

Finding Rachel

Part One

A Detective Almond Horror Story

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By Matthew Lee

Chapter 1

Yukus swept his long black hair over his shoulder and gazed out over the plain far below. None of his people had ever climbed so high on the mountain. Tařúma towered more than fourteen thousand feet above the prairie his tribe called home, and all, save him, lived in fear of the great rumbling pinnacle and deep, dark tunnels. Gods live in the mountain, they told him, but he knew otherwise. They were ignorant and fearful. Gods do not live in the mountain. Gods, he knew with absolute certainty, live in the Earth. The mountain was merely a doorway to the world below. When the peak growled, as it so often did, he knew they heard the god living under the mountain moving.

Today, he would meet that god.

He reached the snow line and continued the climb, leather boots crunching ice. Last night Tařúma was loud, grumbling until morning, spewing gray ash, and Yukus knew why. He'd seen the brilliant emerald streak cross the sky and vanish down the throat of the mountain, choking Tařúma. The god was upset. Yukus would climb in and remove the obstruction, winning the god's favor. He imagined his life after, now a favored son, and hurried.

The snow was soon knee-deep. He wrapped his heavy fur shawl and trudged on, probing the packed snow for gaps and crevasses. He climbed the mountain often, thrilled by the spectacular views and incredible beauty, but he'd learned caution, narrowly escaping death and injury numerous times. His friends called him a fool. Sometimes the mouth was closed, gagged with snow. Sometimes the mouth was open, a dark tunnel leading into inky blackness. Yukus was unafraid.

He stopped to eat and tightened his furs. The wind was calm, and he was grateful for that. More than once he'd been forced to turn back. He'd learned to take the

peak in stages, camping at night to resume at daybreak. Today he made good time. The sun would be high and help light his path down.

He continued, and four hours later crested the rim. He glanced backward at the broad unspoiled plain before turning his attention inside the cauldron. Smoke and ash rose in a thin plume but what drew his eye was the faint glittering emerald glow, just out of sight in the wide throat. He surveyed his favorite path down and scolded himself for haste.

Do not die on the mountain, he thought. Only a fool would offer such disrespect.

He breathed deep until calm returned, then began picking his way through the boulders and craggy spires. He tested each spot before placing his foot, sacrificing speed for certainty. He knew up ahead the path down would level out for a time, winding like a game trail into the belly of this beast. His breath caught in his throat. The shimmering green was brighter in the darkness ahead. He forced himself, again, to proceed slowly. He gradually left the sunlight behind. Hours later, he moved in almost total darkness, guided by the emerald glow and his small oil skin torch.

Then, he was upon it.

A great glittering gem almost as large as his head beckoned. The path it had taken was obvious: impact craters in the dirt and rock, followed by streaked and melted snow. This jewel had come in hot and bounced deeper into the throat. He moved closer and the mountain rumbled again, eager for him to remove this obstruction, this bone lodged in the gullet. He stepped closer, blood singing through his veins.

The mountain will love me, he thought. The god below will be grateful.

He stabbed his small torch into the dirt and snow and reached for the gem with both hands. He stopped. Movement caught his eye. Or was that the flickering of torchlight within the deep facets? He paused, hoping to see it again. At last, he placed both hands on the still warm surface and heaved, lifting the huge jewel up to his face, admiring the verdant tones, marveling at the emerald beauty. Where had it come from? What message was he supposed to understand? This brilliant herald had fallen from the heavens. What was the meaning?

A facet cracked open and, too fast for the eye to follow, slippery tentacles whipped free and slapped around his wrists. Yukus jumped back and tried to drop the green rock, but the stone unfurled like a coiled snake, slithering higher up his arms, tightening around his wrists. He opened his mouth to scream but a tentacle lashed out and circled his throat, squeezing. He staggered backward, throwing his arms and shaking his head, trying desperately to dislodge the creature. He smashed his hands against the tunnel wall but the chitinous outer shell protected the monster. More tentacles whipped away from the main body, latching onto his waist, his legs, his face. At last, pieces of emerald jewel fell to the cave floor. The last thing Yukus saw before a slithering arm enveloped his head were two small black, soulless eyes gleaming deep in the body of the slimy beast.

I am going to die on the mountain, he thought, fighting for air.

But he did not die. The creature left his nose uncovered, whispering strange and alien thoughts into his mind. Yukus felt himself push away from the wall and set a trembling foot to path, although he did not will it. Sharing a mind with this creature from the stars allowed him to see through tiny black eyes. His body mechanically lurched forward, walking deeper into the mountain, following the ancient lava tube far down into

the guts of the peak, entering a world of pitch blackness yet still somehow able to see. On and on he tread, seemingly for days, until his feet bled from the sharp stones, his shoulders and elbows cut and bruised from the unforgiving walls. Yukus marched himself deeper until, finally, his nose detected the faint scent of seawater. He sensed the creature's excitement and his legs forced himself to hurry.

At last, he reached an underground grotto, illuminated by faint blue bioluminescence. The creature began to tighten its grip, squeezing Yukus until breathing became impossible. He began to thrash as his body demanded oxygen, yet the creature squeezed only harder. Unable to withstand such pressure, his body exploded like a crushed grape, spurted blood and other liquid, all quickly consumed by the tentacled monster holding him.

When nothing remained of Yukus but a crushed and drained pulp, the monster released the slimy husk, sending one long tentacle in search of the cold salt water. Energy surged as it anchored itself and pulled its remaining bulk in with a splash, sinking beneath the dark surface where it began to explore. This world was rich with delicious life. The creature instinctively knew eons could be spent here. Sea currents glided over sensitive skin, and the monster picked a direction, heading north underwater, heading for the bay which would one day, far in the future, be named Puget Sound, and a city named Seattle.

Chapter 2

The clock on the wall read nine-fifty-nine.

The front door opened. Detective Anders Almond stepped inside the cramped office and looked around at the group of people seated there. Most looked hungover. His gaze traveled over each face, remembering what his research had told him about this team: Lara and Winston, the young but not too young married couple. Koko, athletic, shoulder-length red hair pulled into a no-nonsense ponytail. Brandon, currently obsessed with a frustrating circuit board, and, lastly, Abigail, active nun although you couldn't tell that by the miniskirt, tank top, and tight black choker an inch wide. The detective's eyes lingered on Abigail, just like every pair of straight male eyes lingered on Abigail. She seemed indifferent to the attention but with his heightened senses Almond saw through that facade. He saw through all the screens each of them tried to erect. These people had seen some things.

"Good morning," Almond said.

"I know who you are," Abigail said. "I may not know what you are, but I do know who you are. You're Seattle Police Detective Anders Almond."

"I am. Actually, I was. I'm freelance now. I consult for the Seattle police. Any police department, really. I'm a private detective. More freedom. Fewer rules."

"You mean laws," Koko smirked. "You can follow fewer laws."

"Yes. That is what I mean."

"How can we help you?" Lara said. "Last night you said you needed help finding your wife. You said you killed a demon, and his brothers kidnapped her for revenge. Pull over that stool. Maybe you should tell us the whole story."

Almond studied the group before him. He hated to use his heightened powers of observation on these people, but it was difficult not to, especially now that the blood of

Kali had so amplified everything. He saw that Koko possessed underdeveloped talent as a medium and Lara had engaged in group sex with multiple men last night, but none of them had been her husband. In fact, by the look in her husband's eyes, he'd been the one to arrange it. Brandon had strong feelings for Koko, and Koko had feelings for everyone, male and female alike. Abigail blared like a klaxon to his enhanced perceptions, a woman of God with both feet firmly entrenched in sin. She was alluring without effort, desirable without trying. He made a mental note to remain wary of her. He loved his wife Rachel beyond measure, but he was still a man, mostly, and carried all the weaknesses of any man. Abigail was something special. Abigail tickled his mind and tickled his penis. Abigail could become a problem for him.

"It all began," he said. "With a missing husband." He pondered for a moment. "No. That's not true. It all truly began years before, when I was buried alive."

He spoke for almost an hour, describing his career and the events which had led him to their door.

"I know I asked you to help me find my wife," he concluded. "But last night I received a phone call. A new case. An ancient artifact, an obsidian gem, was stolen from a museum. They'd like me to get it back and they will pay a lot. I'd like all of you to help me. We can get to know each other. When we finish that case, we can return to the hunt for Rachel."

"What's so special about this gem?" Brandon asked.

Almond sat on the corner of a desk.

"I spoke to the historian at the museum. She believes there is a modern day cult that seeks the chunk of rock because it can return a long-dead holy man to life."

"Can it?" Koko asked.

Almond chuckled.

"That's funny," he said. "I asked her the same question. She thought I was joking and scoffed at me until she realized I was serious. She assured me such a thing is impossible which to me means it probably can. The museum wants me to find the group responsible and return the stone as quickly as possible. For that I need help. I heard about your crew through the police rumor mill and decided to seek you out. Are you interested?"

There was a long moment of silence. Lara stood and faced the group.

"I think we need a minute to discuss your offer," she said. "This is different from the work we usually do. Ghosts are dead. They can sometimes affect the living, but they are worlds away from demons and monsters. You fight living evil. Your world is infinitely more dangerous and deadly than ours."

Almond headed for the front door.

"I'll step outside to give you privacy," he said. "I'll understand if you decline."

"Cool then," Brandon said. "This one's easy. I'm out."

"Me too," Koko added. "Way too dangerous. Your world has a high body count, detective. People die all around you. No thanks. I'll stick with horny ghosts."

Lara looked at Winston.

"I'm in," Abigail said, meeting the detective's eyes. "There's something about you. A sense of fate, if you will. You fight demons and I want to help. There's a reason the Lord brought our two worlds together. There's a reason we met."

Almond gave her an appreciative smile and left the room.

Chapter 3

Rachel Louise Almond leaned backward into the tall grass and spread her legs. Cana circled overhead, soaring through the clouds, turning loops and plummeting before stretching his wings wide and scooping the air, rocketing upward again. Rachel loved to watch him fly. She reached for her pussy, already wet. She knew this aerial display was for her benefit and that Cana would soon land and take her. She watched her lover and his show of strength and circled her clit with a fingertip. The beast was so powerful, so magnetically masculine. His desire for her matched her own and showed no signs of abating.

Cana held himself aloft with powerful beats of his wings, maintaining one position like a hummingbird. He gazed down on her as she gazed up at him and both smiled. His cock began to rise, and she gasped. She knew she'd never get tired of fucking this magnificent creature. His features had continued to change the longer he was free of Pasha's magic. His skin had luster now, polished marble laced with golden veins. His talons had changed shape too, becoming something more like hands. Pasha had twisted the magnificent creature into something humans find terrifying; a demonic monster pulled from their nightmares. In his true form he was splendid. Memories of her former life drifted through her mind rarely these days. She hardly remembered her husband or her married life.

A wave of sadness swept over her.

She should feel the loss, shouldn't she? Her time with Cana had been blissful but was it enough? How long had she been lost to the euphoria of her life with this winged demigod? She slept when sleepy, ate when hungry, and made love all the time. How long had that been all she required? More importantly, she wondered, how much longer would it continue to be enough? Cana had spent centuries trapped in servitude. For him this was indeed all he needed.

Is it enough for me?

Her gaze fell from his handsome face to his penis, fully erect from the mere sight of her. A thrill ran up her spine and she spread her legs wider, an open invitation Cana could not ignore. Her eyes remained glued to his hard cock as he dropped, heavy body hitting the soft earth with a thud. His body was enthralling. His cock was majestic. She felt her need for him in the deep primal recesses of her ancient mind. Her empty pussy suddenly ached with longing.

"God," she gasped. "Put it in me. Hurry."

He folded his wings and knelt between her legs. She grabbed his large phallus with both hands, pulling him forward and down, rubbing the head around to wet him and then tugging him forward, groaning as his solid girth forced her inner expansion. She slapped her palms on his firm ass and pulled, ramming him deep. All the air left her lungs in a rush as she groaned. There was no feeling like it. Her level of wetness always surprised and thrilled her; proof she'd found her true love.

Or is it true lust? she wondered.

His fat cock pushed deep, and her legs curled around his hips. She instinctively hooked her heels under his ass and pulled him deeper still. She clenched her entire body around his invasion, grimacing as she clamped down, felt herself truly filled. His

girth always stretched her wide, dragging her clit along his rigid shaft, flooding her mind with overwhelming pleasure. Her orgasms with him rocked her to the soul.

Where is Andy? she wondered. *Where is my husband right now?*

She gasped as the large head burrowed. Despite the waves of pleasure washing over her, a sense of loss set a tiny hook in her heart before a growing orgasm began to build. She forced those thoughts from her mind, concentrating on the rising sensations.

Does he miss me?

Cana began to pump his hips and all other thoughts were driven from her. She lifted her pelvis to meet his thrusts and offered him her breasts which the winged demigod devoured. His sharp pointed teeth raked her skin and teased her stiff nipples. Her pussy convulsed, clenching around his invading spear.

“Close,” she moaned, working her hips on him.

He slowed his thrusts, dragging his inches in and out. The heightened sensations pushed her over the edge, and she orgasmed, soaking his stiff cock with pussy juice. Her loud cry filled the peaceful meadow, sending birds into flight. Her nails raked his back, and he restrained himself no longer, erupting inside her womb, gushing potent sperm like a fountain. Her legs tightened around his body, and her arms circled his neck. She held his mouth tightly to her sensitive breasts and lost herself in the white light and noise of a blinding climax, dimly aware of his copious seed flowing into her.

Chapter 4

Rasul Dray lifted the dense chunk of coal, the crimson sleeves of his robe sliding down to his elbows, and turned the stone to catch the light. His wide eyes danced with menace. He and his followers stood in the damp and smelly basement of the auto parts store above.

“I don’t understand,” acolyte Gregory said. “We went through all that trouble for a rock? What can a rock do for us? Can we sell it?”

Rasul slowly turned his attention to the new priest.

“This is the Heart of Ur,” he said. “The Heart sleeps now as it has for millennia, waiting for a Learned cleric, me, to perform the ritual and awaken it.”

Gregory looked around at the other priests. Some met his eyes. Others, members of the Crimson Cult far longer, averted their eyes.

“What does it do?” Gregory asked. “How will that rock help us get rich?”

“Is that why you worship?” another acolyte asked. “For money?”

Gregory looked at the others, seeking support. He found none.

“I thought we robbed that place for the cash,” he said. “If y’all are this serious about the spooky religious shit, maybe I should go.”

The crimson cleric stepped closer.

“No one leaves,” Rasul said. “We have the Heart now. A new age comes yet you fail to see it. Ur will rise again. Ur will teach us and lead us.”

Gregory backed away from Rasul and the others.

“Hold him,” the crimson cleric said.

Worshippers lunged. Gregory was seized by many hands. He opened his mouth to shout at the other followers, but one of them stuffed a rag inside.

“Tear his robes away,” Rasul ordered. “He is unworthy to wear them.”

More hands grabbed his clothing and pulled, shredding the cloth until he stood naked and trembling before the group. Someone moved their hand, and the acolyte spit the rag out.

“Just let me go,” he pleaded. “I’ll keep your secrets.”

“Don’t you mean our secrets? Were you ever truly a believer?”

Rasul lifted the Heart and pressed it against the man’s bare chest. The crimson cleric muttered strange words, and the lump of coal began to show thin veins of red. The basement air began to thrum. A hand attempted to return the rag to the man’s mouth, but Rasul stopped them.

“Let him scream,” the cleric said.

The coal had started to steam, thin red wisps curling upward. The acolyte felt the heat and increased his struggles.

“It burns,” he whimpered.

“It has only just begun.”

Rasul continued his chant, and the spidery veins grew brighter. The man threw himself at his captors but there were far too many. He barely moved them. Rasul’s voice grew louder, and smoke rose. The man groaned in agony.

“Please stop,” he whined. “Please. I’ll leave and you’ll never hear from me again. I only come to these meetings because a friend invited me. I’ll tell no one.”

Rasul smiled grimly.

“You are to receive the greatest gift, yet all you do is beg. Ur shall be reborn in you. His knowledge and power will lead us. I will learn great things at his feet. As I am so willing to serve, so should you be.”

The acolyte shouted for them to stop but they did not. The Heart glowed red now, bubbling and sizzling against his sternum, blistering his skin. Suddenly his flesh parted, and the Heart sank half an inch. He screamed and arched his back, pulling hard on the hands that held him.

“Pain always accompanies birth,” Rasul purred.

The crimson cleric pressed firmly on the glowing coal. The acolyte howled in agony as the obsidian gem slowly sank beneath his flesh. Smoke rose and the stench of burning skin filled the basement. The cleric chanted continuously, and the radiant jewel sank deeper, until it disappeared beneath the skin, which closed like a blanket. The acolyte stiffened and began to shake. His eyes rolled back in his skull and his jaw dropped. His throat bulged and weird moans issued. Veins stood out across his face and shoulders. The onyx rock had vanished within, leaving only a faint blackened scar.

The acolyte opened his eyes again, but he was no longer the same man. He straightened his shoulders and shrugged the many hands away.

“I hunger,” his deep and gravelly voice said.

“Yes, Lord Ur. I have assembled many for you. Choose whom you will.”

The crowd stepped away, many fearful. That they faced something new was obvious. The creature stood tall and waded into the crowd, searching faces, scrutinizing bodies.

“You,” he said, pointing to a chubby man in the group. “You, and you,” he added, selecting others. “Remove your garments and join me.”

Frightened, but obedient, the men stripped, standing nude before the crowd. They sought to hide their genitalia, covering with both hands and averting their eyes.

The creature wearing the acolyte's body stepped closer. He muttered an ancient language, and each man slowly froze in place, the fear in their eyes soaring. The creature held the first man as a lover would, cupping his face as if to kiss. The muttering grew louder, and the man's skin began to bubble. The creature spoke faster, and the man clenched his jaw, desperate to scream but unable as his flesh began to flow like melted wax up his body and over his face to blend with the creature, pouring down his body, adding to his chest, his legs, his penis, increasing his size everywhere. He gained height as his bones extended, weight as his muscles and sinews expanded. Soon the creature stood many inches above the fixated crowd.

On and on the rivulets of skin and muscle streamed and the creature grew larger. Biceps tore away, abs turned to mush and crawled up his chest until merging with the creature's hands and then crawling like slugs over his body, adding to his bulk. The two men waiting, now aware of their fate, tried to break the spell which held them but failed. Lord Ur drained every speck of soft tissue until only a bloody, dripping skeleton remained, suspended by its jaw. He released the skull and the bones crumpled in a pile at his feet.

Ur stepped to the next terrified man.

Down the line he moved, stealing the flesh and tissue from each victim and adding it to his own. Muscle, sinew, skin and fat all melted and flowed, creeping along the man's arms to merge with his body, filling him, expanding him, granting him the life essence of extra men. His arms grew strong, his legs powerful, his naked cock, fed now with the abundance of three men, lengthened and thickened. His singular cock dangled heavy, arching downward in a gentle curve, a pendulous hose capped by a large, helmeted head.

Finally, three piles of bones lay at his feet. Lord Ur raised his arms, assessing his additional strength. The crimson cleric brought forward a robe, tailor made for Lord Ur's immense new size. The creature shrugged his shoulders into it but left the front open, daring those assembled to ignore his fresh power. A woman from the crowd, unable to control herself, rushed forward and lifted the hefty cock to her mouth, stuffing several inches and sucking hard. Lord Ur chuckled, petting her hair.

"What year?" the massive beast asked.

"Two-thousand and twenty-five years have passed since the death of Christ," the crimson cleric answered.

"I know not this Christ," Lord Ur said. "How long since the battle of Megiddo? How long since the foolish Canaanites followed their mad King Kadesh into the grave? I feasted on his face before I sealed him in alive."

"I do not know of this battle, Lord Ur. You have much to teach me."

Ur turned his attention to the assembled crowd. The woman at his feet slurped loudly but he ignored her efforts. He studied the people and then the basement walls, seeing the world around him for the first time.

"As you have much to teach me," he said. He looked the crimson cleric up and down. "I thank you for returning me. Come, tell me your needs and show me the truth. I see you wear the red, a priest of the highest order. Are there more believers than those you have gathered?"

"No. But with your rebirth, we will become legion."

A second woman, also overcome by lust, darted from the crowd to take her place on her knees. Both women slathered Lord Ur, running tongues up and down his veiny length and sucking voraciously on the head. His cock radiated the power of three men and they found him irresistible.

"Then let us begin," Ur said. "I name you my second. Together we will rebuild what has fallen. The worship of Nergal, who is Erra to some, will spread around the world. We will found a New Kutha. I have many spells to share. We awaken a God, and we will be rewarded. Now, let us leave this place and you can show me your modern world."

The terrified crowd parted, opening a path to the stairs. The women pouted, disappointed their oral worship must stop. They tied Lord Ur's robe closed and followed him and the crimson cleric up and out of the basement, the army of now true believers following. The piles of bone they left behind.

Chapter 5

"Why would they call you to find a rock?" Abigail asked. "That makes no sense."

"Order anything you want," Almond said. "My treat."

Abigail gave him an appraising look, then sent her gaze around the lavish Six Seven restaurant. The view of the bay was incredible. Waiters hurried here and there across the Travertine tiles and around the faux tree trunks. Steam rose in the kitchen. Dishes clanked and silverware jingled.

"Are you trying to impress me?" she asked.

"I think I am," he said. "I find you remarkably attractive."

Lead with truth, the voice of his father advised. *Smart*.

"You're married."

"I am. You're married to God."

"Yes. That was my vow. Then I met Lara and Winston and the others and everything changed. I have tasted the pleasures of the flesh and found them delicious. Do I still serve God? Yes. Am I chaste and pure? No. Do I have enough restraint to resist the flirtations of a handsome and intriguing private detective? Maybe. I'm only human. I can promise nothing. I sense you've strayed as well."

"I have."

"Tell me, and spare nothing. I'm no delicate flower, despite my profession. I have seen and heard things that would drive most insane. I know the truth of life."

"All right. I was willingly seduced by a succubus. A female demon."

"I know what succubi are."

"Right. Of course. She drank my blood, and I drank hers. I am bound to her forever. We fornicated but not for love. She used my infatuation. Her attention was a ploy to enlist my help."

"Was she successful? Did you help her?"

"Yes. I did. I killed her enemy for her. He was my enemy too. She had enlisted many men before me, but all had failed. She was willing to sacrifice me as she had them, but I didn't care. My need for her, which she created, was too strong. I was willing to do anything she wanted."

"Are you still?"

“Hard to say. She left and has not returned. I try not to think about her.”

Abigail looked around the restaurant, wondering what the other patrons would say about the conversation she shared with the detective.

Better they stay ignorant.

“Your wife,” Abigail said. “Rachel. Did she also stray?”

Almond laughed bitterly.

“Too many times to count.”

Divorce the whore already, his dad said.

Shut up, father.

“Did you forgive her?” Abigail asked.

“I do. I love my wife. Her mind was not always her own.”

“But she’s been gone a long time and at least part of you is still human. You’re lonely, and the nun is attractive, so invite her to dinner and see what happens.”

“That sums it up.”

“Hm.”

Activity swirled all around them. The smell of various succulent dishes drifted by. With his heightened sense of smell, Almond separated each scent and savored the various aromas.

What I would give for a taste of that filet, the voice of Miss Mapleberry said.

“The demon’s blood gave you powers,” Abigail said, watching and understanding.

“Yes. The world is a very different place to me now. What about you? You have powers of your own.”

“Not like you.”

“No.”

“I see things hidden,” she said. “I mean the invisible connection between things. It’s hard to explain. It’s like an intuition, a sense of the truth or what is truly happening. A few sisters say I’m psychic. One says I’m a true medium. I speak several languages, including Latin, and I hold a Vatican endorsed commission from the Church to perform certain rites and rituals.”

“As a woman? Impressive.”

“They cannot ignore my gifts.”

“Rites and rituals? Exorcisms?”

“If need be.”

“Ever wonder why God made you so sexy? That must hinder you.”

“Yes, it complicates my life and my life in the church. Many priests cannot see past my looks. Perhaps God made me this way to test them? I don’t know. I’ve learned to trust his plan, but I’ve also learned I have appetites of my own. I’m lucky those appetites seemingly do not conflict with the path he’s chosen for me.”

“Lucky you. What kind of appetites?”

Abigail sipped her wine and forked a chunk of filet into her mouth. She chewed.

“I like men and women equally. I have a hard time saying no to aggression.”

“If someone that wants you simply takes you, you melt.”

“Something like that.”

“Good to know.”

“We’ll see. Let’s talk about your missing rock.”

Detective Almond stuffed his mouth with salad. He chewed.

"The Museum of Witchcraft and Magic in Boscastle, England, called my former station and they connected us. The rock, as you called it, is thousands of years old. Legend says an ancient priest, when faced with angry villagers and imminent death, ripped his soul free and forced it into a nearby lump of coal. Throughout history the lump keeps reappearing, used in a magical ritual to possess one person after another so that the priest can survive down through the centuries. The museum believes it was stolen for that purpose."

"That's a classic myth."

"I said legend. Do you understand the difference?"

"I'm not sure I do. Aren't those words interchangeable?"

"Not truly. Myth is a story handed down that probably started with a lie. Legend is a story handed down that probably started with the truth. Both change and grow over time, exaggerated with each retelling."

"You think the lump of coal can actually raise a dead priest?"

Almond eyed her pretty face, reading clues.

"I do," he said. "And so do you."

She ate some steak.

"I've seen too much to disbelieve anything anymore."

Almond scoffed.

"Me too," he said.

"Where do we start?"

"Missing persons. These men and women like to play at cult membership, but they still have real lives. They have wives and husbands, children and employers. They have people that care about them but know nothing of their secret life. Sooner or later they get sucked in and the cult consumes them in some way and then they get reported missing. It's often the same kind of people around the same time."

"You have friends on the police force."

"Not really. I know things about people in key positions. They help me under threat of exposure."

"Extortion. That makes life dangerous for you. Your death frees them."

The detective shook his head.

"They understand I have systems in place. Anything happens to me, their worst fears become reality."

"You are remarkably comfortable with doing evil."

Almond laughed.

"I didn't start out this way. I blame the blood of Kali running through my veins."

"The succubus."

"Yes."

The conversation hit a lull. Abigail gazed through the glass wall as she ate, admiring the bay at dusk.

"I'm always amazed at the complications of life," she said wistfully. "It's impossible to get through it clean. Everything is messy."

"Chaos is the music of the universe."

"Truly. Would you enjoy a walk around downtown after dinner? Maybe we stop someplace for a drink?"

"I'd enjoy that."

Their eyes met.

"Why does our making love feel so inevitable?" she asked.

Do it, the voice of Janet said. *Let me watch.*

The detective reached across the table and placed his hand over Abigail's.

"Let's not allow it to be so," he told her. "Let's take that possibility out of the picture. Remove it entirely. Let's promise each other we'll stay focused on the case."

Abigail laughed.

"I'm a mess, Andy. The idea that we won't makes me sad. The idea that we will fills me with anxiety at the same time it fills me with desire. I've got a hundred conflicting emotions when it comes to you."

"Chaos music," the detective chuckled.

Chapter 6

Riley Isla heard a thump and left her seat to investigate. The public library was huge and well lit, with people wandering everywhere, but since being sucked into the portal, she spent most of her day living in fear.

She wanted that to change.

Almost two years had passed since she read that damn book and opened a gateway into another realm. The winged creature who tormented her still lived in her dreams. She'd used her time wisely, hunting down every clue, gathering information, learning exactly what happened to her that day and how Detective Almond and his partner, along with several others, had rescued her. The more she learned, the more frightened she'd become. Finally, she'd reached her limit. No longer would she live in fear. Since she worried that one day the creature would get her again, she had to make sure it could not.

She had to kill it.

She quickly realized she'd need detective Almond's help.

The demon's name was Velmorath the Bonewright and was typically summoned when one human wished for another human an exceedingly painful death. Velmorath was rebellious and difficult to bind. Riley had come to understand that the man who lived in their apartment before them was not the simple booklover everyone assumed. In fact, Riley was convinced, that man had met a gruesome death at the hands of the very demon he'd tried to summon, an assassination attempt gone wrong. Somewhere out there a man or woman walked around, living their life, blissfully unaware of the horrible end they'd dodged. Riley had no interest in learning who they were. Riley focused on ways to destroy Velmorath.

The girl learned gold was deadly to creatures from the netherworld and had set out to find a way to introduce the demon to some. She read everything written about her case and happened upon a comment someone had made in passing about detective Almond and his golden bullets.

That's when she knew she needed his help again.

She reached the end of the row and scanned those around her. Everyone had their nose in a book or cell phone or computer monitor. They were in their own little worlds. Like them, she'd come to the library in search of knowledge. She knew

Velmorath was vengeful. She knew he was furious she'd escaped his realm. She felt his anger in the air around her. She was attuned to his vibrations since being sucked through the portal. A thin barrier separated his world from hers. She felt him watching, always, one parallel dimension away. He'd claim her bones if he could, and fashion a golem from them. Almond's too. She'd felt a lot of new sensations since her visit to that other world, all of them unpleasant. Velmorath could not enter her plane without proper incantation and authority, but he could influence the weak-minded to do his bidding. Whispers in the dark were often more effective. She knew she was in danger everywhere, even at a public library. She ran her fingertips over the gun under her coat, reassured by the hard cold steel.

I haven't dipped my bullets in gold yet, but they'll work fine against a human.

She turned, intent on retracing her steps to her desk and stack of books. She froze. A man in jeans and a hoodie stood over her empty chair, sniffing the air and examining what she'd been reading. She gasped softly and he looked up, eyes gliding in half a circle around him, sensing, hunting. Riley backed to the end of the row and hid, breathing fast.

Maybe it's just some creep, she thought. I get a lot of those now that my body is maturing. Jerks.

She walked away, taking the bright yellow escalator up one floor to look down on her desk. The man was still there, turning her books to read the titles. He seemed to sense he was being watched and scanned around again. He left the desk, sniffing the air. He followed the path she'd taken. Riley aimed for the stairs, wishing to avoid meeting him in a cramped elevator. She passed a mural of tentacles painted in three-D, made to look as if the octopus reached through the bookshelves for her. A strange sense of danger washed over her.

I left my phone and keys on that table. I need to circle around.

The man stepped onto the escalator, following her trail by scent. She flew down the stairs, arriving at her desk and quickly gathering her things, glancing over her shoulder frequently. She filled her backpack and stacked her books and hurried to the exit, hoping to lose him in the twisting streets and smells of downtown. She turned her back on the freeway and headed for Puget Sound, hoping the offshore breeze and fishy stink would confuse the man. She turned right on Madison. Five blocks later she turned right again, this time on Alaskan Way. She stuck to the seaside, hurrying, glancing back often. She thought she saw the man far behind her.

"Watch where you're going," a man's voice said.

The collision rocked her. Her backpack slipped from her arm. She would have fallen if the man hadn't caught her.

"Are you okay?" a woman asked.

Riley looked up into the face of Detective Almond. Abigail helped the girl stand.

"Detective Almond?" the young girl said.

He was confused for only an instant.

"Riley?" he said. "Riley Isla? Good God. I haven't seen you in years."

"Oh my God," she gasped. "I was just thinking about you. I need help. The demon is still after me. Some guy is following my scent."

She turned to look down the way she'd come just as the man in the hoodie stepped onto the path. He saw Riley far ahead but kept coming.

“That guy,” she said. “He followed me in the library and then out here on the streets too. I think Velmorath sent him. The demon can influence weak minded people. I think he’s after me. Please help me.”

Abigail pulled the girl behind her and stood ready. Almond studied the man as he approached, watching for any sign of aggression. The detective’s heightened vision showed him a man with a pockmarked face and a frozen wicked smile.

“I see something, Andy,” Abigail said. “Something inside him. He’s not one but two. Something possesses him.”

“I see something too,” the detective agreed. “Be ready.”

The man walked towards them faster, breaking into a jog. As he drew near, he pulled his hands from the hoodie’s pockets, waving long twin knives. Then the sweatshirt ripped along the sides and two more arms cut through, also brandishing long knives. Riley gasped. Abigail hugged the girl tightly as Detective Almond drew his jet-black Glock Nineteen and stepped forward.

People screamed and scattered for cover. The four-armed man raced towards Riley, growing taller and heavier with each step. Clothing ripped. Shoes split. The air turned icy. Detective Almond stood his ground, heartbeat steady, watching and waiting for the perfect shot. The creature jumped, diving at the detective with knives raised. Almond lifted his pistol and fired once, driving a gold-plated bullet directly into the man’s heart. The monster dropped, hitting the sidewalk with a thud and rolling facedown. Bystanders ran from the insanity, shouting, hiding behind cars and shrubs or fleeing, running into the nearby Seattle Aquarium.

“Stay there,” Almond told the women.

He moved closer to the body. He glanced around at the many people using their phones to call the police or record what was happening. When he reached the body he turned it with his toe, ready to fire again. In death, the creature was a mess, a blended mix of man and beast. His human features had melted, revealing an animal skull structure beneath. His lips curled back to show large canines.

Abigail and Riley approached slowly.

“I told you to stay back,” Almond said.

“We should get married,” Abigail muttered. “That way you can boss your wife around and she can ignore you too.”

“It’s a canid demon,” Riley said. “You can tell by the teeth. Someone masked it to blend in, someone probably still watching.”

“How do you know about canid demons?” Abigail asked.

Riley jerked her thumb at Almond.

“Ask him,” she said.

Almond holstered his pistol and covered the creature’s face with his coat. He called the police on his cell, wandering away but looping back to the girls.

“Cops are coming,” he told them. “I let them know it was me and what happened here. I called off the ambulance, but the coroner will be here soon. This sidewalk will be crawling with city officials. Let’s take a seat and wait.”

“You’re an amazing shot,” Riley said. “You didn’t flinch. Crazy four-armed monster charging you and you aimed and fired a kill shot no problem. I’m learning to shoot but I’m nowhere near as good as you.”

“Why do you know it’s a canid demon?” Abigail asked again.

Riley gave a little shrug.

"Years ago, the good detective snatched me away from a vile creature who had captured me. I appreciated him doing it, but the creature was furious. I sensed that monster coming after me the next day, the next day, and every day since. Every minute. Demons don't sleep. So, I educated myself on who and what he was. I educated myself on all demon lore. I learned all kinds of demons walk the Earth. Read Revelations twelve-nine. Where did the angels that fell land? Earth, that's where. Most got sucked into Hell but not all. Many fled, fearing their fate, and retreated to dimensions all their own. They're everywhere, all around us all the time. Velmorath wants my bones. He hates that I got away. He wants to pull my bones out of my living body and create me again as a servant golem. He'd make it so I'd be aware of my fate but powerless to change it. No way I'll let that happen." She turned to Almond. "I need gold bullets like you have. I can't afford them on my own and Mom doesn't have the money."

He raised an eyebrow.

"Not a little girl anymore, are you?"

"No. Here's something you don't know. Velmorath controlled my sense of time while he had me. I felt like I was tortured for months. Months, Detective. He told me things. He forced me to see things. He forced me to feel things. You rescued me and I returned to my previous life, but my childhood was gone. My innocence was dead."

A patrol car raced to the curb and two officers jumped out. Almond went to meet them. Abigail took Riley's hand.

"I know about demons too," she said. "I'm Sister Abigail, I've been given the honorary title of Pararius. I'm a kind of special agent for the church. I know all about canid demons. I know all about all of the different demons. I'm authorized to perform exorcisms. I can see spirits and often hear their thoughts."

"But you're a woman."

"The church pretends people like me don't exist, but they use us."

The coroner pulled up to the curb. A man got out and huddled with Almond and the others. A crowd had gathered, curious about the freakish creature dead on the sidewalk. Abby and Riley watched Almond gesticulate as he explained what happened.

"So, you believe me," Riley said.

"Belief is unnecessary this time," Abby responded. "I don't believe, I know. Faith is not required in the face of evidence."

Riley met her eyes.

"Are you and the detective boyfriend and girlfriend?"

Abigail scoffed.

"No."

"Have you done it?"

Abigail regarded the young woman.

"No," she said. "But we might."

"You want to. I see it in the way you look at him."

"He's a good man, and good men are hard to find. But he's married."

"Plus, there's that pesky vow of celibacy you took."

"Long gone, my friend."

Riley appreciated the honesty, and it showed on her face.

"I'm technically still a virgin," Riley said.

“Technically?”

“Velmorath tormented my mind with many experiences. I've mentally endured intercourse. I've mentally endured many men at once. He filled my mind with images and sensations and laughed as I writhed in pain.”

“That's terrible. I'm so sorry.”

“You understand my desire to destroy him. Once I learned it was possible, I had to have it.”

“That's what you studied at the library?”

“Kind of. I was looking for a way to summon him here. I need him on this plane to wipe him from existence.”

“Summoning is always dangerous.”

“Sister Abigail. I'm fully aware of our danger, believe me.”

Chapter 7

Rachel sat up abruptly. The night was still. Stars twinkled overhead. She left the bed of straw that Cana had fashioned for her and walked to the cave mouth. Outside, Cana sat perched as always, awake and aware, ready to protect her.

“What troubles you, my love?” he asked, voice a deep rumble.

“I'm not sure,” she replied. “Did a dream wake me? I don't know. My heart feels heavy but without a reason why.”

Cana sighed. With a beat of his wings, he left the rocky mountainside and landed next to her. He lifted her hand, kissing the back. She marveled at gargoyle features, terrifying to most but gorgeous to her.

“I know what troubles you,” he said. “I'd hoped this moment would never come, but I fear it has.”

“What moment?”

He scooped her naked body into his strong arms and took flight, circling the mountain peak until he reached the top. He landed but held her in his arms.

“You must return to your kind,” he said, and she gasped.

“No.”

“It's true. We made magic but it cannot last. Our worlds do not blend. Yours calls out to you. Your friends, your husband. It is his undying love you feel. His for you and yours for him.”

“No.”

She eased from his arms, dainty toes stepping onto mossy rock. She used his hips for balance and found herself face to face with his pendulous cock. How could she give it up? Impossible. She crouched and lifted the phallus on both palms, admiring the smooth skin, the glowing internal warmth.

So many memories of mind-bending pleasure. So many instances of staggering bliss. How many orgasms has this instrument given me?

She leaned forward and planted a soft kiss on the wide head.

Is it possible to be in love with a penis? she wondered. Do I love the individual, or do I love what he can do for me? Are my feelings truly about us? Or are they more selfish than that? It's not like we can buy a home and have kids.

She circled his girth with both hands and lifted, causing the head to bob and sway. She captured the tip with her mouth and sucked, gently at first, but then rubbing her tongue under the head and sucking hard. She slid her hands down the shaft to the root, feeling the weight of him on her tongue. She suckled, teasing the head, licking away his sweet, copious precum. The urge to drink his essence rose and she bobbed slightly, working just the head inside her hot mouth. He began to harden, expanding and throbbing, and a thrill ran through her. She licked away every honeyed drop that leaked until her mouth tasted like melted sugar. She eased him farther in, excited by her struggle. Her jaw ached around his delicious girth.

Minutes later he was fully engorged and pulsating. Covered with her saliva, gleaming in the moonlight. She leaned back to admire his rampant cock for a moment and then turned her back, bending at the waist. She reached between her legs and guided him to her wet hole, shoving her hips at him, forcing his stiff spear deep.

“God,” she groaned, stuffed. “I love the way you fill me up.”

He grabbed her hair and pulled, forcing her to stand. He circled his legs around her legs and his arms around her waist. His wings beat hard, launching both skyward. She was skewered on his curved cock like a piece of meat, a lovely gazelle impaled on a rhinoceros’s horn. He held her tightly and climbed higher, hips pumping slowly, until he reached the thin clouds and passed through them, chilling Rachel with icy dew. She watched the ground recede and then the mist surround her, all while his relentless piston pumped her insides. It was too much. Her wail of unimaginable pleasure echoed across the countryside. People in the towns below looked up, wondering what kind of creature soared above them.

His stone body pressed against hers, a delicious weight that made her feel small and protected. Rachel’s hands reached around to cup his rock-hard ass, pulling him deeper. The gargoyle’s plunges were both gentle and demanding, his hot breath on her neck teasing and tantalizing. Her need quickly rose again until she writhed in his arms. Rachel’s pleasure exceeded her wildest dreams.

With slow, deliberate thrust, he filled her completely. Rachel moaned loudly, her cunt stretched to accommodate him, her senses overwhelmed by the sensation of being completely possessed. The gargoyle’s rhythm was steady and unyielding, each thrust sending waves of pleasure coursing through her.

Rachel’s nails dug into the stone flesh of his ass, urging him on, her body feeling a fervor that matched his own. The clouds echoed with the sounds of their passion.

As another deep climax approached, the gargoyle’s pace quickened, his body tense from the effort of holding back. Rachel felt the tremors of her approaching release, her body convulsing around him, soft, wet, hot flesh coaxing him, urging him to join her.

With a final, powerful thrust, he shot himself into her, his roar arching across the night sky. Rachel shuddered with the force of her climax, feeling the warmth of his seed filling her, claiming her as his own. Over and over his strong hips jerked, each a tremendous volume of semen pumped out of his four-testicle scrotum and into her.

In her heart, she knew this would be their last time together. Her heart had returned to her, and she found an empty space only Andy could fill. Her time with Cana was something she would treasure forever, but that time had come to an end. She worried about the gargoyle’s feelings and then chuckled inwardly. The creature had

lived for centuries. His list of lovers was long. He radiated a masculine aura no woman could resist, not for long anyway. He would spend little time alone and then some other woman would take her place. She waited for jealousy to hit but inside she found only comfort knowing he would not suffer loneliness for long.

Chapter 8

Detective Almond, Abigail, and Riley watched the coroner drive away. The curious crowd dispersed slowly, many wondering what they'd just witnessed and who Almond was.

"Lots of YouTube videos tonight," Riley said. "Could be trouble."

Almond shook his head.

"I've been doing this for years and years," he said. "The Internet is so saturated with bullshit now, so laden with AI tricks and lies, nobody believes anything anymore. What happened here tonight will get swallowed and forgotten. A single blip before being consumed by the wave of new bullshit crashing down tomorrow. The Internet is dead. It had its moment of glory and then faded the way everything does."

"We should get off the street," Abigail said. "Velmorath probably sent more than one after her. Now that we've banished an underling, he'll be especially furious. We should expect multiple attacks."

"Good idea," Almond said.

"The library is open until eight," Riley suggested.

"Lead on," Abigail said.

A strange whistling sound made them stop. They looked at each other and then around at the dwindling crowd.

"What's that?" someone said, pointing skyward.

A large figure dropped like a stone from the heavens. At the last moment, huge wings unfurled and scooped the air. Naked Cana set down lightly on the sidewalk before them, still holding a nude Rachel in his muscular arms. He placed her lightly on her feet. Almond immediately noticed semen leaking from her pussy. Riley and Abigail gawked at the gargoyle's immense swinging dick and muscular frame. The detective caught them staring and rolled his eyes. This demigod of virility had a power over females he did not appreciate.

"She abandons me for you," Cana announced. "I bring her home."

Almond froze, stunned by the news.

"Is this true?" he laughed, afraid to believe the creature's words.

Rachel nodded, bursting into tears and she fell into her husband's arms. The detective began to cry too. Abigail removed her coat to cover Rachel's nakedness and Riley backed away a step, shocked by the sudden events.

"What the fuck is happening?" the young woman said.

"Rachel is Andy's wife," Abby said. "She was missing. Now she's home."

Riley looked Cana up and down, studying the strong arms and legs, curved wings and dangling phallus.

"You should be ugly and terrifying," she said. "But you're not. Not at all."

Cana stepped closer, towering over the girl. She reached out a dainty hand and placed her palm on his broad pectoral, running her fingers down his chest and over his rippled abs.

“Hot,” she said.

She looked down at his hanging cock and oversized balls.

“I guess this means I’m straight,” she murmured.

“Leave that creature alone,” Abigail warned. “He has power over us. Our feminine senses cannot resist him. Take your hand away, child. He is not for you.”

“But I just want to touch him.”

“Yes, I know. I feel it too. It’s something unnatural. Come.”

Abigail took Riley by the shoulders and steered her back to Rachel and Andy. The married couple were locked in deep and intense conversation and Abby did not interrupt. The Sister looked around at the crowd watching and recording, frightened and disbelieving faces everywhere.

They either think the winged creature is real and are terrified or think he’s some Hollywood special effect and are amazed.

Some women in the crowd were beginning to come under his spell and it showed in their eyes.

“We need to get away from here,” Abby said. “All of us. Including the naked gargoye.”

“I am Cana,” the creature said, gazing into her eyes.

Abigail froze. The creature’s voice sent shivers up her spine. She felt herself turn wet and gasped.

“Oh, Lord,” she muttered.

She took Riley’s wrist in one hand and Rachel’s in the other and she ran, pulling both women into the street. She aimed for a large parking structure half a block away. Andy followed. Cana stayed behind. He watched Rachel leave forever, deep sadness etched into his face. Several women left the crowd and their husbands to come kneel at his feet, kissing the length of his soft cock. The last thing Abigail saw when she looked over her shoulder, was a forty-something wife slurping Cana’s bulbous cock head into her mouth, much to the dismay of her angry husband. Detective Almond, Rachel, Abigail, and Riley hurried down Seneca Street. They turned right on Fourth Avenue, and stepped into a nightmare.

Chapter 9

Lord Ur drew his trench coat tightly around his massive frame and eased deeper into the shadows of the Bank of America building, hating the need for secrecy.

“Just storm in and take it,” Lord Ur complained. “This is how I get things done.”

Rasul Dray showed him a palm.

“Patience, my Lord,” he said. “This is not how we do things today. There are protective systems in place. Men with guns. Camera’s. Also, if we barge in, a button will be pressed and the book we seek will drop into a sealed vault, out of our reach.”

“How do they know we want it?” Lord Ur asked, eyeing the cleric suspiciously.

“They do not. The book is ancient and therefore priceless. They protect it as a treasure, not because they know what it is.”

“Idiots. The Book of Misty Vales contains the map to the Emerald Dagger. Every soul taken gives me strength.”

“One step at a time,” the crimson cleric cautioned. “You should wait here while my men and I go steal the book.”

“Why does the book reside here?”

“This is the city library. They keep copies of rare books here. How that came to be I do not know and matters not. Be patient.”

“Again, you tell me what to do. Who is servant and who is master? Let me show you how a victor claims his spoils.”

Lord Ur grabbed the front of his trench coat and pulled, tremendous strength shredding the heavy fabric and revealing his densely muscled body. Rasul took a step back. Lord Ur left the shadows, his nakedness covered only by a simple loincloth, not out of any sense of propriety or desire for social decency, but because he enjoyed how it accentuated his body and the flesh he'd stolen from other men. He strode into the open streets, pleased to see the frightened people back away.

“No,” Rasul hissed, following closely. “No, no, no. My Lord, you will undo all I have accomplished. We cannot risk discovery yet.”

Lord Ur turned on the crimson cleric.

“I hide from no one!” he bellowed.

He rounded the corner and grabbed the handles, wrenching with his incredible strength, tearing the glass and stainless-steel doors from their hinges and throwing them into the street. Crystalline shards rained on startled bystanders. A woman screamed. Lord Ur smashed through the turnstiles and entered the library. He closed his eyes and extended his arms, feeling the energies drifting through the air. He strode forward, knocking people and book carts aside. He waded in, guided by instinct, aiming for the rare manuscripts section at the back. The heavy wooden doors were locked but they suffered the same fate as the front doors. Lord Ur stepped into the darkened room, scanning the various lighted displays. He spied a deep red book with esoteric black lettering and punched through the heavy plexiglass protecting it. Alarms sounded. A steel cage dropped from the ceiling, but he caught it before it hit the floor. Biceps bulged as he twisted the metal bars and ripped the cage from the ceiling.

He grabbed the ancient tome with both hands.

Detective Almond and his companions had followed Ur into the building, helping those they could. They came up behind Ur, presented with the easy target of his broad back. Almond drew his pistol, but Riley placed a gentle hand on his wrist.

“No,” she said. “Golden bullets won't work. This creature is something else.”

“Bullets are bullets.”

“Not good enough. You could empty your clip and hit nothing vital. You'll only make him angry.”

Guards burst onto the scene from two directions, pistols drawn, ready to defend priceless treasures. Lord Ur raised the Book of Misty Vales over his head, gleeful triumph on his face, and the guards raised their weapons.

“Drop the book!” one shouted.

Lord Ur planted his large foot and leaned forward. He roared at them, furious at their lack of respect. Terrified of this monster, both guards opened fire.

“Lord Ur!” Rasul Dray cried. “Watch out!”

The crimson cleric knew the guards would fire their weapons before they did, and leapt to block the bullets, howling as the missiles ripped into his flesh. Lord Ur roared again, enraged to see his servant fall. He dropped the book and with speed far too great for a man of his size, lunged at the guards, wrapping his massive hands around each head. Muscles along his forearms clenched and their heads exploded like watermelons, blood and brains spraying. People ran screaming.

Lord Ur looked down on the body of the man that had returned him to life. Rasul lay in a crumpled pile, dead. Lord Ur grabbed the book he'd come for and lifted his gaze to survey the library.

"You will all pay for this death!" he shouted. "One shall equal a thousand. Throw yourselves from the roof of this place. Better you die today than live to learn your fate. I will make slaves of you all."

Detective Almond raised his gun again.

"Fuck it," he said. "Let's see if bullets work or not."

He squeezed the trigger. A scarlet wound opened on Lord Ur's back but quickly closed. The beast slowly turned.

"Told you," Riley said.

"Run," Abigail said.

Lord Ur snatched a display case and hurled it like a missile. Almond barely dodged in time, even with his heightened reflexes. Ur grabbed another pedestal, but more armed guards arrived. He dropped his weapon and covered the book with both arms, charging through the rows of bookcases as if they were made of paper and exiting the library into the Seattle night.

"Let's get out of here," Abigail said.

"Let's go home," Rachel murmured. "I want to make love to my husband."

Riley looked around, feeling awkward.

Detective Almond slipped his arm around Rachel's shoulders.

"I think some time to find yourself is what you need," he said. "We can do nothing more here. Let's go home. I'll take you away from all these netherworld creatures and their influences. We can remember how to be husband and wife. We have a lot to talk about. Where have you been? What have you been doing? What's going on inside your heart and your mind? Most importantly, why did you come back to me?"

Rachel faced her husband.

"Love brought me back," she said. "I hope you can forgive me, but I hope you understand my mind was not fully my own. Over time Cana's influences diminished. I got used to him. Once I did, I began to miss you. I missed the man I love. Love brought me back."

"How can I ever trust you?"

Rachel stepped closer and took his hands in her own.

"These monsters are only in our life because of you," she said, and the truth of that struck Almond like a mallet. "Your crusade to protect the innocent from the spirit world, your war against injustice. You allowed me to get sucked into our struggle, and it cost me. It cost us. Keep me out of your world and the trust will come more easily."

Almond recognized the role he'd played.

"Who suffered more?" she asked, voice quiet. "Me or you?"

ME! he wanted to shout. *I was the one who lost his wife. I was the one consumed by worry and stress, fearful I may never see her again, unable to track her down and get her back.*

Then he considered what it must have been like to lose your free will. To bend to someone's desire as if it was your own. To lose control over the days of your life, smothered with pleasure, yes, but devoid of independence and choice. The detective grew ashamed. He'd only considered his loss. He'd never considered hers.

She saw the softness enter his eyes. She knew he knew.

"I'm sorry," he said.

"I know. Me too. Let's go home and make love."

Almond looked at Abigail.

"Don't worry," she said. "Riley stays with me. Call when you're ready to nail these fuckers. We'll go back to my place and do girl stuff, like braid each other's hair or clean our guns."

Riley laughed.

Chapter 10

Almond bathed Rachel slowly. Her body was different from the woman he'd first married, more feminine, more alluring. Pasha's magic had continued to alter her. She responded to his touch instantly and with far greater sensitivity. When they kissed, the room spun for both.

She was more aggressive sexually too, quickly growing impatient with his foreplay. She pushed him against the shower wall and squatted, face to face with his bigger cock at last.

"Things have changed since I've been gone," she purred. "Your body has changed like mine. You're stronger, more heavily muscled, and this bigger cock is wonderful."

"When I fucked Kali," he admitted. "She drank my blood, and I drank hers. The side effects were numerous."

Rachel soaped her hands and began massaging Andy's cock, lathering every nook and cranny. She lifted the heavy tube and rested it on her forehead to soap his fat balls. She slipped a finger up his asshole with ease.

"I never told you this but I'm glad you fucked Kali," she said. "I always hated the idea that I was doing to you something you were not doing to me. Guilt shared is guilt reduced. We both strayed from the path. I think that will help us forgive each other."

She pumped the digit in his rectum at the same time she pulled repeatedly on his long dick. Her delight in his new phallus was obvious.

"I'm not as big as Cana," he admitted. "I hope you're not disappointed."

"Size is nice," she said. "It's true. But there's no substitute for hot flesh and blood. Yours is warmer than his. The skin is softer and more inviting."

She leaned back to admire his hanging cock, causing him to rise. She grinned and continued to stare. He filled rapidly, curving upward until his meat strained and throbbed. She stood and faced away, bracing her forearms against the tiled wall, lifting on her toes, offering her pussy to him. Andy could not resist. With one hand on her firm round ass, he guided his cock with the other. Her pussy was a furnace, squeezing his

inches like a vise, but what blew off the top of his head was the presence of so much sperm already in her. He sank through a glut of slippery semen, undeniable evidence of her infidelities. His beautiful wife carried a lake of her lover's sperm. To his male mind, Cana owned Rachel's pussy. That reality shook him and infuriated him. That reality demanded he do something.

Rachel belongs to me! his thoughts screamed. *She's mine!*

The urge to reclaim her swamped his mind. No other need mattered or even existed. He grabbed her ass and drove his big cock all the way in, gratified by her loud moan of satisfaction. He was taking back his wayward wife, claiming what rightfully belonged to him, driven by the knowledge she was truly his. She'd chosen him over a demigod, an otherworldly creature. He pushed deeper, determined to reach her womb and add his seed.

Thoughts of her cheating overwhelmed him and fueled his lust. Images of her having sex with Cana, worshipping his heavy phallus, opening herself to his penetration, daunted and intimidated him, but also made him pump his hips harder and faster. He fucked Rachel and she welcomed it. She felt all his loneliness, grief, fear and anxiety. She felt his love, lust, and competitive fire. Was Cana a more exotic fuck? Yes. But nothing she shared with that creature compared to the human passion and frailty she felt with her husband. Andy loved her no matter what. She knew that. His devotion was complete. She felt connected to him in the purest human way and that was something Cana could never provide. In the end, it was her humanity, her desire to connect to the human man that she loved and loved her, that brought her home.

Her climax slammed into her like a hammer. Her head snapped back and a cry like a banshee flew from her throat. Andy, caught by surprise over the suddenness of it, took a moment to realize and then boiling lust surged from deep in him. His wife was cumming! On his thrusting cock! He could still please her! He could still satisfy his wife, despite her wild lover. Redemption felt so sweet.

His balls tightened and he pulled her ass against his hips. He threw his head back and roared like a savage, blasting a huge spurt of semen all the way up into her womb. He shot searing bolt after bolt into her orgasming cunt. She felt his hot cum splash her inner walls and came even harder. They cried out together, united at last, fully aware of the love that bound them. Her climax went on and on. His release was volcanic, shaking his body from head to toe.

Rachel began to softly sob. The detective's eyes filled with tears. Their reunion felt like tectonic plates shifting.

Okay, his father's voice said. *Maybe don't divorce her. This feels real.*

Shut up, Miss Mapleberry said. *Leave them be.*

Andy smiled at the inner battle, grateful they were always with him.

When you finish making love to Rachel, the voice of Detective Beckett Ridgway said, *maybe you can get busy chasing the bad guys again?*

Andy was rocked, jolted by a voice from long ago.

Beckett! How long have you been inside my head? Why didn't you say something sooner?

It took me a while to figure out what was happening. This existence in here is difficult for us too. Once I got my bearings, I had to watch and learn. I only found my

voice again when you laid eyes on Rachel. The sight of her guided me out. She brought me back. I found my voice because of her.

Detective Almond stared off into space.

That makes sense, he thought, given your shared history. I feel her bringing me back too, if you know what I mean.

I do understand. You're an incomplete man without your wife.

Rachel noticed Andy's far-away look.

"Baby?" she said. "Where have you gone? What's happening? What's going on inside your head? Are you hearing the voices again? Is your dad talking to you?"

Almond pulled his hips away from her, dragging his long cock out.

"Yes," he mumbled. "No, not just Dad. Miss Mapleberry. Beckett Ridgway, too."

"What?"

The detective noticed how his wife's eyes flared, how the passion for his dead partner instantly rekindled. Rachel may have come back to her loving husband, but her love of fucking came along too. Almond's lust surged at the thought of sex-starved Rachel.

This is how it will be, he realized. Rachel will fuck others, and I will reclaim her. Her desires will fuel my desires.

"Beckett Ridgway," Almond said again. "He just appeared, adding his voice to the others. He was never there before."

"Tell him I say hello. Tell him I've missed him."

Andy regarded his wife. She wiped tears of passion from her cheeks yet was ready to fuck another, if she could. His desire for her rekindled.

"If I could get hard right now," he told her. "I'd fuck you again."

"That's good to know," she said, rising on her toes to kiss him. "I want to be fucked again. Let's find me a hard cock to do the job you can't."

He knew she playfully teased, but her words stoked a fire in his belly.

"Let's be honest with each other," she said. "I'm damaged goods, as they say. I know it. I know you know it. The things that were done to me changed me. I worried you'd reject me, but I can see you've changed too. Maybe you even get off on this new version of me a little. If I suck your cock, will Beckett feel it?"

"It's worth a try."

Rachel laughed.

We don't have time for— Beckett began, but stopped as Rachel's lips enveloped Andy's cock head.

Rachel opened her throat and allowed Andy's softening penis to slide far to the back. He groaned from the hot pleasure and then groaned again as she closed her mouth around him and gently sucked.

Dear God, Beckett moaned.

"Yeah," Andy said. "He feels it. I guess that means my dad does too. Maybe even Janet and Miss Mapleberry, although for them I have no idea how it must feel."

Rachel redoubled her efforts, aware now that she brought pleasure to a whole host of individuals. She ducked under to lick Andy's hanging balls, imagining they were Beckett's, and Dad's. The decadence of her acts thrilled her.

Yeah, she thought, sliding his cock deeper. *I've changed.*

Give me control, Beckett told Andy.

What do you mean?

I mean let me take over. Give me control of your body. You just had sex and can't get hard again, but I can.

With my body?

Yes!

Andy worried for a moment about the wisdom of this action but then gave in. Beckett was his partner and had paid the ultimate price. Andy trusted Beckett. With an inner sigh, Detective Almond released himself, allowing Beckett to take over. He wasn't even sure how it should be done, but instinct guided him. One instant he was gazing down at Rachel through his own eyes and the next instant he saw her through Beckett's. The transition was simple. He simply stepped aside mentally.

His cock began to rise immediately. Rachel moaned, pleased and surprised. She lifted her head to look into her husband's eyes and gasped.

"Beckett?" she asked.

"Yes," Andy heard his mouth say.

Andy's cock rose fast, quickly throbbing with every heartbeat. Beckett was thrilled to feel life again, to feel alive again, if even through a fuzzy muffler. He moved Andy's hand to reach under and cup Rachel's warm tit. He massaged her firm orb and groaned at the exquisite sensations of holding a woman again.

"Oh, Beckett," Rachel breathed.

Andy felt the pangs of jealousy. In life, his wife had strong connections to his late partner. Andy was pleased to offer the man this small taste of living, while at the same time conflicted by Rachel's hungry delight. When she lowered her mouth to Andy's hard cock, Andy knew she was actually sucking Beckett. Her hunger was actually for Beckett.

Before he could organize his thoughts, Beckett scooped Rachel and exited the shower, throwing her onto the large bed. Dripping water and hard as glass, Beckett, who was Andy, crawled between Rachel's legs. She spread them eagerly.

"Are you going to fuck me, Beckett?" she purred. "I've missed you. I cried so hard when you died. I'm so happy I get to have you again."

She reached down between her legs and found her husband's big, hard cock. She pulled him forward and everyone in that bedroom knew she was guiding Beckett into her.

I'm soaked, Janet murmured. I love this new version of Rachel.

I knew she couldn't be trusted, Dad said.

Shut up, all of you, Andy demanded. Let me watch my wife fuck my partner.

Beckett sank his cock deep, pushing until the head smashed Rachel's cervix. The couple groaned at the penetration and Rachel hooked her legs behind the man's butt. She drove her heels in, pulling him impossibly deeper. Her discomfort was more than offset by the lovely sensations of his pulsating, buried cock. Their lips met in a ferocious kiss, a kiss from beyond the grave, and Andy's pang of jealousy returned. He said nothing, shouldering his angst for his friend, but Rachel fucked Beckett differently than how she fucked Andy, and everyone knew it.

"I want you to know," Rachel gasped between thrusts. "When you cum inside me, it will be you cumming inside me, not Andy. I know that. I want you to know that too."

Beckett nodded his head vigorously, pumping faster. It was obvious he would not last long. Rachel felt his cock expanding inside her and grabbed his face, kissing him

again as the first bolt of sperm launched. Beckett groaned and Rachel lifted her hips to meet his thrusts, moaning along with him until her orgasm hit too. She kissed him over and over as he sprayed wild semen deep inside. Andy watched, amazed at the passion they shared, amazed at the connection they always had.

Regaining control was easy when Beckett was too stunned to think. Andy knew this scene would get repeated often.

Wow, Miss Mapleberry said. That was really something.

That was fucking awesome fucking, Janet gushed. Maybe you should let some of us take over too. You let Beckett. Why not let some of us? Maybe you should let your dad fuck Rachel. That might shut him up about her. I hate how he always tells you to divorce her.

Beckett was my partner, Andy replied. None of you will get a turn.

Chapter 11

Riley pushed back from the dining table. She closed several of the books scattered in a half circle around her.

"I don't care about that freak at the library. I want Velmorath destroyed. I can't live like this, always looking over my shoulder, always expecting everyone I meet to attack me. It's insane. I'm going crazy. Hanging with you guys is the safest I've felt in months. I can't even go see my mom over fear they'll attack her to get to me. Please. Before we chase Lord Ur, can we end Velmorath?"

All eyes turned to the detective. Andy looked to Abigail.

"You ladies know more about this than me. I'll back whatever you say. Rachel will probably sleep for days so let's use that time to finish this. What needs to be done?"

"We must summon him and then fill him with gold bullets."

"Great," Almond said. "Where's a good place to do it?"

"We need a church," Abigail said. "Obviously, an abandoned one would work best. Demons are weakest in a house of worship."

"Riley," Andy said. "Find us one. I'll get started on dipping bullets in gold."

"Why do you have so much wealth?" Abigail asked. "You're a retired police detective now operating freelance. Where does all this money come from?"

"Pirate treasure," Almond admitted. "Long lost. I helped myself before turning over the rest to the historical society."

"Actual hidden pirate treasure?"

"Yes."

"That's the coolest thing I ever heard," Riley said.

"It is cool," Andy agreed.

They got busy. Hours later they were ready.

"I found our church," Riley said. "High up in the Northern Cascades. Little town called Dobe. Two hundred years ago gold was discovered, and the town grew. Gold ran out and the town collapsed almost overnight. There's an old church still standing, barely, and nobody to bother us. We can be there in less than three hours."

They packed the car. Andy said goodbye to Rachel, and they were on their way.

This feels dangerous, Miss Mapleberry said.

Almond ignored her. The drive was uneventful: freeway at first, then winding mountain roads slowly gaining elevation. Small patches of snow dotted the shoulder. Densely packed trees grew right down to the roadside. Douglas Fir and western red cedar grew next to bigleaf maple and poplar. Sword fern and huckleberry grew beside hemlock and slide alder. Water dripped everywhere. Small creeks and streams wandered down the steep mountains. Mist clung to everything.

Riley asked questions about the ritual Abigail planned on using and offered suggestions on how to improve it. Both women asked the detective to describe cases he'd worked on. The time passed quickly as Riley slept in the back seat and Abigail peppered the detective with questions about his past. He shared without reservation how he'd been buried alive, how the voices of the deceased had come to comfort him, how he'd spent his years with the police force solving the mysterious occult crimes no one else could crack. He spoke of Pasha and Rashad and Cana. He spoke of the Sultan and the portal and buried treasure. He expected Abigail to distance herself from his strangeness but found his open honesty only brought her closer.

Remember you're married, Dad warned.

The first buildings at the edge of town were barely standing. Many had collapsed. Vines grew over and around every structure. Nature had reclaimed what was once home to hundreds of miners and their families. Almond stopped the car, and they walked the main street on foot. Broken windows and buckled doorways ran the length of the street. Towering trees stretched their branches over rusted rooftops, casting dappled shadows on the ground below. The side streets and alleyways were barely discernible beneath the dense foliage. Nature's relentless march had created a serene yet eerie atmosphere, where the only sounds were the gentle rustling of leaves and the distant calls of wildlife echoing through the deserted streets.

"There's the church," Riley said.

The small building and steeple, once a brilliant white, had flaked down to bare and moldy wood. The bell was missing from the tower. These glazed windows had survived somehow, cobwebs hinting at the spider infestation within. The front doors were locked so they circled the place, testing every door and window. Abigail discovered the steps down to the basement and followed, noting that the bracket which held the padlock had rusted through. A simple shove snapped the nails and allowed her entrance.

"Over here," she called out, waiting for the others.

Almond put his shoulder against the heavy door and shoved, the bottom dragging the bricks and screeching. They entered.

In one corner sat an ancient furnace, used to heat the rooms above. The space was a shambles of broken furniture, rusted filing cabinets with old church records spilling out, wooden pews, melted candles, and a cracked crucifix laying across a dusty table. Folding chairs leaned against a wall. A stained but dry baptismal bath held a desiccated rat carcass. Stone steps led up to another heavy wooden door. Cobwebs hung like sheets from the rafters. Almond grabbed an old broom and cleared a path to the steps, sweeping debris and spider webs away.

Upstairs was more of the same. Most of the stained-glass windows had been boarded on the outside so the main room was dim. Abigail picked a spot before the altar

and shoved pews away, clearing space. Almond swung the broom through the air, collecting webs. Riley sat on the floor and opened her backpack.

"I'm more familiar with banishing them than summoning them," Abigail said. "But I'm confident we can get this done."

"I can help," Riley said. "I actually opened a portal once all by myself."

Detective Almond chuckled.

"Yeah," he said. "You sure did. Beckett and I had to rescue you."

"I was only a dumb kid then."

"You're still a kid."

"I'm an adult in every State. I can vote. Don't try to put me at the kiddie's table. I'm not a kid. Not in the eyes of the law."

"Well, you are in my eyes."

"Mine too," Abigail added.

"I'm old enough. How do you think I bought this gun on my own? How have I been away from home and my mother for so long? I'm an adult."

"Okay little miss adult," Abigail teased. "Help me move this furniture away. I need two circles of salt right here in front of the altar. One big, about eight feet across, and one small enough for me to sit inside. I'll sketch the pattern in the dust. You pour the salt. We'll add the glyphs last."

"Cool."

The women got to work. Almond used his muscle to shove the decrepit pews around, creating the room they needed, while Riley poured salt. Abigail spaced candles at every junction point of the diagrams she drew, intricate glyphs came next, followed by Riley and her salt. At last, everything was finished. Riley and Almond stepped back as Abigail entered the smaller circle.

"Do not disturb the lines of salt," she warned.

"We've seen all the scary movies," Riley said. "We know about the lines of salt."

Abigail ignored her sarcasm, focusing on preparation. When she felt confident, she sat cross-legged and raised her book of incantations.

"You guys should back away," she said. "Be ready with your golden bullets. Let's destroy this fucker."

Riley and Almond hunkered down behind some pews.

"Is this stupid?" Riley asked. "Are we acting like idiots?"

"Probably," Almond said. "Can you think of another way to rid yourself of Velmorath?"

"No."

"Then this is all we get, smart or not. Let's just stay sharp and make it work."

They drew their pistols and watched Abigail closely as the Sister began to chant. She finished and turned the page, continuing her incantations. A spiral of mist began to form in the larger circle, gradually taking shape. The salt began to glow red. The mist began to spiral; a thin tornado trapped inside a pentagram trapped inside a circle.

Suddenly the air screeched and a rip in space opened onto a rocky, blasted landscape. Air rushed in faster and faster until the church was filled with a howl. Sickly, red light glowed through the aperture. The rip grew bigger and then a large black winged figure stepped through. Waves of fear assaulted them. Abigail faltered, terrified. Velmorath surveyed the group, settling his gaze on poor Riley. A gruesome penis,

latticed with angry veins of glowing ember red and flesh as dark as coal, rose from Velmorath's body. Face to face with her tormentor once again, Riley began to tremble with fear as tears marked trails down her face.

"Hello, my love," the creature rumbled, a voice like breaking glass. "You missed me so much you had to have me summoned. How sweet."

He stepped forward with confidence, as if to leave the circle, and red electricity crackled all over his body. He recoiled with a snarl. A wing touched the invisible barrier and scorched feathers sizzled. He turned on Abigail, growling in anger.

"You think you can bind me? You should have prepared better."

He closed his eyes and drew his wings tightly around his onyx body. His lips moved as he recited an incantation of his own. Abigail gasped.

"Andy!" she exclaimed. "He's doing something to me!"

Detective Almond fired a shot, but the gold bullet hit the invisible barrier. Nothing gets out, but nothing gets in.

"Drop the wall!" Almond yelled. "I can't get through!"

Riley fired, and fired again, squeezing the trigger over and over until her clip was empty, sobbing in terror at the prospect Velmorath could gain freedom.

"Do something, Abby!" she yelled.

"I'm trying. I feel him slipping. I don't know what I did wrong!"

Velmorath began to chuckle.

"You lack authority," the demon rumbled. "Such a spell requires intimidation if I refuse. You have no means of harm. I reject your demand and thank you for your gift."

"Gift?" Abigail shouted. "What gift?"

She dropped the book into her lap and her head snapped back. Tornado winds howled, pouring into the breach between the demon's world and ours and disturbing the carefully placed salt. Abigail gasped again, panic in her eyes.

"I cannot escape," Velmorath laughed. "But you can join me!"

The wind whistled and Abigail's long hair flew, crossing both circles and entering the demon's domain. He twisted his claws in her lovely tresses and mumbled, and Abby suddenly froze as if electrocuted. Drool spilled from her mouth. Her eyes rolled back, and her body went stiff. The demon's large black body crumpled like a deflated balloon, sucked into the void. Abigail opened her eyes, but they were not her eyes. She looked down at her arms and hands, grinning wickedly. She stood abruptly, running her hands over her clothed body, grabbing her tits, clutching her pussy. With more strength than she should possess, she ripped the fabric away, including her bra and panties, throwing the tattered clothing to the floor.

"Oh no," Riley whimpered. "No, not again. No."

Abigail clutched her own breasts again, rejoicing in the new sensations. She rubbed between her legs and gasped, shocked by the pleasures he felt there. Riley raised her gun but could not fire. Almond did the same. This was Abigail! Possessed, yes, but the face of their friend!

The sexy Sister stepped out of the circle. She approached Riley with a seductive walk, hips swaying. Riley lowered her gun, crying. Abigail palmed one of the younger girl's breasts and brought her mouth down for an impassioned kiss. Abigail's tongue slithered across to play with the girl.

Detective Almond stared, dumbfounded. What could he do? Whom could he attack? Velmorath was Abigail and Abigail was Velmorath. The demon had taken the perfect cover. Neither of them could harm Abby. What would it accomplish? Abigail would suffer and possibly die, and the demon would simply slide back home.

“Goddamn it!” a frustrated Detective Almond shouted.

The demon laughed and ripped open the front of Riley’s shirt, exposing her budding breasts held in place by a white sports bra. Velmorath used Abigail’s teeth to bite through the cotton fabric and then tore that open too, exposing the small but firm tits and puffy nipples. Abby took the girl’s head in her hands and forced her to her knees, pulling the young, pretty face to her crotch.

“Lick,” Abigail commanded, with a voice not her own.

Riley whimpered but began eating Abigail’s pussy. She knew what punishments awaited if she failed to please. Abby held Riley in place with both hands and turned her attention to Almond.

“Your ignorance has cost you,” Abigail growled. “I hear this one’s screams in my mind. She spent her life serving her lord and now serves me and it drives her insane. I think I’ll turn her into a whore. She’s aware of what she does and despairs. She sees me control her body and suffers. I believe I’ll spend a little time with this one.”

“I will find a way to destroy you,” Almond rasped.

“Many have tried. So many, over the eons. You think you can? I welcome your attempt. Slay me, man, if you can.”

Abigail pressed Riley’s face to her pussy and the young girl licked and sucked feverishly, her first taste of pussy. Abby hooked a leg over Riley’s shoulder, chuckling at the look of agony on Almond’s face. Abigail shuffled backward to the antique altar left over from long ago and slid up onto it, spreading her legs wide and guiding Riley’s tongue into the soft, wet folds of her cunt. Velmorath had never assumed the form of a woman before, and the physical sensations were new and powerful. He felt Abby’s arousal despite her revulsion at what was being done to her. The wrongness of Riley’s corruption fed a decadent streak Abigail had tried desperately to hide, even from herself. Now it was fully embraced.

Riley dragged her tongue up Abby’s slit and felt the woman shiver with delight. She hated what she was being made to do but at least she was giving Abigail pleasure. Not all of Velmorath’s tortures were so pleasant. Riley circled the nub of Abby’s clit and gently sucked while licking. Abigail gasped and tensed, legs straight and abs tight. Riley dove in, pleasuring her friend’s body, refusing to give Velmorath the delight of her fear. She would do this for Abby. She licked all around, knowing the woman trapped inside shared her body and mind with the demon. Abby felt what he did. He felt what Abby did. The Sister’s pussy gushed excitement and young Riley lapped it up.

Encouraged, she eased two fingers in, pumping and stroking the sensitive inner walls, rubbing as she licked and sucked. Abigail’s orgasm arrived like a tidal wave, catching Riley by surprise. The pussy in her mouth gushed and Abby groaned and writhed, twisting on the altar as pleasures Velmorath never knew ripped through that mortal form. The demon was stunned, bewildered by such intense bliss. Velmorath pushed Riley away, unable to take any more.

Dazed, Abby slid off the altar and crumpled to the floor.

Detective Almond saw an opening and took it, running forward to scoop Riley into his arms and racing down the stairs. He threw the girl into the car and started the engine, backing out and driving away.

“What about Abby?” Riley cried. “We can’t just leave her.”

“We must. There’s nothing we can do for her right now. Your demon has her and until we can figure out a way to make him give her up, she’s his.”

“He’ll torment her. He’ll torture her.”

“He seems to enjoy using our minds against us, which means in her case, he’s going to make her do crazy sexual things, like attacking you. We have a little time to figure this out. He told us himself: our ignorance cost us. We missed something we need so we go back and find it and confront him again.”

“How will we find him?”

“I think he’ll find you.”

“I’m the bait?”

“Yeah. Sorry.”

Almond darted a look at her bare tits. Small and pert, the stiff and swollen nipples showed signs of arousal. She may have hated what Velmorath made her do, but her body had responded anyway. He was instantly disgusted with himself. This was someone he was supposed to protect. Before he could look away, Riley caught him. She pulled her tattered clothing around, trying to hide.

“I’m sorry,” he said.

“It’s okay,” she replied. “Guys can’t help it. It doesn’t matter if it’s the guys at my school or old dudes like you. Guys have to look.”

Chapter 12

Sister Abigail sported a black choker from which hung a tiny gold upside-down cross. Her lips were black, her eyeshadow dark gray. Her veil was white as was her bandeau, shrouding her head like a halo. Her décolletage, the upper chest area of her neckline, was bare skin, as was the lovely, rounded deliciousness of her cleavage, bound behind a black corset. Her habit was also black, a modified miniskirt, with a slit running up one leg. Thigh-high stockings, black, accentuated the black gloves she wore to her elbows. Close inspection revealed the mesh between the ribs of her corset was see-through, exposing areola and nipple.

The man lay strapped face down, bound at ankles and wrists. A couch cushion and a dining room chair lifted his hips, granting easy access to his asshole, cock, and balls. The ball gag in his mouth prevented any complaint.

His apartment was shabby and seducing him had been easy. He’d never been with a woman as sexy as Abigail and both of them knew it. She’d started a blowjob in the bar parking lot, habit hidden under a long heavy coat, and suggested they go to his place to finish. His eyes had lit up when she’d first shed the coat but dimmed after the drink she’d spiked hit. He was unconscious only a short time, just long enough for Abigail to get him into position and bind him. Velmorath was having great fun in this new body. He’d discovered a whole new kind of power over men. He delighted in it. He did miss his big ugly cock and the pleasure it gave him, but it was missing that pleasure which had led him to this idea.

Abigail pulled a large strap-on latex penis from the coat pocket. She walked around in front of the man to show him what was about to happen, and the man groaned, nervous, but not totally against the idea. Velmorath laughed. Humans are such slaves to their senses. She squatted in front of her victim, miniskirt riding high and revealing see-through panties that matched the stockings and stuck the replica cock in her mouth to wet it.

The mind Velmorath and Abigail shared told the demon Abigail was growing excited and hated herself for it. Good. Better to torment both humans at the same time. He let her take control for brief moments as she suckled the latex cock, enjoying the way Abigail sucked and licked before trying to mentally escape. She couldn't help herself. God had made her a sexual creature and then barricaded her from her own desires. Typical. The gods have a twisted sense of humor. They always have.

Abigail, who was Velmorath, stepped back to tighten the straps, allowing her victim to see what was coming. She sauntered around his body, dragging a fingernail down his hunched back before scratching his tight balls. His downward pointing cock twitched. She leaned over and licked his asshole before pushing her writhing tongue up his ass. Abigail recoiled in disgust, but Velmorath only probed deeper. The man moaned when Abigail began to nibble all around that sensitive area, licking and biting from balls to sphincter. She checked his penis and found him hard.

"Perfect," she murmured. "Thank you."

She stepped over the man and placed the head of the plastic cock at his tight puckered hole. She pressed slowly, giving him time to expand but also drawing the moment out for him. She wanted him fully aware of his invasion. He whimpered. She fed his rectum an inch and the slick head popped inside. The man groaned at the penetration. Abigail held his hips and flexed her round ass, pushing several inches in. His moans grew louder. She pulled back a bit before pushing deeper. He groaned, helpless and invaded. She adjusted her grip and pushed deeper, determined to bury every inch. His groans rose in pitch.

"Does that hurt a little?" she asked, her voice sweet like honey. "A little pain mixed in with your pleasure? Good. Here's a little more."

She rose over him and let her body weight sink every inch into him. He squirmed and struggled but when she checked, he was harder than ever. She began pumping her hips, fucking his small tight hole.

"At the bar I told you I loved anal," she purred. "I bet you thought I meant something else." She giggled and began fucking his ass with long smooth strokes, all the way out, all the way in. His muffled cries filled her heart with decadent joy. "You're going to love it when you orgasm," she told him. "You won't believe how hard you cum. It will be like nothing you've ever experienced. How twisted is it that the gods put such pleasure up your ass? What's the point? I think it was so I could do things like this to you cretins."

She pumped her hips faster and the man gasped around his gag. His stiff penis throbbed, pulsating with need, heart pounding from an approaching climax. She continued to fuck his asshole while reaching under and stroking his hard cock. The man wailed, smothered by the gag. Suddenly his body tensed and the first blast of jizz rocketed out. His long loud groan told of the mind-melting pleasure he felt. Abigail

fucked him strong and deep while milking his penis and the man poured his soul out to her, almost weeping from pleasure.

Long moments later, he had nothing more to give and collapsed in a heaving pile. Abigail popped the snaps on the replica penis and left every inch buried in him. The unconscious man drooled semen.

Abigail adjusted her clothing and moved to his kitchen, opening drawers, looking for knives. The night was young. The man was ugly, but he had lovely bones. She'd fashion a golem for herself and begin to build an army of helpers. The power of Abigail's sultry sexy beauty meant the whole world waited. No man could resist her, and few women, if she chose to push the seduction. Velmorath grinned but it was Abigail's mouth that curled.

I will enjoy this body for now, the demon thought. Sweet Riley can wait. Then, just as she begins to believe she's safe, I'll either snatch her and take her home to torment or open her right here on this Earthly plane. I'm undecided. She has such lovely bones too.

Chapter 13

Riley lifted the large book to show Almond an illustration. He stared at an artist's rendition of a green dagger. Riley sat the large book on the coffee table and gathered her feet under her. She wedged herself between couch cushions. Rachel moved several open books out of the way and sat a tray of hot tea and cups on the low table. She poured the girl a hot cup and handed it to her.

"Why didn't you mention the dagger before?" Almond said. "It's been weeks."

Riley took a sip.

"Because it's not real," she said.

"You don't know that with certainty."

"I do know it because it's not real. I needed gold bullets, not mystical emerald daggers that fell from Heaven."

"Myth has a way of being true if one goes back far enough," Almond said.

"Demons are anchored to the Earth. The Bible says so. Something not of the Earth could destroy them. There may be something to it."

"The dagger was mentioned by native tribes over twelve thousand years ago. Even if it was real, which it isn't, the thing has been lost to time."

"Legend says it steals souls. Legend says it kills demons."

"Cool. Where is it? Let's go grab it."

Almond sipped tea, made a face, sat the cup down and grabbed a bottle of whisky and a shot glass. He glanced at one of the books Riley had left open.

"Who's that?" he asked, pointing to a man wearing crimson robes.

Riley looked at where he pointed.

"Some priest," she shrugged. "I thought he might know something about Velmorath, but it turns out he just leads a small, weird cult. I never bothered to contact him. He's small time."

Almond spun the book to get a better look at the picture.

"Riley," he said. "Look at this picture again. Notice anything familiar?"

"No."

"We saw him die at the library. The guards shot at the big guy and this man jumped in front to take the bullets instead, sacrificing himself."

"How does that help us destroy Velmorath?"

"Remember the museum hired me to find the obsidian gem? The gem named the Heart of Ur?"

"Vaguely."

Almond stabbed a finger at the photo.

"That guy was there at the library. That guy shouted a warning to someone named Lord Ur. The legends say the Heart can be used to raise the dead. I'm betting the man wearing the crimson robes used it to bring back the real Lord Ur. Hell, it probably actually is his heart."

"Again. How does that help us destroy Velmorath?"

"We have more than one mission, Riley. We must destroy Velmorath, free Abigail, and find the black gem."

"And the emerald dagger too, I guess."

Detective Almond turned thoughtful.

"Why was he there?" he asked.

"Late fees?"

"Why did he plow through the front doors, knock people around, rip the heavy doors off the rare manuscripts section, and steal a book? Such need. Such desperate determination. He had to have that book. We need to find out what book he stole. I need to call the library."

"Velmorath is running around inside Abigail's body," Riley said. "Doesn't that bother you?"

"Of course it does. But you saw what he did with it. The first thing on his list was force you to give him females pleasures. Demons are all about worldly pleasures. Everything he did to you he did for pleasure. Abigail's body will keep him occupied for a while. We have some time. I'm beginning to suspect this dagger, and the Heart of Ur, are connected and the way we are going to win. The angels that followed the rebellion fell to Earth and were trapped here. That dagger is not of the Earth. They'll have no power against it, no defenses. I'm telling you just like my gut is telling me; that is our path forward. You want to destroy Velmorath? You will need something he's never seen before, never encountered."

"Listen to him, Riley," Rachel murmured, surprising them both. "When his gut gets involved, he's always right. Trust him."

Riley sighed.

"Fine. We'll do it your way. But the moment we hand over that gem, we go after Velmorath. That fucker needs to die. I can't believe he made me eat Abigail's pussy. How will I ever face her again?"

"Don't be so hard on yourself," Rachel said. "You're pretty. I bet Abigail enjoyed herself. I know I would."

Riley was instantly uncomfortable and shot the detective a look. Almond shook his head. Rachel was home, safe and sound, but she was not the same woman. Perhaps her voracious sex drive would diminish in time, but he doubted it. More likely, he'd start finding her extra lovers to keep up with her needs. He'd shared Beckett with

her again, but their connection troubled him even as it turned him on. Better, he thought, to find her strangers, attractive men they could use and discard.

He'd discovered watching Rachel get fucked was something he enjoyed.

Chapter 14

Vast rivers of ice began their slow, relentless crawl from the high latitudes of the North Pole. These glaciers were towering walls of ice hundreds to thousands of feet thick, moving with a patience that could reshape entire landscapes.

As they advanced southward, they met mountains head-on, but instead of being stopped, they split, flowing around the rocky giants like cold, grinding rivers. In their path, they scraped bare the ancient bedrock, carving deep valleys and leaving behind smoothed cliffs. The boulders that lay in their way were not spared, dragged beneath the ice like stones beneath a millstone, ground down into pebbles, sand, and a fine mineral powder which would later enrich soils far from where it formed.

When the climate shifted to warmer summers, melting snowpacks, the glaciers began their long retreat, leaving behind a landscape forever changed. In their wake lay great boulder fields, winding ridges of gravel called moraines, and lakes that filled the deep gouges they had carved. The retreat was not a gentle farewell; icebergs calved into meltwater rivers, floods surged through valleys, and the land slowly emerged from an icy shroud.

The tentacled creature waited, more patient than stone. This world was fertile and the humanoids crawling the surface already possessed an insatiable curiosity, just like Yukus, the warrior from years ago whose flesh first fed the creature.

The beast had discovered a subterranean grotto illuminated by faint blue bioluminescence, and made a home there, devouring any sea animal foolish enough to explore the cave. Such sea life sustained but did not provide the same rush of pleasure consuming a human did. Nothing tastes better than sentience.

The creature would wait. In time, humans would discover him and his grotto, and a display of his might would teach them fear. Over the coming centuries they would build a religion around him, sacrificing captured enemy soldiers and others in their efforts to please him and win his favor. He would come when summoned and feast and grow large and complacent.

Eventually, he knew, this world like every world would come to an end. When that time arrived, he would protect himself in his emerald shell once more before being launched into the inky depths of frozen space, to hunt for a new home, and, hopefully, something delicious.

End of Finding Rachel Part One

Part Two, The Conclusion, Coming Soon

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