

# IN SEARCH OF A GODDESS (Parts 2 & 3)

(a SeldomLasts story)

**(amysconquest.com)**

"The children woke up and they couldn't find 'em  
They left before the sun came up that day  
They just drove off and left it all behind 'em  
But where were they going without ever knowing the way"  
-- "The Way", Fastball

Father Mallory watched the giant redhead walk into the classy east-side apartment building in a daze. She was a Daughter of Athena now, he knew, the latent magic unleashed by the murder she must have committed today. That was the only reason Helen would go into an apartment building and leave the residents alive.

Father Patrick Mallory of the Holy Catholic Church had been chasing Helen for nearly ten years, never managing to confront her when firepower was in his favor. It was his job to hunt down and kill these Daughters of a heathen goddess. He was a moral man, and most would say a good man, and his job would give him serious qualms were it not for the fact that Daughters were indistinguishable from normal women until they killed. Therefore the only women he ever hunted were already murderers.

There was one woman he vowed he would kill before he died. Helen's evil could not continue. Her murderous ways must be stopped, and he would stop them. He didn't know how, she was already more powerful than any Daughter in the history of the Catholic Church, but someday he would find a way.

Helen claimed to be around a hundred and twenty, but he suspected she was far older. He had evidence, not conclusive, that she was as ancient as Athena herself. She was clever, never confronting a hunter when he had the high ground. Among the thousands of men she boasted of killing were many hunters, including Mallory's mentor. That was why he would follow her to the end of the Earth, and then shove her off. The other Daughters he killed because it was his job; he would kill Helen out of sheer hatred.

After a half hour, Mallory entered the apartment building. He read the mailbox he had seen the redhead check earlier. Alyssa Connor, he thought, I don't know why you killed, but you shouldn't have. He went to her apartment and quietly picked the lock. He crept through the dark rooms, alert for the sound of breathing, but heard nothing.

The floor creaked. He whirled around, pistol in one hand, bible in the other. Helen chuckled. "Father Mallory, what a pleasant surprise."



Mallory watched her cautiously, taking a step back, the sight of the pistol trained straight at her left eye. "I wish I could say the same, Helen. You don't happen to know where I could find a big redhead? I hear men are just dying to meet her."

Helen circled slowly, watching the pistol tracking her every move. "You should be ashamed, Father. Alyssa's such a sweet girl. You know she told me she doesn't want to kill anybody?"

Mallory's movements mirrored Helen's, keeping aim on her eye. "It's a little late for that, though, isn't it? She killed someone today or you wouldn't be here, initiating her into your sick sisterhood."

"Just a mortal, Father. Why don't you pray for his soul and fix everything? It's me you want, Father, it's me you should kill. Why do you hunt the other Daughters? Nine times out of ten they're just nice girls who can't help that they're too strong for mortal men, who wouldn't hurt a fly and killed by accident."

It was true, and deep inside Mallory knew it was true, but he couldn't admit it to himself. It would undermine his entire life's work. So he went on the defensive. "You're abominations, children of a heathen goddess. You're murderers and worse. You must be cleansed."

"Like the Jews, Father? The Jesus-killers your beloved church persecuted so mercilessly? They were almost cleansed, alright, you should be proud."

Mallory was angry and defensive. The Church was good, and holy, and she was an abomination... so why was she always right? He steeled himself and replied, "We're past that now, every institution has its fall from grace. Do you deny that your kind are killers, Daughters of War?"

She shook her head. "Will you hear my confession, Father?"

"Why do you always ask me that?" Mallory asked through clenched teeth.



She grinned. Her broad shoulders shrugged, her massively muscled arms rippled with power. "Because every time I do you hate me a little more, Father, blemishing that precious soul of yours. If you ever do hear my confession, it would be an admission of defeat for you, a recognition that I have a soul worth saving. Yet every time you deny me my right to a confession, you are denying everything you believe in. I love making you a hypocrite, you smug self-righteous bastard."

She left out the window, Mallory's pistol following her all the way out. If she turned around, he would shoot her in the eye, and then it was a fifty-fifty chance on which one of them would die. But she didn't look back; she knew they would meet again.

Mallory settled onto a couch and waited for Alyssa to return.

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Ryan woke up aching. He took a moment to remember where he was, then he saw Alyssa sprawled on his couch. She had kicked off the sheet during the night, revealing her flawless, powerful body. Her long red hair framed her beautiful face.

When Alyssa awoke, she groggily opened her eyes. Her night had been fitful, full of violent and horrible dreams. She wished the man she killed yesterday had been a dream.

She looked around, the events of last night flooding back into her memory. Psychotic Helen, the random walk around the city while sobbing hysterically, and finally how she ended up in her nerdy little neighbor's living room. She hadn't meant to fall asleep on his couch, she was just too exhausted to stay awake any longer.

She heard tapping behind her. She turned around and watched Ryan typing at the computer for a while. She didn't understand what he was doing, but she recognized the Johnson & Johnson logo on the screen.

Eventually he stopped typing and turned around. He looked embarrassed to find her watching him. "Just, um, some online security stuff," he mumbled. Then he managed to stutter out a question, would she like some coffee?

Alyssa smiled, lighting up the room. She had the kind of natural beauty that always shown through, in spite of just waking up from a fitful night on a stranger's couch. Ryan couldn't hide the frank admiration in his eyes. "Please, I'd love some coffee, thank you," she said. While he was in the kitchen she took a look around. Ryan Miller, she read from an envelope. Well, Ryan, she thought to herself, I don't know why I ended up here with you last night, but I'm glad I did. What a perfect gentleman he was, shy and sweet and so pathetically eager to please.

He brought back a tray of food. "I didn't know what you like, so I um brought some choices," he stuttered out, blushing. The tray contained coffee, sugar, orange juice, a muffin, a bagel, and some cream cheese. Alyssa accepted it gratefully; she hadn't eaten last night, and she was no anorexic model, she was hungry!

While she was eating she looked at Ryan once in a while. He looked down whenever she caught his eyes. She thought about what a nice guy Ryan was. He didn't want anything from her, it was obviously a joy for him just to be with her. That didn't happen to Alyssa; the men she was with paid for her company and definitely expected results. For Ryan it was enough that he could give her breakfast, even though she might never see him again after today. It made her feel good to be desired so purely.

She finished eating. "Thank you, Ryan, for everything," she said. "I really appreciate you letting me stay here last night, I didn't want to be alone."



Something deep within Ryan opened, and he managed to speak without stuttering for a few brief, painfully honest seconds. "I'd do anything for you Alyssa, I love you." As soon as he said it he turned bright red and looked away.

The awkward moment didn't last long, however. They both jumped when they heard someone knocking on Alyssa's door. "Alyssa? Alyssa hon, you okay?"

Alyssa looked at Ryan. "Melissa, from work," she said. She was about to go talk to Melissa when they heard her door open.

"Hey!" Then a brief struggle and a thump. "Now, young lady, where can I find Alyssa?" "I don't know!" Whack!

Alyssa jumped to her feet and raced for the door. "Wait!" Ryan called and tried to stop her, but she was much too big for him. She hardly noticed dragging him across the living room and out into the hall.



"Melissa!" she cried. A man dressed in black with a white priest's collar holding a gun came into the hall.

"Alyssa Connor?" he said.

"What have you done to Melissa?" she demanded.

He made the sign of the cross and raised his pistol. His finger was squeezed on the trigger when Ryan tackled him, taking them both to the floor. The bullet smashed into the ceiling, raining plaster down on Ryan and Mallory. Ryan punched Mallory's forearm and the gun went skittering down the hall.

Mallory scrambled after the gun. Ryan grabbed Alyssa's waist and tried to haul her to the elevator, but Alyssa just ran to the door of her apartment. Melissa was moaning on the floor.



The priest reached his gun and brought it around. Alyssa and Ryan ran down the hall to the elevator. Mallory tried to aim but he was still shaking from Ryan's tackle. He called down the hall, "Where are you going, Alyssa? You're a murderer! I know it, and soon the police will! Where are you going to hide?" They disappeared into the elevator.

Alyssa collapsed against the wall of the elevator, shaking. Ryan supported her, her weight nearly bearing both of them to the ground. Tears streamed down Alyssa's face. "I'm a murderer," she moaned to herself over and over.

The elevator door opened into the basement parking garage. "Come on!" Ryan urged, tugging on Alyssa's sleeve. She slowly followed him, still crying. The other elevator's display showed it coming down from their floor. "Come on!" Ryan pulled harder.

They made it to Ryan's black Jaguar just as the other elevator opened and Mallory came rushing out. He saw the sleek car peel out of its parking space and disappear up the ramp. He shrugged and called the police.

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The Jag was Ryan's present to himself. He had all this money and didn't know what to do with it, so he figured he'd buy himself some nice stuff. He also figured it would help attract girls since he couldn't seem to do it by himself, but since he never went out to meet women it didn't help.

Ryan and Alyssa drove in silence. Ryan took the GW bridge out of the city and headed vaguely northwest for no reason. Alyssa had stopped crying but hadn't said anything, and Ryan didn't know what he could say that would make Alyssa feel better. He was burning with curiosity and a little fear to know what the priest had meant, but he couldn't ask.

Eventually Alyssa spoke. Her voice had the same emotionless quality it had the night before. "I suppose you want to know why I'm in trouble," she said.

Ryan studied the road ahead. "You don't have to tell me," he said quietly. "I just want to help you."

"Thank you. But I should tell you." Alyssa took a deep breath. He said he loved her and would do anything for her, but that was before he knew what a...a monster she was. She didn't want him to stop helping her, but she couldn't let him help her without knowing what she was.

She explained it, everything, her parents' death, her prostitution (she looked over at him to see his reaction to that, but he just kept watching the road), and the events of yesterday, concluding with what Helen had told her. "It's unbelievable, I know, but I can't help but believe it. What else could explain what I did? I'm not human!" she sobbed at the end.



Ryan pulled off into a rest stop. He turned off the car and sat there for a minute. Alyssa watched him, not knowing what he was going to do. Would he be afraid of her? Kick her out of the car? Abandon her?

He smiled weakly and looked at her lap, the smooth muscular thighs under her dress. "What do you want to do now?" he asked.

"You'll help me?" she asked, not quite believing it. After all, he just found out that she was a prostitute and a killer, what man in his right mind would help her after that?

"Of course," he said. "You're so nice, and just being with you..." He couldn't finish. "I don't care what you are or what you did."

Alyssa leaned over and kissed his cheek, her warm, soft lips pressing moistly into his skin. "Thank you," she whispered.



They got lunch, fast food at Arby's (she ate three times as much as he did), and decided that they should leave New York. Ryan explained that he could take a vacation; he was self-employed and all his projects were complete. Alyssa told him about the twenty thousand dollars she had saved up, and he told her not to worry about it, if she tried to get it the police would know where she was.

She told him that she wanted to look for the Amulet. If there was even a possibility it existed, then she needed to find it. She didn't want to kill anybody. They decided the best place to start looking was Washington, DC, the nation's capitol and home of the Library of Congress.

They drove to Washington in awkward silence. After all, he still loved her even though he was slightly afraid of her, and she was in his debt. He thought about the wisdom in staying with a woman who needed to kill once a month, but they would cross that bridge when they came to it.

They entered Washington around eight at night after a long day of driving, carefully staying under the speed limit. They checked into a Holiday Inn using Ryan's credit card. Two rooms, no baggage. He looked embarrassed ordering two rooms with her right next to him.

Outside their rooms she looked at him for a long moment. He started to fidget. "Thank you so much," she said. She went into her room. He looked longingly at her door for a minute, then entered his.

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Alyssa emerged from the bathroom and put on her bra and panties. As she hooked her bra she frowned at the rumpled dress on the bed. She had been in the same clothes for three days, and though the odor of her sweat was erotic to men, her clothing was getting a stale body odor smell. She needed more clothes. But she already owed Ryan for so much; her escape from New York, the ride to Washington, even saving her life from that strange gunman in priest's clothing. But how else could she pay for it? She had no money and no job.

She knew how she could repay Ryan, but she knew that that wasn't what he wanted. He was helping her because he liked her (and, let's face it, because she's gorgeous), and he would be hurt if she tried to repay him her way.

She shrugged. She had to go shopping, so she would have to remain in his debt. She didn't like it, but there were so many things she didn't like, including herself. She had always felt dirty as a prostitute; now she was a killer and a leach as well. She didn't know what she would do the next time a full moon came around; could she really kill in cold blood? Could she allow herself to die?

Alyssa woke from what could have been a long session of self-loathing and self-pity when Ryan knocked softly on her door. She put on her dress, let Ryan in, and told him about her clothes. He looked down embarrassedly; as a geek he had completely forgotten such issues.

They ate breakfast in silence. Alyssa felt awkward; she wasn't used to being quiet. When she was out with her girlfriends (who she might never see again, she thought) she was the talkative one. Nor did she know what to say to Ryan. Thank you? How many times could she say it? Not enough. But they didn't have anything in common, or anything to talk about, so she ate without speaking.

Ryan drove her to a ritzy mall in northeast DC. As they emerged from the elevator she looked around and thought Jeez, how rich is he? He looked at her and shrugged, asking which store first?

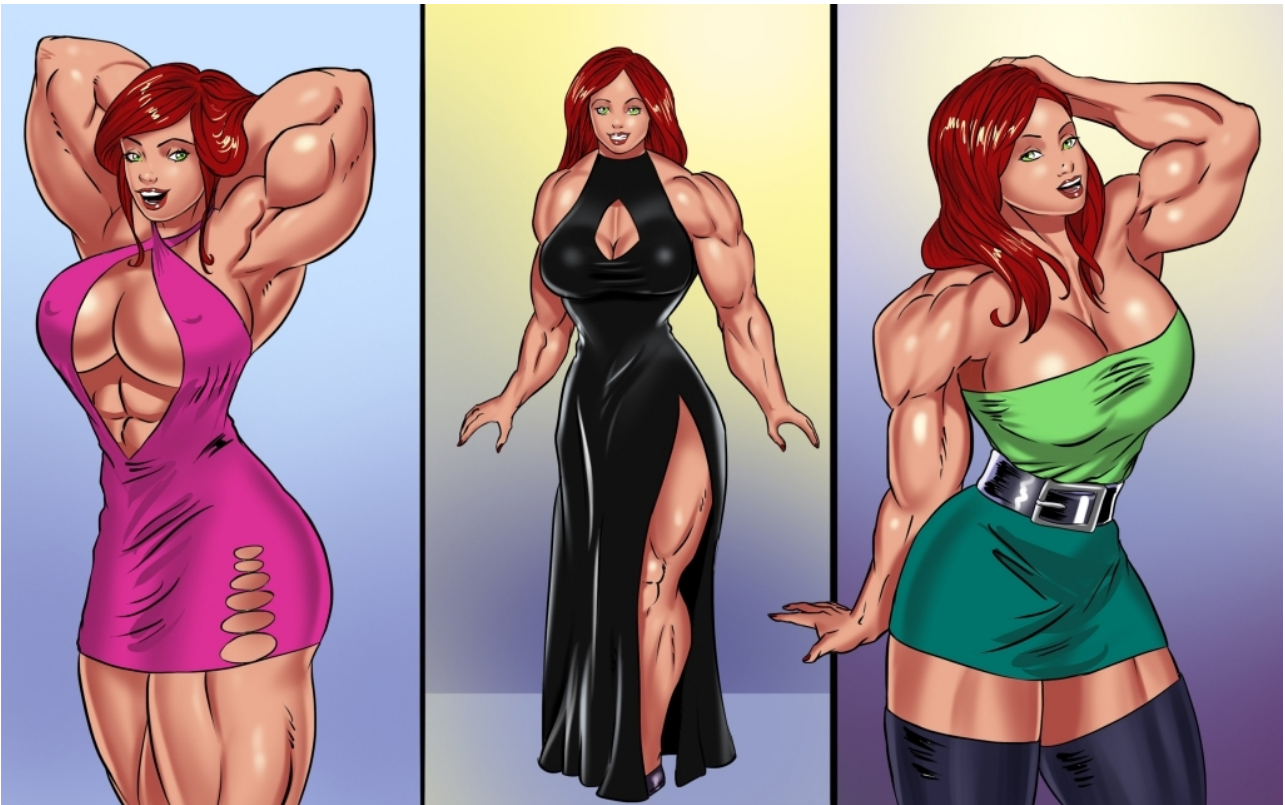
She looked around until she found a store that sold very nice, fashionable dresses for "up-sized" people. Up-sized meant fat in most cases, but also tall. She had always wanted dresses like these, but had never been able to afford them. She had worn nice dresses for work, of course, but nothing like these. She held up a price tag and showed it to Ryan. He just said, "You want one of those?" barely glancing at the price. Very rich, she thought, it's amazing one of the millions of female marriage-predators hadn't snagged him yet. Thank God.

A pretty clerk came up to her. "My, you're a pretty one. We don't get many customers as, ah, striking as you," she said. "May I be of service?"

Alyssa spent the next hour having the most fun trying on clothes she'd ever had. The clerk showed her stunning dresses, some elegant, some gaudy, some understated, some revealing. Alyssa had the most fun modelling the revealing ones for Ryan, who just blushed brighter each time. Finally she was done teasing him and settled for two of the understated dresses, one elegant one (\$2000, Jesus H.! she thought), and two suits, plus a pair of over-priced running shoes and a pair of pumps. She looked absolutely incredible in all of them.

Ryan picked up three pairs of slacks, a couple pairs of jeans and a few t-shirts, plus one suit. "Anything else?" he asked Alyssa. She estimated he had already spent nearly ten thousand dollars on their new wardrobes.

She smiled sexily at him, feeling more confident and secure now that she had new clothes. "I need more underwear, silly," she said quietly to him, turning it into a low growl. She felt a little sorry for him, he didn't deserve this teasing, but seducing him was even more fun because she knew he needed no seduction. He loved just being with her; she just wanted to make it a little more fun. She really liked him, he was the nicest guy she had ever met, and she wanted him to feel more comfortable around her, but she couldn't help teasing him.



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Andrea watched the couple walk to Victoria's Secret. They were striking, she thought, the enormous sexy redhead with the cute little guy. The redhead was big, much bigger than the average Daughter, and more muscular. Andrea was certain this woman was a Daughter.

Andrea stood up. At five feet eleven inches, one hundred seventy pounds, she was no tiny figure either. She had long raven-black hair, a very pretty face, and a body to die for. She grinned, knowing that the men who a moment ago had been drooling over the redhead were now watching her legs and ass.

She browsed around Victoria's Secret a while, watching the redhead pick through many racks of underwear trying to find sizes that fit her. Those were incredible breasts, and broad, powerful shoulders, not to mention her tight muscular butt. The redhead zoomed right through the 42DD rack. Andrea felt a twinge of jealousy.

The man was standing in a corner, looking shy and embarrassed. The redhead occasionally smiled at him, and he would blush. Not a couple, then, but he obviously wanted her. Who wouldn't?

Andrea walked up to the redhead and smiled. "Hello," the other woman greeted warmly.

"Hi, I'm Andrea. Are you a Daughter?" If the redhead looked puzzled, Andrea was prepared to elaborate with Daughter of the Revolution. Instead the other woman looked shocked for a second, then nodded slowly.

"Yes, I just found out. I'm Alyssa Connor," she said.

Andrea was fully jealous now, in a good-natured way. This woman had her incredible body, with those muscles and breasts and everything, naturally? Un-fucking-believable. Well, time to deliver the message. "Come to fourteen twenty-two Military Road tonight at ten. We're meeting for the full moon."



"It's a full moon tonight?" the redhead asked.

Andrea laughed. "Oh yeah, and if you want to stay alive you'd better start paying attention to little details like that. You said you 'just' found out. So you're set for this full moon?"

"Yes, thank you, I'll be there."

"Me too. I'll see you tonight, Alyssa," Andrea said, and left.

Alyssa hurried through the rest of her underwear shopping, getting some practical bras and panties and some incredibly hot, sexy lingerie. You never know when you might need it, and it made her feel almost normal to buy underwear like any other woman. Of course, her size was not like any other woman. She was a very full 44DD, her breasts filled the cup and more. She also got a string bikini swimsuit. She hadn't modelled any underwear for Ryan, of course; not because she cared if he saw her, but because she didn't want to tease him anymore.

Ryan paid and they left. He also bought them some suitcases. They went back to the Holiday Inn to drop off their clothes and get lunch.

He had heard Andrea as well. He was a little afraid. What would a meeting of the Daughters of Athena be like? Did they kill people at the meeting? He was completely in love with Alyssa, but he had no idea what the other women would be like. Killers, all of them?

He answered the knock on his door. Alyssa came in and sat on the bed. "We have an afternoon to kill, ten o'clock is seven hours away," she said.

"You want me to come?" he asked timidly.

She laughed easily, tossing her head back, shiny red hair flowing over her shoulders. He could die happy just watching her beautiful face in profile, listening to her laugh. "Of course I want you to come. I don't know what's going on, and I'd feel better with you than by myself." She had obviously been thinking along the same lines he had, for her face became suddenly serious and she said, "Don't worry, I'll protect you if it comes to that. It's the least I can do. Besides, Andrea obviously said it so you can hear, so she probably expects you to come." She patted the bed next to her. "Now come on, let's watch a movie or something before dinner."



She lay down next to Ryan and they turned on the television. She wasn't paying any attention, and neither was he. She put her head on his shoulder and pretended to watch, and he lay there rigidly, staring at her hair, terrified of touching her. "Relax, Ryan, it's okay," she mumbled into his chest. She stroked her long, graceful fingers over his stomach. He was trying hard to hide his boner, and she respected that. Alyssa didn't move her hand down to his crotch or anything else she normally did with a client, because he wasn't a client. He deserved better than her, she knew; he was so kind and generous. He made her forget that she was a slut and a killer and totally dependant on him. He made her feel normal, and accepted, and appreciated. She didn't have normal relationships with men, but lying here with her head on his shoulder, for the first time she wanted a real relationship. She fell asleep on his shoulder, her hand on his chest, thinking warm thoughts of him and her.

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Fourteen twenty-two was a big old brick house, very elegant, with vines creeping up the sides, a garage, garden, and children's toys in the yard. It was a beautiful old house, like the others in the rich North East sector of Washington. Alyssa knocked on the door, and a tall, beautiful middle-aged woman answered.

"I'm a Daughter of Athena, and I'm here for the meeting. This is my friend Ryan," Alyssa said. She was dressed in plain, unrevealing black dress and pumps; of course "unrevealing" is relative, as clothing is not designed for Alyssa's type of body. It stretched tight over the breasts and around her hips and butt, and rode just slightly too high on her thighs.

"Of course," the woman greeted them with a warm smile. "My name is Celeste, I'm this month's host. Come in, come in. Always good to have a new face." Ryan floated hesitantly at the door. Celeste gently but firmly guided him into the house, whispering into his ear, "You are welcome here. There's no need to be afraid."

The living room was packed with people. Ryan had never seen so many large, beautiful women in his life. There were almost thirty of them scattered in various rooms, from teenagers to middle aged women, of all races. Alyssa, at six-two, was the tallest, most muscular, and most strikingly beautiful, but the other women were also very tall, ranging from five-eight to six feet. There were around twenty men, also of varied ages and sizes. He saw a huge proud black woman with her even bigger black husband talking with a group in the corner. Celeste took Alyssa through a door into what looked like the kitchen, leaving Ryan alone in the loud room. He saw Andrea with her husband, and she gave him a smile and a nod of recognition.

He watched the various groups interacting, talking loudly and gesturing. It was like the social functions he always saw on TV and wished he were invited to, but instead of cute little anorexic actresses there were big, beautiful, real women. He saw one man surreptitiously reach over and squeeze his wife's knee, and she smiled at him and kissed him on the cheek. The room was filled with warmth and good feeling.

Ryan felt a hand on his elbow. A priest stood behind him, dressed in robes and bible in hand. He felt a touch of shock, still not quite believing his last encounter with a priest. He saw a Catholic cross hanging around the man's neck.

"Hello, young man. A little jumpy, are we?" the priest asked with a smile.

"Oh sorry Father, yeah, it's just I had a little problem with the last priest I saw," he said.

The man's face darkened. "A hunter," he muttered. "Well, we all do what we think is right. I'm Father Cohen, son. It's nice to meet you."

"Yeah, you too, Father. So you come to these meetings every month?" Ryan asked.

"Goodness no, my boy. This meeting's special."

"Why's that?"

"You'll see." The priest smiled sadly and walked over to a corner. Ryan saw another man in the corner who was gazing ahead blankly, seeing nothing, engaging in nothing. The priest put a hand on his shoulder and said, "She's joined God, Harry, she's in a better place than we are." Harry glanced at the priest, nodded slowly, and then returned to staring at nothing. The priest came back to Ryan and explained briefly, "His wife died this month trying to stop a rapist. She didn't know he was carrying a gun."

Ryan wandered aimlessly from room to room, not really paying attention. Everyone was friendly, greeting him with a smile, but they were all engaged in their own conversations. Every once in a while he caught a peek into the kitchen, where Celeste and Alyssa were still talking. He guessed Alyssa still had a lot to sort out.

Ryan backed up trying to go around a group and backed right into someone. He quickly turned around to apologize. There was a tall, pretty girl with long curly blonde hair, slender but obviously well-muscled, teen-aged, with big, soft breasts he accidentally bumped into with his face. He tried to stutter out an apology.

"Don't worry about it," she said. She looked around. "This your first meeting, sport?" Ryan nodded. She grinned at him. "Mine too. I'm Lauren. Nice to meet you."



"Nice to meet you, too," Ryan said. Lauren asked who he was here with. Alyssa, the big redhead, he said.

Lauren whistled. "She's unfuckingbelievable, sport! You're a lucky man." Ryan quickly tried to explain that they were friends, he hadn't meant to give the wrong impression... "Oh, I see!" said Lauren. "Well, she's lucky to have a friend like you, cutie." She ruffled his hair.

"Cut it out," he said, annoyed. Lauren laughed, a genuine, warm laugh.

"I like you, sport, you're alright," she said. He kept fidgeting, trying to escape, but she just thrust her chest wherever he tried to go. She was playing with him, knowing he was unwilling to just push her out of the way. He would have loved to grab her breasts, to push on them even for just a moment, but he was not that kind of man.

"So, uh," he said, gamely trying to make conversation as long as he couldn't escape. "How did you, uh, know you're a Daughter of Athena?"



[C'mon cutie come here. No, not today, please! What's the matter? Please, I just don't want to. You don't want to, you ungrateful bitch! We take you in, we feed you, give you a nice place to live! You want to be out on the street, slut? Is that it? Whoring out those nice soft tits of yours to crack addicts? No, I don't, please, stop, she's crying. What's the matter all of a sudden I'm not good enough for you? You found someone else to take you in, you slut? Fine, go then! No, no, please, he crawls on top of her unzipping his pants ripping down her skirt her favorite skirt putting his slobbering mouth on her chest pulling up her shirt off with her bra slobbering on her tits her nipples hard anyway.

Oh yeah he says You like this, slut, you like it when daddy gets rough with you! No, I don't, please stop! Oh yeah I'll stop in a few minutes don't you worry. God you're so pretty he pushes into her again it's painful again like the first time she feels no pleasure she's squirming but he only thrusts in harder deeper slobbering on her chest scratchy beard kissing her lips he cums deep in her and it's hot so hot it hurts Oh God it hurts! He collapses on top of her smiling saying you liked that didn't you, not going to find another place now, are you my little slut? And she breaks something inside her breaks after the pain the horror she shoves him off her with surprising strength.

He staggers back What do you think you're doing little cunt? I'm not little I'm taller than you are you asshole! Who do you think you're talking to? he yells his hand striking her The sting is unbearable and his fist comes at her again she catches it with strength she didn't know she had she squeezes and his fingers break in her grip. She's surprised but feels so powerful Hit me will you Hit me asshole she screams at him her fists pounding into the soft flesh of his belly, feeling his ribs crack from her punches her powerful, muscular arms and shoulders powering fists that feel like jackhammers into his body rupturing his organs She pounds her fists into his neck and head his skull getting soft and pulpy from her blows she didn't know she had power like this! his body sagging to the ground broken and bleeding in a hundred places and the power the orgasmic rush of power into her body oh god what is this? This power! coming into her infusing her with life slowly her fists stop pounding at the lifeless corpse and she sinks to the floor, the rage gone, she rocks on the floor sobbing his blood spilling onto the floor pooling around her almost naked body that's how the police find her fifteen minutes later.]

"Don't ask that, never ask that," Lauren whispered, suddenly pale.

"I'm so sorry," Ryan said, not knowing what happened to her but seeing the shock and terror on her face, knowing that she was reliving whatever horror had happened to her in her mind. She put her arms around him and hugged him, her cheek on his shoulder. He felt the wet tears running down her cheeks, running onto his neck.

Her arms gripped him tightly. He felt the big, hard knots of her biceps pushing into his weak arms. He knew he could never break her grip, but he didn't want to, he just wanted to hug this young, beautiful, vulnerable girl and tell her it would be alright. He forgot about her big, soft breasts pushing into his chest and the wonderful smell of her long, curly, beautiful blonde hair and just stroked her soft, slender back, whispering "I'm sorry," over and over.

She whispered her story into his ear, needing to tell someone, and this cute little guy was so nice and sweet. Something about him made her instantly trust him. Lauren could see why the big redhead came with Ryan, he was so easy to talk to and be with. His grip tightened on her and his tears fell when she told him what happened, how her foster father raped her almost every day until she began to like it, and then what happened three weeks ago, the day of her seventeenth birthday, when she snapped and couldn't take it any more.



Ryan had always wanted to meet beautiful women and be able to talk to them, had always ached after the tall, fit New York blondes and brunettes, but he never imagined it would be like this. He never thought he would hear the confessions of the two most beautiful women he had ever met in one incredible forty-eight hour span. These women, too, so sweet, so nice, so wonderful, were not deserving of this burden life placed on them. He didn't know how this Athena thing worked, but he would have to have it out with Her. What kind of Mother put this curse on Her own Daughters?

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Everyone gathered in the living room. It was shoulder-to-shoulder, but several of the big men and women made room for Ryan in the front, as he was the smallest. Almost fifty people were ringed around a space cleared in the middle. There knelt a very pretty, very muscular young woman, who would have looked strong except for the dark rings under her eyes and almost gaunt cheeks. But there was an unmistakable look of triumph on her face, a shining in her eyes, that let all who looked on her know that whatever battle she had fought, she won.

The priest held the bible over her head and crossed her, muttering a short prayer in Latin. He started the last rites ceremony. Ryan didn't understand. This woman was triumphant about dying?

The priest spoke. "As many of you know, Rachel has made the decision not to kill anymore. You all know what this means. She is giving up her life for the sake of those around her. She has been forgiven all her mortal sins, and her newly cleansed soul will travel easily to the Kingdom of Heaven." All those watching, even the non-Christians, were quietly respectful and attentive to this ceremony. "The hour approaches."



The priest stood back. The clock's second hand rounded the fifty-five mark, seeming to move in slow motion. Then the clock read twelve midnight. Rachel's body began to glow. She raised her hands triumphantly, saying quietly, "Thank you, Father." A blinding flash of light, and her body was gone. Her clothes, jewelry, and watch fell to the floor. There was nothing left of Rachel.

"Go, and sin no more," Father Cohen said, and closed his bible.

There was a muttering from the back of the room. Alyssa recognized Helen, by far the most heavily muscled man or woman she had ever seen, pushing through the crowd. Helen knelt by the pile of clothing. "Goodbye, Rachel," she said quietly. She looked up, eyes filled with pain. She slowly stood. "We don't need the hunters to kill us, we do it to ourselves now, don't we?" she said angrily.

Father Cohen put his hand on Helen's shoulder. "She did as she thought best, Helen. She is with Our Father now."

Helen shook his hand off. "She was a fool, Father, and so are you!"

The priest looked sadly at Helen. "I hope you are a fool one day, as well, Helen. The happiest day of my life will be the day you confess and follow Rachel's example."



Helen raised her fist to strike the priest. One blow from her could flatten his skull or crush his chest. Father Cohen didn't move, didn't flinch, just continued looking at Helen. She slowly lowered her fist. "No, Father, I have nothing to confess. None of us do! We are better than you. Better than you! Mortals are our prey, our food! You are nothing to me!"

"You too are human and mortal, Helen, just a different kind of mortal. I beg of you to think of your soul instead, and give up your sinful life."

Helen laughed, a nasty scornful laugh. "No, Father, I'll kill as I please, as we all should, to gain power so you mortals can no longer hurt us. You make me sick. You all make me sick! So careful to kill only one man a month, going out and finding criminals, risking your immortal lives so as not to hurt any more than you have to. Men are there to hurt! To die for us! I told most of you what you are, and you still deny our Mother! I will have none of it!" Helen stomped on Rachel's watch, grinding it into the floor, and shoved her way out of the room. Everyone could hear the front door slam. Silence followed.

\* \* \* \* \*



Any doubts that Ryan and Alyssa had had about the Daughters of Athena and magic in general were put to rest by Rachel's death. They were among the last to leave. Celeste showed them to the door, saying, "Well, that was certainly an interesting meeting. We haven't seen Helen in almost a year. Will you two come back next month?"

"I doubt it," Alyssa said. "I have to find the Amulet."

"Of course," Celeste said. "I'm sorry I don't have any better information for you. Do give Hy Myu a try, she's the only person I can think of who might know. Good luck."

"Thank you." Alyssa took Ryan's hand and they walked out the door.

Lauren was standing by Ryan's Jag looking embarrassed. "Heya, sport. I don't, um, have anywhere to stay or anywhere to go. I was wondering if maybe you wouldn't mind if I tagged along? I wouldn't ask, you know, but I don't have many options, right?"

Alyssa smiled at Lauren. "Of course you can come. Right, Ryan?" He nodded weakly. The two tall women climbed into the back while Ryan drove. They whispered to each other and he was dying to know what they were saying, but he didn't dare ask. Lauren's long legs barely fit in the space behind him, and her knees kept jabbing into his back. He tried to concentrate on the road and not think about the two drop-dead gorgeous women in his car.

Back at the hotel, Alyssa and Lauren told Ryan that they would share a room. They disappeared into their room and Ryan walked into his. He felt ashamed about what he did next. He didn't want to, but Alyssa was the most beautiful woman he had ever met, and he couldn't get her out of his mind.

**THE END**  
(Part 4 Coming Soon!)

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