasure.

It made it so much more special.

I put away the toy and wandered the house, imagining its former glory.

We were going to restore that.

She was with me everywhere I went, though I didn't go down into the basement. I wanted to be sure before I ever went down there alone again.

I felt her around me. I saw flashes of her long black hair. I had grown accustomed to her nose – even the little flat spot looked beautiful. Sensing her like this had kept my nipples hard all day. They positively ached to be touched.

I'm certain a head doctor would've diagnosed me as psychotic, except that I knew better. The ghost had been an existing presence separate from me – not a part of me. She was something unique and not a reflection of something inside me.

No, I was not psychotic.

She had become a part of me – of us – now that was a true tryst of a trio. Do two living people and a ghost make a ménage?

I was comfortable with the ghost.

I welcomed Dan home with a kiss that was meant for both him and the woman unseen to him. I gave him the gesture of intimacy for both me and her. I sensed her satisfaction that I did.

The team was due to arrive.

I was not prepared for what I was going to find opening the door.

The ghost woman receded. My friend left me when the SUV pulled up in front of the house.

That was somewhat bewildering.

I did not sense the bad one around, either. Maybe downstairs in the basement, but not near.

Dan was skeptical, but indulgent that I had invited them here. I was sure he thought if I did this that I might sleep better, even if I already was.

I opened the door to an avalanche of shock.

The man wore a grimace, as if he didn't think it was worth his time to be here. He was tall, his belly hanging over his belt, and his gray hair streaked wildly with silver and white. His beard was grizzled and needed trimming. His glasses rested a little low on his nose and he adjusted them by pushing up on them with a disinterested index finger. They promptly slid back down.

I spared him not even a second of a glance.

It was the woman.

It was her.

My mouth hung open and my eyes widened in surprise and joy.

It was her.

Her long, thick black hair hung straight. Her bangs covered most of her thick eyebrows. Her lips were the same – not very wide, but a full lower lip. Her nose was identical down to the width and flat spot midway up the ridge of her nose. Her eyes were the only difference: the same dark orbs, but not glowing.

I couldn't move or breathe.

Dan stood behind me and I heard him gasp.

He knew.

I knew he knew.

Embarrassingly, I became wet.

The man with her sighed. "Dan and Linda?"

My husband cleared his throat. "Yes."

I was glad he answered, because I couldn't talk.

The woman was looking at me with growing curiosity – her head slowly tilting and eyes squinting.

*Don't you know me? I love you! I wanted so desperately to say it, but the man was talking.*

"I'm Howard. This is my wife Rachel. We're the Beverly Hills Paranormal team?"

Rachel. Is that your name? Rachel... I couldn't take my eyes off her.

Her eyes stayed on mine for a short time before flipping up past my shoulder to my husband. They widened as if in surprise. I saw her swallow and quickly wet her lips with an inward pull.

My husband held out his hand and invited them in.

I stepped back to allow... my friend into the house. I still couldn't take my eyes off her.

As she stepped in, she took her gaze away from either of us. Her fingers came outwards from her legs as if she were feeling the air. Her eyes darted to a dozen different locations as if she were trying to find words in a word search puzzle.

Howard said, "We don't normally investigate hauntings without a longer time-frame, but..."

Dan chuckled. "This is for my wife. I haven't seen anything—"

"It's not uncommon, really."

"What? For her to see something and not me?"

The man nodded and sighed. "We usually like to have a better background – more developed, but..." His eyes wandered around the entry. "Quite a spooky looking place."

"That's what our plumber said."

I wanted to talk to Rachel, but she inclined her head downward as if listening; I could tell she didn't want to be disturbed.

She hummed for a second as if to insure her voice was working. What came out rattled my bones down to my toes. Her voice was raspy, like a smoker's. Like my friend, the ghost. "I sense something here, all right."

There was an earthy tone to it that hinted at low laughter, sexy suggestion, and sublime sensuality. From the one sentence, by tone and delivery, I could tell she was quiet and a woman of few words. She spoke when she needed and only then. This was not a chatty woman.

Howard said, "We'd like to split up and take a quick walkthrough of the house. Just to get a sense of everything before we commit to an investigation."

Dan said, "Whatever."

Rachel said, "I'll start at the bottom."

Her husband said, "I'll take the attic. We'll meet in between."

I finally spoke and had to clear my throat. "I... Um... The really bad one is down in the basement. Please don't go down there alone."

Howard rolled his eyes and exhaled.

Rachel was looking at me. She opened her mouth to talk, but nothing came out. Whatever it was, she changed her mind. She looked at her husband. "Let's both go down there. No harm in it."

He grunted.

My husband showed them the basement door.

I waited anxiously as they descended the steps.

He came to me, a pensive set to his features.

I grabbed his arm. "Dan..."

He looked at me curiously.

"Talk to her. Don't... let her get away."

"What?"

"She belongs here... Don't you feel it?" I was taking a risk, but I was certain he had seen it in her, too.

I was right. His face shifted and he started to nod, then his face cleared. "Belongs here?"

"You know it. You feel it and I know it."

He shook his head, but I saw the lie in his eyes.

I said, "Don't let her get away, Dan. Do it for me."

"What? Why?"

It was time to reveal it all. "I've... seen her. Here, in the house. She protects me from the bad one in the basement."

He was quiet, but his face had taken on a look of scorn.

I pleaded with him. "Please, do it for me. She's the one who has kept me safe. I know her; I feel her. She is what has made me happy."

"Rachel is just a woman—"

"I've seen her in the mirror, Dan. Down to the bangs and funny nose. She's been... with us in the bedroom."

He could not hide the look that crossed his face and set his jaw. He knew. He shook his head.

I shook his arm. "Do it. Talk to her. I think she knows, too."

He exhaled and said, "If there was some ghost or whatever, this is different. She's flesh and blood, not your imaginary—"

"She's not imaginary!"

The paranormal team was coming back up the stairs.

I squeezed his arm and whispered, "Please."

Rachel came up first, stepping silently. Her husband tromped up the stairs behind her, face down and appearing intent.

The woman said, "Definitely something down there. I smelled leather and cinnamon—"

I was nodding so dramatically that she stopped.

Dan looked at me with scrutiny as if seeing me for the first time – as he had seen Rachel for the first time.

Howard muttered, "It definitely has a creepy feel to it down there..." He looked up the stairs. "I'll go up..." He left without waiting for input.

Rachel clasped her fingers together in front of her and leaned on one leg. She was turned away, but her face was towards us with a look of question. Whatever it was on her mind, she didn't speak to elaborate.

I nudged my husband and said, "Dan will show you the downstairs..."

Her eyes flicked to him and stayed on his face.

I almost shoved my husband.

He took a tentative step towards Rachel.

Her eyes brightened and widened. She looked at me for an instant, licking her lips. "Are you sure...?"

I said, "Please. I'll... show you the upstairs."

Her head tilted in thought as if hearing something distant. "Okay, I think that sounds fine."

I wanted to rush to her and hug her to me as I had felt from the presence now for days. I wanted to press her to me and feel her heartbeat and hear her breathing. She was real! The manifestation of that which had bonded to me.

Did Rachel know it? Or was I psychotic? Or just mistaken?

There could be no mistaking the utter duplication of the visions I had seen of the woman in the house and Rachel who I had never met.

My husband held out his hand to guide the way to the dining hall and kitchen.

I clasped my hands together in a tighter version of Rachel's as I watched them go. There was symmetry to their passage that lit my heart like a lighthouse beacon. I wanted to twirl.

The entity downstairs could never have power over me with Rachel around.

I wished fervently while waiting there that my husband took my suggestion and talked to her. He had to make this right!

*Please don't let this pass by, Dan. Don't be the skeptic now; be the believer. Believe in me. Believe in her. Believe in us...*

## CHAPTER 11

When Dan and Rachel came back out of the side rooms to cross back to the ballroom, they appeared comfortable near each other.

She looked at me with a quick search that registered nothing on her face. She headed to the back doors into the ballroom.

Dan followed right beside her, head lowered. He looked at me too – a quick glance checking on my posture and attitude.

I bit my lower lip and willed him to talk to the woman. He had to make her understand she belonged here. If he couldn't do it, I had to when I escorted her upstairs.

The very sight of her in my house lifted everything within me and held it there, as if my entire soul was holding its breath. I needed her here.

I needed her.

Dan had to understand.

I tiptoed to the ballroom doors.

He was talking to her as she gazed at the walls and windows. She did a little twirl while looking up at the old chandeliers.

It was exactly what I had done when we had moved in.

My heart thumped heavily and my limbs ached with the need for decision and action. She had to sense the attraction. She must have felt it all when I opened the door. That we had shared an incredible stare and then she had shared one with my husband was all the confirmation I could have hoped for.

She knew.

Would she act?

I tiptoed away and went to sit in the parlor. It was a strategic move so I could listen to them when they came in.

They did so, a few minutes later.

Dan said to her, "This is the room that decided it for me."

"Not the ballroom?" Her voice was so familiar to me now.

"It's grand, for sure, but this fireplace." He looked around at the walls. "I have ideas for this room that..." He looked at me as he trailed off.

I gave him my best reassuring smile I could.

She moved through the room, fingers out and testing whatever or however she did it. There was a slight tilt to her head and I saw her beautiful dark eyes shift to mine. Her expression did not change in the least way. She studied me just like the rest of the room.

I gulped, wanting to talk to her, but not wanting to infringe upon Dan's time with her.

Her eyes drifted away and I wasn't sure if there wasn't a hint of a smile there on her lips.

I wanted to kiss her.

I wanted Dan to kiss her.

I wanted her to be with us – a part of us.

They moved into the next room.

I heard him tell her it was his office.

Her earthy voice sent exciting tingles through my chest and tickled my nipples. She said, "What do you do?"

"I'm an attorney advising businesses on business law."

"Busy?"

"Here and there. It pays very well and I don't often have to be in court."

There followed silence that made me ache to get up and look. It stretched and stretched and there was no sound of movement.

Were they hugging? Kissing? Staring at each other?

I hoped so and my arms ached to know it to be true.

Except that they must not have been because Dan came out of the room by himself without any sound warning to my hearing. He pursed his lips at me and swallowed.

I... felt... his desire for Rachel.

I looked at him longingly, wondering if he knew that I knew he had envisioned me as the woman when we made love. I wanted him to be close to the woman – to Rachel. How could she not be connected? I had seen her face exactly in the mirror, on my skin, sharing space with me... I had never met or seen Rachel before. The coincidence was too great; it had to be fate.

I wanted him to possess her in the flesh, in reality – not just dreams. He had to understand I needed this inclusion. The ghost woman was as much a part of me as my soul, and thus Rachel, too.

The woman came out of his office, fingers still out. Her eyes moved from the ceiling down to me. "I think I'm ready to go upstairs?" Her eyes flicked to my husband and her face possibly registered disappointment.

I didn't want her to regret my time with her. I rose eagerly. "Come on, I'll show you around up there."

She followed me and I felt a surge behind me of companionship and warmth.

I said on the stairs, "I'm so glad you're here."

She didn't answer.

At the top of the stairs she paused. "Yes... definitely different up here. Very... comforting..." She sniffed. "Do you have fresh flowers up here?" Her head

twisted around, looking. The lower ends of her dark hair flipped back and forth.

I tried very hard to suppress my joyous laughter. I wasn't very successful and it came out as a bubbly giggle. "No, that's... the woman who lives up here. I mean, the ghost."

Her eyes wandered up the walls of the hall and overhead.

I heard her husband down the side with the spare bedrooms. I led her the other way to the master suite and past the single spare bedroom on this side.

She followed without comment or hesitation.

I turned in the master bedroom. "I sense her in here. A lot."

She was all business. "What do you mean by sense?"

I turned away, leading her into the master bath. "At first, just the smell of flowers. Jasmine and maybe lilac. Perfume? I wasn't sure."

Rachel stated simply, "In the past, some perfumes and colognes were simply distilled fragrances – not very complex. Some of the mixtures were kept simple."

I leaned against the sink. "I've sensed her in here, too. And... I've seen her in here."

Her eyes widened a little. "A visual apparition? In here?"

"And out there in the bedroom. Also, lately, in other parts of the house."

"This happened over time?"

"Yes."

She nodded. "Full body apparition?"

"No... just the head and shoulders, usually. At first, just an outline, but that was after the whispers."

"Whispers? Tell me." She stood in a relaxed posture, head tilted as she listened to me.

I felt extremely pleased that we were having a private talk. I felt... honored. I said, "She warned me about the bad one – the leather and cinnamon smell."

"Sometimes multiple entities abide in a structure. There's a pecking order. Sometimes a very strong one controls the others or keep them in line. Usually, they are the bad ones."

"I don't think the woman is bad."

"No, I definitely don't sense that."

"What... do you feel?"

She brought her hands up and rubbed her arms. She looked around at all the pink tile and then moved to the shower. She studied the tiling up by the shower head. "This is bad."

I laughed, but not at her. "You feel that? I'm not crazy?" I had wondered if the pipe thing had really been about temperature.

She turned to me, a soft look on her face. "You're not crazy, Linda. You're a normal woman faced with the unexplainable. Tell me, do you see the woman now?"

"No, I think she was worried you would try to expel her."

Rachel shrugged indifferently. "It all depends on what you want for your peace of mind. We can have a priest we know come cleanse the basement. If you aren't freaked out over the woman—"

"I'm not. No, she's a great comfort to me."

Her smile was slow and pleasant. Beautiful. "Those are the best kinds. So, when was the last time you saw her?"

"Earlier today."

"Do you see her every day?"

"Lately, as time has passed, yes. Before, no. It was very sporadic. Same for the

bad one."

"Did he ever form?"

"Not really. I had the impression of slicked back hair, but nothing else, really."

She nodded quietly, looking at the floor. "What did the woman look like?"

I swallowed hard. "She looks... a lot like... you."

Her eyes came up to mine. Her eyebrows drew down a little bit. "Like me?"

"Almost exactly... I..."

"Have you seen me somewhere before? Have we met?"

I crossed my arms defensively. "You mean, am I projecting my memory—"

"I don't recall ever meeting you."

I shook my head. "We've never met, except here in the house." I let the double meaning hang there. "I feel like we know each other already."

She didn't answer; she just stared at me.

"Lately, her voice has become stronger. It is exactly like yours."

She blinked. "My voice? My gravelly yucky voice?"

I shook my head. "No, it's a beautiful voice..." I suddenly had too much saliva in my mouth and went into a swallowing fit.

Howard came in, looking sour and grumpy. He grunted at us before checking out the bathroom.

I gestured to Rachel. "I'll show you the other rooms."

She held up a finger and asked her husband, "How goes it?"

"The basement maybe is the only place that feels bad. The rest of the house is just..." his eyes flicked to me, "just an old house."

"I felt it down there. Linda says the other entity is peaceful. We might call in Michael to cleanse down there?"

Howard only grunted.

She said to me, "Show me the rest."

I did. We were down the other side when she stopped in a room mostly empty. A few decorations sat along the floor. She looked at the wallpaper on one wall.

I didn't want to do anything in this room because the wallpaper needed to be replaced. Besides, there was a hint of a splash, as if someone had thrown a water balloon at the wall. It could be seen only at an angle.

Rachel sniffed. "Someone committed suicide in here..."

I got creeped out. "They did?"

"A guest... a woman."

I panicked. "A woman? The woman?"

She shook her head. "A blonde woman, I think."

I exhaled a loud sigh of relief. Whatever or whoever, I didn't want to imagine my comforting presence had ended her life so tragically.

I showed her the attic up the extremely narrow stairs at the end of the hall.

She immediately moved away from me and spread her hands up there under the single bulb. "Strangely, this is clean. Some entities like to hide in the dark away from people... I don't sense your woman, except by impression. The flowers." She shook her head. "She's hiding."

"What about the one in the basement?"

"He watched." She chewed on her lip for a moment. Her raspy voice echoed warmly in the attic space. "Most entities do that, gauging your vulnerabilities. They test you and eventually move into taunting you."

I scrubbed my hands on my arms. "The bad one... did things..."

She blinked once. "Sexual things?"

I nodded.

Her lips firmed. "We'll definitely call Michael, if that's okay with you?"

"Yes, please. I want him gone."

Her eyes flashed as she looked away. "I guess we're done."

"Are you going to investigate the house?"

"Only if you want us to."

I clasped my fingers together and fidgeted. "My husband... he..."

"He doesn't believe?"

I shook my head. "But, he was worried when he saw my bruise—"

"What bruise?"

"I was down in the basement the day the plumbers were working. The gate slammed on me."

"We need to know those things."

I didn't want to tell her about the sex. I looked away.

She touched my arm and sent tingles rising up my body. "I think that'll be enough to convince Howard. Let's go."

## CHAPTER 12

I rocked underneath my husband as he plunged his cock into me.

This was one of those times he had taken direct initiative without asking.

I moaned to his thrusts, knowing that it was too much of a coincidence that he had wanted to fuck just an hour after Rachel had left. He was inspired – turned on – by her visit.

I wanted that from him. I needed his desire for her. How else would this end to my satisfaction? To ours?

I asked him, "Did you think Rachel was pretty?"

He stopped all movement, but his cock throbbed inside of me. "She... was, sure."

"She looks exactly like the woman I've seen—"

"You might be projecting—"

"I'm not." I had told him very little about the woman; he hadn't looked like he believed me so I had let it drop. "I've seen her face for weeks now. I know it. I was stunned when I answered the door and saw her."

He began moving again, but it was slow as if in thought. "It did... seem... strange at the door."

"You felt it, too?"

He moved faster. "It's just a coincidence on your part. Maybe you shocked her with your stare."

He was trying to dismiss it all and that made me sad. "Dan, please. I know you felt it. I saw you stare at her, too."

He gasped. "Yeah, but I think it was all whatever passed between the two of you."

I caught the arrival of the aroma. Jasmine and lilac tickled my nose. I felt her settle on my skin like another skin. I felt and smelt her hair on me. "Don't you smell her, Dan?"

"Who?"

"Rachel? Haven't you dreamt about her? About making love to her?"

His eyes widened and he froze. His mouth dropped open to protest, but he was holding his breath. His shaft flexed in me, hard.

I urged him on. "Do it, Dan. Fuck her. Use me like you did before. Let me be her pussy for you." That was all I could get out.

His eyes bulged in shock and his hips rammed mine repeatedly. His shaft pumped slickly in and out of my pussy as he closed his eyes. He groaned loudly, "Oh, yes... Rachel..." His hot spurts splashed inside me, coating my walls with his orgasm.

I clawed his back and humped my hips up at him. "That's it, fill her up deep." The swell of satisfaction and lust inside me lifted me up high. I felt the woman on me and in me, lusting and wanting. I mimicked the woman's voice the best I could. "Fuck me, Dan."

He was already done and spent, but my words lifted me beyond the point of no return. I writhed under him, jerking and gasping to the orgasm that rolled through me in sharp waves.

When I came down, he pulled out and rolled onto his back. He was breathing heavy.

I turned to him and scratched lightly at his chest. "I want her... to be a part of us. This is important to me. I want you to be with her. Could you do that for me?"

"She's married."

"I don't think her husband is all that... loving."

"We don't know them."

I clutched my fingers on his chest. "Please promise me you'll try."

"But you're my wife."

"Yes, this is for us. Please."

He didn't answer.

I called Rachel the next day and left a message to schedule a time for the investigation. My fingers trembled as I tapped the number and the flower aroma was bare comfort, though it did give me the confidence to call.

The woman was with me over the next two weeks until the time of the investigation arrived. Her face hovered and mocked me, not cruelly, but reminding me of Rachel and her absence.

I masturbated almost every day, wrapped in the woman's presence and imagining Rachel there with me. My orgasms were draining and exhausting – satisfying on one hand and disappointing on the other. The real woman was out there.

The night of the investigation had us quiet in the spare bedroom. The husband and wife romanced the house and the priest spent hours down in the basement.

I was hoping Dan and Rachel could talk, but it was not to be.

At the end of the night, in the lightening hours of the morning, I stood wrapped in my robe at the front door seeing them off.

Rachel said, "One of us will call you to arrange a meeting to go over what we found."

I touched her arm. "Could you give us the reveal?"

Howard grunted sourly. "Suits me fine."

I didn't know what she saw in him.

She looked at me without acknowledging him. "If that makes you happier..."

"Please."

She glanced over my shoulder at my husband who was standing and watching.

Howard grumbled and carried out the last of the equipment.

She made contact with my eyes again. "Okay, then."

I had felt the attraction between her and my husband. I was definitely aware of Dan's attraction as we had spent the last two weeks fucking with him imagining Rachel. But her? Only hints. Her acquiescence confirmed to me that she was also attracted to him.

That she got along well with me was great, but not the most important thing.

I watched her go, wishing she could've stayed. I pulled Dan to me so we could both watch her beautiful ass sway tiredly away. I wanted to see his hands on her. I reached over and caressed his manhood through the robe.

He chuckled and moved away from the door in case either of the two looked back. The priest had left hours ago.

I whispered, "I want to see your hands on her."

He got behind me and ran his hands up my sides, feeling my hips. He hummed contentedly.

It was another agonizing week before Rachel could return to show us what she had found. Every night, I teased him and prompted him to promise he would make every effort to engage her.

The ghostly woman urged me on. She appeared much more during that time after the priest had cleansed the basement. She even told me it was safe to go down there.

I didn't want to.

I saw much of her figure now when she appeared – down to her thighs. I swore it was Rachel. I even called her that and received amusement in response.

What else was I going to call her? She was a part of me and would never give me her name. She was an intricate piece of my soul now and Rachel was the culmination.

The reveal was a simple meeting in our dining room. Rachel set up her laptop and went through things they had seen and heard. I was instantly turned off with the whole experience when she played voices that had been captured down in the basement. A few words, but it was enough to send my skin crawling.

The bad one might be gone, but I hated hearing what they thought might be his voice – it was filled with sadism and sneer. I wanted none of it.

Dan stepped in at the end, fortunately, and my heart began to thump hard. He said, "Will you come back in after?"

She was preparing to take her laptop out to her car. She tossed her hair to the side to look at him. "Sure." Only after she had said it, did she look over at me. It was a quick flick of her eyes that did not ask permission, only to check on my disposition.

I was nodding with enthusiasm.

She licked her lips and carried out her case.

Instantly, I was clinging to Dan. "You have to do—"

"I know."

"You must, Dan, please."

"I will." The determination in his voice settled my nerves.

We both waited at the door.

## CHAPTER 13

He let Rachel back in and shut the door.

She turned to him and watched him, not even looking at me.

Dan didn't look at me either, just took a step towards her. It was a slow step, tentative and testing.

She made no move except to look.

I swallowed, praying inside they would make the connection. The flower aroma drifted around me, comforting me. She did not appear. She didn't need to with Rachel standing there facing my husband.

Dan stepped closer and she lifted her chin. Another small step and he lifted his hand to brush the side of her arm.

She did not move away. She did not look away. She did not flinch.

The move together was abrupt and breathtaking. Dan wrapped her in his arms just as she lifted hers to do the same. Their bodies crushed together and they were squeezing each other close.

I got instantly wet. My nipples hardened with lust and joy. He did it! Thank you! I was smiling so wide my face hurt.

Dan moved his head and gazed down at her face. Their lips met and a second later they were exploring each other's mouth with a vigor that left my knees weak.

Their kiss grew more frantic and desperate. They broke it, gasping.

He said, "Let's go upstairs."

She looked at me for less than a second and let him lead her without hesitation.

My chest was thundering to my heart. I wanted to jump up and down in exultation. She was here! They were going upstairs. This was everything I had wanted. With her here, the ghost was formed and cemented in my soul as if she had been a lifelong friend. I felt her presence swirling around me as I followed them.

In the bedroom, Dan began undressing Rachel. Her eyes were locked to his, and his to hers. I settled down into the chair.

Naked, she was not a stunning creature men drooled over on TV or in magazines. Her breasts were not big and round. Her hips were not very curvy. Her butt was tight and smaller than mine.

What made me gasp was the sight of seeing my husband's hands glide over the skin of her back and down to her butt cheeks. It was what I had wanted to see for so long.

Dan pulled back and undressed like a teenager on a timer.

His half hard dick flopped out and Rachel made an appreciative noise of surprise. She reached out with a finger and stroked it. She said, "Is that for me?"

His dick hardened and lifted.

She giggled.

My pussy clamped and ached ferociously seeing my husband's dick erect for Rachel's nakedness. I groaned with lust.

He moved her to the bed and laid her back on it.

That's when she looked at me.

I colored, feeling the heat in my neck and face.

She frowned slightly. "Does she have to watch?"

Dan didn't look at me. "It doesn't matter. She's a part of this and I need you right now." His erection bobbed in the air, ready and stiff.

I reached a hand down my shorts and thrust my fingers up into my aching hole. Just the sight of his cock all hard for her left me breathless.

There was no preparation for what I saw.

Dan climbed over her and touched his dick to Rachel's pussy.

My breath caught.

I had imagined it might be slow and seductive.

It wasn't. He pushed and my husband's cock moved into her pussy. A little jerk at first, then it was sliding in and disappearing.

Rachel clutched his arms and her breathing became shallow. She lifted her hips for his thickness as he slid it in.

Both of them sighed with relief when his hips pressed forcefully against hers. His butt cheeks clenched with the effort and her fingers clawed into his biceps.

They kissed.

I swooned. My ghost had been validated and fulfilled. She was a part of us now through Rachel – if they were not somehow the same entity. I stuffed as many fingers as I could up my pussy trying to chase and massage the deep ache. The pressure from the width of my fingers all crammed in there gave me a pleasurable stretching sensation as I watched my husband's butt move.

He fucked her deep for a few strokes, and then began pulling out to the tip. He pulled his cock almost out after each thrust, and then jammed it back in, driving forward and up at the end.

Rachel moaned loudly, her eyes going wide as Dan drove his dick into her pussy.

My husband hissed with effort, thrusting hard and moving her body on the bed. Her thighs tensed and relaxed. Her body writhed under him as he fucked her with all the pent-up lust we had generated over the weeks.

They panted and gasped together in a beautiful union of bodies and minds.

I drove my fingers in and out harshly, reveling in their sounds and my titillation. The jasmine scent was strong around and in me as I ground my way towards orgasm.

I'm not sure how long my husband fucked Rachel; I don't think it was very long. He was too excited to last. He gasped and grunted furiously, slamming his hips down onto hers.

Rachel mumbled at first, but her passion was rising, driven by his thrusts. She began moaning, then groaning. Finally, she cried breathlessly, "Yes! Make me yours, Dan! Make me yours!"

I exploded, lava flows erupting through me and shaking me as my orgasm ripped my innards to shreds. I cried out painfully as the hardest, sharpest orgasm of my life tore through me. Wave after wave of ultra-hot flashes doubled me over with each release. In the end, I half lay in the chair, panting and gasping in exhaustion.

My head cleared enough to see my husband in the throes of orgasm, straining to get as much of his dick into Rachel as he could.

Her beautiful face was framed by her long, black hair. Her bangs were a little sweaty and her mouth was open in a constant pant of lust.

She turned her head and looked directly at me as my husband filled her pussy with his cum. She stared at me until he was finished, then she closed her eyes and smiled.

In that exchange, I felt the satisfaction and joy of my ghostly companion. Through Rachel, we connected on a level deeper than ever before. I felt the ghost's pleasure and triumph.

Rachel slowly looked up at my husband. "I love you..."

Dan didn't even look at me. "I love you, too."

"I knew from the second I saw you that I needed you."

My soul sang with vindication. I had not been wrong.

My husband stroked her hair back off her forehead in a loving expression of intimacy. "So did I."

My pussy throbbed ecstatically.

My ghost wrapped me in an embrace of solidarity in the place to which she had led me.

Dan drew his finger down her nose. "Tell me you'll come back – that this is just the beginning."

She laughed – it was low and sexy and sultry. I had never heard her laugh before. She said, "There's nothing in the world that will stop me, now. I want to be yours."

My husband kissed her passionately with all the heat and lust I felt drumming through my pussy.

I was alive.

I wasn't sure if that was me or the ghost thinking that. But I knew it was what I had become.

I was complete.

**Thank you for reading A Cuckquean Haunting! I sure hope you enjoyed the departure from the mundane. All reviews are greatly appreciated.**

**If you liked this cuckquean story, be sure to check out these similar titles by Laran Mithras:**

Try to Seduce Him – a woman suspects her husband and becomes a cuckquean

Wishing Every Day was Christmas – her friend's husband begins the chase

Bourbon, Babysitter, and Blackmail – babysitter wants a crack at the husband, blackmails wife into agreeing

Watching Will – she shares her husband with her best friend

Ache to See Him with Her – her sexy cousin and husband are quite a pair!

Tears of a Cuckquean – her husband selects her Facebook friend