



HIRED
SERIAL ONE
GUN

A . J . BENNETT

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Hired Gun

By

A.J. Bennett

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To my PA Amy Chris. Thank you for everything you do!

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1

Thorne Hollow, grandson of Theseus, opened the aluminum suitcase and removed a 9mm Ruger, along with a silencer. He locked the slide to the rear and checked to make sure the chamber was clear. It was.

Safety first, he thought with a smirk.

Using the palm of his hand, he slammed in the magazine, released the slide and chambered a bullet. Turning the gun to the left and to the right he observed the piece of art in admiration. Then he slid the gun into the concealed holster in the back of his pants. It was a shame really. The pistol would be a throwaway piece. But such was the nature of the job.

He tucked the silencer into his side pocket before pulling out a piece of paper from the bottom of the case. Quickly, he scanned the cipher regarding his next target. On the surface, the gibberish made no sense, and he mentally swapped the letters around to read the hidden message. After memorizing the information, he moved into the kitchen, turned on the burner and watched as the paper turned into ash. Humans loved all this cloak and dagger shit.

Back in his day, he was given the name of a target and killed them. Simple as that. None of this fancy bullshit. Granted he'd been around over two thousand years, and a lot had changed. But, whatever. His job kept him busy, and that was a good thing.

If he knew one thing for certain, it was that immortality got old *real* quick. Running and gunning – as the boys liked to call it – made the passing time somewhat enjoyable. Hell, he was bred to bring on death and destruction; it was in his genetic makeup. It's what got his juices flowing. That, and a willing woman to occupy his bed for a few hours, made the days passable. Every. Last. One of them. Some days it was like being on a merry-go-round. Round and round we go, where you stop no one knows. But for him there was no stopping. Just another slash mark on the calendar.

He shouldn't complain. For the most part life was good. But there was only so much nonsense a man unable to die could take.

True, each century the living arrangements got more enjoyable. He was digging all the modern conveniences, but watching his friends and loved

ones die wasn't something he'd wish on his worst enemy. Well, maybe his worst...

On his way back to the living room, Thorne caught a glimpse of himself in the mirror. Six foot five, two hundred and thirty pounds of pure muscle, coal black hair, and a chiseled jaw. Stormy gray eyes stared back at him. They were the eyes of his human mother, who died so long ago, it was hard for him to recall her face or the sound of her voice. His eyes were an ever-present reminder of a woman and a time long since gone. It was because of her that he'd been forsaken by the Gods, forced to remain on earth for eternity. Not only that, but the assholes made him sterile, so he couldn't even have a family of his own.

His crime? Defying the Gods to be by his mother's side when she was on her deathbed.

Fuck them.

Given the chance, he'd do it again.

Realizing his fists were clenched, Thorne slowly uncurled his fingers and ran his hands over the dark stubble on his jaw as he continued into the living room. Now was not the time to reminisce. He'd learned long ago to shut out emotions. Looking back at the past prevented one from moving forward.

Today there was a scumbag that needed killing, and he was just the immortal for the job.

His target was human. Some of the guys in The Sicarii wouldn't touch a hit on a human with a ten-foot pole. Him? He didn't discriminate. Which of course made his services all the more in demand. Fine by him.

Thorne flicked his wrist to check his Panerai for the time. It was just a little after four, which meant he still had well over two hours to waste.

What to do? What to do? He looked around the expansive apartment and realized he was bored out of his freaking mind.

He might as well grab a cheeseburger at Apotheca. Maybe one of the boys would be around to shoot the shit. He grabbed his leather jacket, shrugged into it and strolled out the door of his penthouse. As he made his way down the hallway towards the elevator, he spotted one of the cleaning ladies heading his way. He shot her a wink. Instantly her face flushed red, and she looked down at the floor.

He had that effect on the ladies. They loved him. And he loved them. Over and over again. So many over the years it was impossible to keep

count.

“Come on, Angie. You’ve been with me way too long to act all shy. I know you’re married. Just having a little fun. Make sure you tell Rogers how lucky he is to have you.”

She nodded and hurried down the hallway. After only a few feet down the hall, she turned to get another glimpse. If her face was red before, it was scarlet when she realized he’d noticed. Thorne gave her a little wave and a crooked grin.

The shy ones never really did it for him, although sometimes the reserved ones surprised him and were hellcats in the bedroom. And to be the one to break them out of their shell was quite satisfying.

But for the most part, he left married women alone. Unless they came on to him. That was a whole different ball of wax. Their karma not his. At least, that’s how he justified it in his mind.

He punched the button on the panel to the basement floor. When he stepped inside, he closed his eyes and used one of his many powers to turn off the annoying elevator music. That shit drove him batty. In all his years, it had never changed. Seriously, who the hell thought of finding the most annoying music in existence and blaring it in a contained space? Whoever that fucker was should have been strung up by his toes and forced to listen to the crap. Hey, now, that wasn’t a bad form of torture. Maybe he could use that today with the little weasel he was going to take out. Then again, the pencil neck wasn’t even worth the time or effort.

The little prick was skimming money from very wealthy old women. It didn’t get much more spineless than that. If there was one thing he hated, it was a coward. There was far too many in the world.

Maybe he would have a little fun at the bastard’s expense. Why not? He had nothing but time.

2

Thorne stepped out of the elevator and cast out his senses, scanning the area for any threats. No red flags went up, and he continued on his way. If humans only knew how many things went bump in the night, what kind of creatures might one day come calling, they'd never get any sleep. But hey, that's what The Sicarii, a secret supernatural society, was there for: protection. It was the best day of his immortal life when he crossed paths with the society nearly a thousand years ago. Finally, he had a purpose and a brotherhood, even if most of his brothers didn't live past the age of sixty.

At least he had Benny Deuces. He was another sucker who'd been cast out by the Gods. Best friend he ever had.

Grinning, Thorne stopped in front of his bike and slung one of his long legs over the Harley before securing his helmet. Not that he needed the damn thing. He was indestructible. But even immortals occasionally got traffic tickets.

Thorne kicked the throttle and revved the engine before shooting out of the parking garage. It was a great day for a ride. The sun was shining and the breeze bordering on brisk.

Gotta love New York City in the fall. He'd been all over the world, but he always returned to the city. There was something about it that beckoned him back. Watching it change over the centuries was a beautiful sight. The scenery changed, new buildings popped up, but the heart of the city remained the same. There was nothing quite like a true New Yorker.

Now the fucking traffic, that was something he could live without. The clock was ticking, and he was hungry. He didn't even try to obey the law as he weaved in and out of traffic, occasionally going onto the curb. What was another ticket? Someone had to pay for the new streets.

Pedestrians cursed him left and right. Whatever. Those assholes didn't appreciate what he did for them. If it wasn't for people like him, the city would have been overrun by darkness long ago.

Lady luck was on his side. He made the drive without seeing any blue lights.

Thorne smiled when he saw the red blinking sign in the distance, *Apotheca*, the place that soothed his soul. He could practically taste the

greasy cheeseburger and fries. Maybe he'd even throw in a chocolate milkshake, just for the hell of it.

With his mouth watering, he clicked on the blinker and eased his Harley down the narrow side street. Parking his bike, he tossed off his helmet and strode towards the large, metal double doors. The old warehouse wasn't much to look at from the outside. The side of the building was rusty, and trash littered the ground around it. But looks were often deceiving, a lesson he learned the hard way many times in his youth.

A hulk of a man stood guard at the side door. He looked like he belonged to the Hell's Angels with his scraggly beard, black shades and attire. Now those were some tough assholes. "What's up, Victor?"

The man barely lifted his shoulder and pulled open the door. In all the years he'd known the guy, he'd never heard him speak more than a handful of words. And even those were more like grunts. Thorne didn't know his story and really didn't give a shit.

His shoulders relaxed as he strolled down the dimly lit hallway. He passed a couple snorting coke. The woman held up the tray, inviting him for a hit. There was no way in hell he'd touch that shit. Thorne didn't even bother to respond. He'd seen too many lives lost over the years to illicit drugs, including that of the only woman he'd ever loved. Humans really needed to get their shit together. Unlike him, their time was limited.

He eased through the double doors at the end of the hallway. The music hit him immediately, some kind of techno noise that was all the rage these days.

Apotheca was known as a trendy underground club, but it was so much more than that.

The humans on the crowded dance floor parted like the Red Sea to let him through. There had always been something in his aura that made people back away. Probably all the energy crackling through his veins. Or maybe it was just that he looked like a fucking bad ass and they valued their lives. Either way, he liked it.

Black strobe lights flashed across the floor, giving the feel that it was later than it really was. As long as the booze was flowing, people and creatures partied anytime in the city. A couple of the women tried to catch his eye, but he didn't have time for them. At least not right now. Later on tonight, well, that was another story.

One of the bartenders yelled out to him, and he waved back. He loved this place. Apotheca was like a second home to him. No one cared that he didn't age. Or maybe, they simply didn't realize or remember. There was so much magick flying around this place, he wouldn't be surprised if the humans forgot everything as soon as they walked out the door.

Thorne pushed through the black door that read *Employees Only*. Now this was where the real action was. He scanned the area for any unsavory characters. Apotheca had an open door policy. Anything with unusual gifts was allowed through the door as long as they followed the rule. And the rule was simple: *fuck up and wind up dead*. Of course, that rule didn't really apply to Thorne, but it got the point across.

In one of the back corners sat a couple of Chimeras deep in conversation. He didn't trust those creatures. They appeared human, but when they were in their true forms, they were freaky as hell. There was something unnatural about a lion being able to breathe fire and having the hooves of a goat. He shuddered at the thought.

He stopped and chatted with a few normal shifters of the wolf variety, before he sauntered up to the counter to place his order.

Leaning against the bar, Thorne turned so he had eyes on his surroundings. The bartender placed a shot of whiskey on the counter. Thorne swirled the caramel liquid in the glass and tilted his head to the side. "Hey there, Ginger. Looking smoking hot as usual."

He tossed the whiskey back, savoring the smoky taste. The beautiful redheaded vamp flashed her teeth and moved in closer.

Been there, done that. He had the teeth marks to prove it. Ginger was always his go-to girl if he was in the need of a little kink. "Benny around?"

"Haven't seen him. But I'm free, if you'd like to play." She ran one of her razor sharp nails down his chest. The chick was a freaking nymphomaniac. If he asked her to drop to her knees right there, she would do it without blinking an eye. No shame in her game.

"Now, now, Ginger it's not even dark out yet and it's what, barely a crescent moon? I'm not sure you could handle me right now." The old myth that vampires couldn't go out in the sun was not exactly true. When the sun was out, their powers were severely limited. They gained their power by the moonlight. The smart ones stayed in during a new moon, the time when their powers were so low, they were easy to kill. Even a car crash could do them in.

Thorne turned into Ginger and ran his fingers up her cool, bare thigh. The minuscule skirt she wore gave him complete access—if he wanted it. He wasn't surprised to find she wasn't wearing anything underneath. Slowly, he parted her plump lips before driving two of his fingers into her hot, wet slit. And they said vampires were cold blooded ...

She grabbed his shirt and pulled him closer. "Like that's stopped us before."

Losing interest, he pulled back his hand and licked his fingers as his eyes traveled around the bar. "Sorry, sweets. I got a gig tonight. Maybe next time."

She attempted to push him back, but she might as well have been trying to push a two ton boulder.

"You'll have to pay for that next time you're mine."

Her green eyes widened, and her pupils dilated in desire. He wasn't really into the whole master-slave shit. Took too much effort. What he really liked to do was fuck. Ever since that damn book *Fifty Shades of Grey*, even the most demure women were begging to get spanked, tied up and calling someone master. It got his cock hard just thinking about it, but those fools didn't understand the true meaning of a sex slave. It was not glamorous in the least. If they knew the real tortures he'd seen over the centuries, how much sex slaves had suffered, they'd be singing a different tune. But hey, to each their own and all that jazz.

And Ginger was a nice girl and all, but she wasn't the sharpest tool in the shed. Sharp as a razor was how he liked his women.

Such women were not easy to find these days. Seriously, it seemed as if it was too much to ask to find someone to have a meaningful conversation with. All the women wanted to do was bitch and moan, or talk about their weight. It was ridiculous. Like he gave a fuck if a woman had a few extra pounds on her. Gods, he'd take curves over a stick any day.

That's what was wrong with this century. The women were too busy trying to be perfect that they didn't even enjoy the gifts they were born with. Show a man a pair of tits and ass, and he was interested. It didn't matter if she weighed ninety pounds or three hundred. Four hundred years later, he still salivated thinking about the women who knew what sex appeal was all about. Renaissance women. A smirk broke across his face at the memories. Oh yeah, those were the good ole days.

Oh, well. It wasn't like he was looking. Long ago, he'd given up on the chance of having a real relationship. He'd let himself fall in love once. Never again. Losing Laurie had been like losing an arm. Hell, almost a hundred years had passed since then, and he still woke up every morning expecting her to be by his side. Her death left him numb.

That's what he got for falling in love with a mortal. When it was her turn to go, there wasn't a damn thing he could do to stop it. Maybe if she'd stayed away from the drugs and booze he would've had her a little longer, but not much. Christ, it was his fault she turned to drugs. She couldn't handle the fact that she was aging, and he was not. She also never forgave him for his inability to give her an heir.

C'est la vie. He shook his head to banish the thoughts.

He placed his food order at the bar, gave Ginger a swift pat on the ass and then found a table in the back corner. His back to the wall, of course. Even with the club rules, he didn't trust anyone.

3

The place was already hopping, and it wasn't even five in the afternoon. Vamps, demons, witches, demigods, succubae and every other supernatural creature under the sky filled the seats and the dance floor, laughing and talking, going about their days. It was nice to see. Never in a million years would he have guessed they'd all be gathered together under one roof. But time had a way of changing things.

A few minutes later, a demon dropped his plate on the table. "Enjoy." The hideous creature grunted under his breath.

"Oh, I'm sure I will, One Eye."

The demon's single eye flashed a dark, insidious red, but he didn't take it any further than that. That's how it was at Apotheca. Just because some of them hated each other, it didn't mean they couldn't all play in the same sandbox, though preferably in separate corners.

Thorne sank his teeth into the juicy burger. The entrance swung open before he'd had a chance to swallow, and in walked Benny Deuces. Benny's eyes went right to Thorne, and he gave a quick nod before coming forward.

Benny was a tracker and a damn good one at that. All Thorne knew of his history was that he was one of the many children that descended from Odin's bloodline. His mother was Skadi, the great hunter, and also the woman responsible for placing the serpent that dripped venom onto Loki. A cold hard bitch.

Poor Benny was the runt of the litter, not even six feet tall and a hair under two hundred pounds. The weight was a bone of contention for Benny – and how he got the name. The poor guy tried everything to put on more size. His goal was to be over two hundred pounds, but it wasn't the will of the Gods.

So Thorne had affectionately called him Benny Deuces. Two hundred-dollar bills didn't sound quite as clever. The nickname stuck, and he had been calling him that since at least the stock market crash of 1929, long enough that Thorne forgot what his real name was and never bothered to ask.

"It's about time you got your scrawny ass here," Thorne said as he stuffed a fry in his mouth. Damn the food really was amazing. A definite

perk of being immortal: he could eat all the fast food he wanted and never gain an ounce of fat.

“Yeah, yeah. Some of us have a life.”

Thorne rolled his eyes. Benny was as much of a loner as he was. “Yeah, right. Have a fry. It might be the one to tip the scale.”

If he had to guess, Benny’s ‘life’ meant catching up on the latest episode of *Haven*, his latest TV addiction. Although, Thorne had to admit even he was slightly addicted to the show. Sometimes he wondered if the creator of the series was an immortal or, hell, even a demon. Wouldn’t that be some shit?

Eyes narrowed, Benny pinned him with a glare and grabbed the fry. He didn’t have quite the same sense of humor as Thorne, but that was okay. They made it work. They were brothers in arms, and that kind of bond could put up with just about anything.

After he ate the fry, Benny made an irritated noise before he pushed his long golden locks behind his ears. Unfortunately for him, the style had gone out with Fabio, but the Gods were cruel and unusual. When Benny was cast down to earth, he was unable to make any changes to his appearance. Anytime he put scissors to his hair, nothing happened. Once Thorne had caught Benny trying to shave it all off, but no such luck. It didn’t seem to affect his luck with the ladies, though, so Benny got over it. Once in a while, he’d make a pissed off remark cursing the Gods. It never did any good.

“I’m about to roll out in a few minutes. Wanna join in on the fun?”

Benny cracked his knuckles, and a crooked grin spread across his face. “Don’t mind if I do.”

It was rare that they actually worked a hit together, but when they could, they helped each other out. They each had invaluable skills that made life much easier. Well, life for them easier. Not so much for the target.

They sat around talking nonsense. Benny had a beer, and soon after, they stood up to leave. Thorne tossed some money on the table for the demon and slapped Benny on the back as they strutted out the door.

4

Once they exited the club, and the cool breeze hit his face, Thorne turned towards Benny. “Whatcha driving?”

“The Tesla.”

Of course. Benny loved all the cutting edge toys. Thorne would take an old school, gas run vehicle any day. “Fully charged?”

Benny gave him an annoyed look.

Thorne shrugged. “You never know with that electric car shit. I call shotgun.”

Rubbing his forehead with his middle finger Benny said, “You’re the only other person going. And it’s a two-seater.”

“Exactly.” Thorne pointed his thumb and index finger at Benny and acted like he was pulling the trigger.

Benny shook his head. “I don’t know how the hell I’ve put up with you all this time.”

“Because we’re like fucking Batman and Robin, Bonnie and Clyde, SpongeBob and Patrick. We’re partners.”

Benny put the car in reverse and backed out of the parking lot. “In each of those scenarios I can guess which person you see yourself as. I’m just the tagalong, huh?”

Thorne rolled his eyes. Benny always took his words so literally. “We’re brothers of destruction. Equals. That’s why you stick around. I’m the only person on this Earth that really knows you and vice versa. We’re stuck together like bubble gum on a tennis shoe.”

Benny laughed, his earlier annoyance fading. “You had me until the bubble gum analogy.”

“You gotta admit - I have a way with words,” Thorne said.

“Yeah, if you say so. Where the hell are we going anyway?”

Thorne pushed the button to recline his seat. “We’re going uptown.”

“Ah, fuck.” Benny eased out of the parking lot and clicked on the blinker before heading towards the interstate. What would normally take thirty minutes was going to take a couple of hours in the rush hour traffic. “What’s the target’s name?”

Thorne rattled off the identity of their target. He could practically feel Benny's power going to work. His friend was vectoring in on the exact location of the coward fleecing old women. He needed a name, no location. It didn't matter if there were a hundred Carson Smiths in the area. Somehow Benny just knew. And he was never wrong. It was a power that Thorne envied. With Benny's magic, he'd never need to use a GPS again. He hated those damn things. The freaking computer always waited till the last minute when he passed the exit. Every. Single. Time.

"What'd he do?" Benny asked. He reached over and changed the XM radio station to the Hair Nation channel. Benny loved the music from the big hair bands of the 80's. Some of it was all right, but most of it was garbage.

Thorne sighed and glanced over at his friend. "Does it matter?"

"Not really, but I always like to know a little about the person I'm about to put a cap in."

Thorne never cared who or what the person was or had done. It really was none of his damn business. He didn't get paid to rationalize deaths. He got paid to pull the trigger. But a lot of the guys had to know. Benny wasn't usually one of them. Maybe he was getting soft in his old age.

"Real scum. He's been stealing old ladies' money. Millions of dollars' worth. Finally, one of the relatives caught on and hired The Sicarii."

Benny nodded. "I hate weasels like that. If they have the skills to skim that much money, they have the skills to earn their own. Assholes."

Thorne reached down and flipped the channel when "Cryin," by Vixen came on. There was only so much a man could take.

"How's it going to go down? Suicide, accident, or murder?"

"Break-in gone wrong."

"Classic." Benny gave a short laugh. "Don't you ever get sick of this shit? I mean really, how many ways are there to kill a person?"

Thorne stroked his chin, watching his friend. "You know how many. More than enough. What's gotten into you, man?"

Benny gripped the wheel tighter. "I don't know. Maybe I just need a vacation or something."

Thorne let out a breath. This happened every few decades or so. He had to talk Benny back from the ledge of throwing it all away and going to live on some remote island. "You know The Sicarii does good. And I'd be

miserable as hell if you jumped ship. But a short vacation might not be a bad idea. Maybe you could go to Mexico or something for a few weeks.”

“Yeah, maybe. We’ll see.”

‘You probably just need to get laid.’

Benny let out a disgusted breath. “That’s your answer to everything. You have to admit even that loses its thrill after thousands of years.”

Thorne looked aghast. “Brother, if you really think that, then you’re doing it wrong.”

Benny didn’t even crack a smile. He drummed his fingers on the steering wheel, lost in his own thoughts. The phrase, *still waters run deep*, crossed Thorne’s mind.

Maybe he should pawn Ginger off on Benny. If nothing else, she was a good stress reliever.

They made the rest of the ride in silence.

Benny turned his car into a parking garage approximately two miles away from the target’s home. The city was wired with so much surveillance, it never hurt to be extra cautious.

Stepping out of the car, their gazes met and held. “You sure you’re up for this?” Thorne asked.

Benny’s features relaxed. “Yeah, but today, I’m Batman.”

Thorne laughed in spite of himself. “Lead the way.”

Using his third eye, Thorne mentally went through with the hit. He always did that. Somehow already having the outcome in his mind allowed things to move smoothly. Most of the time. This hit would be quick. In and out.

As they approached the house, or maybe mansion would be a more appropriate term, Thorne began to manipulate the energy flowing throughout the garish residence. He quickly dismantled the alarm system, cut the lights and popped open the gated entry.

“I really need to bring you on all my hits.” Benny shook his head. “I waste so much time disabling alarms.”

“And I waste so much time finding locations. We really are the perfect team.”

His gift came in handy with anything electronic, but the human element still had to be handled. As part of their code, they tried to leave as little

collateral damage as possible. The Sicarii didn't want any unwanted attention drawn to the secret society.

The security detail would be running in circles right now trying to figure out what the hell was going on with the power outage. Of course, they were equipped with a back-up generator large enough to supply electricity to the whole neighborhood. That was conveniently on the fritz, too, thanks to Thorne.

They strolled down the street, taking their time. Nothing drew attention like someone in a hurry. Perception was reality. If someone appeared innocent, people believed he was.

As expected, the gate was ajar. They strode through like they owned the damn place and were immediately met with two guards who had their guns drawn and pointed in their direction. Not the normal rent a cops, either. These guys looked legit. Probably ex-Special Forces. Too bad. Thorne was going to have to bruise their egos.

In a blur of movements, the guards were subdued in a matter of seconds.

Using a pressure point on the side of the neck, the guard in Thorne's hands was laid out limply. A quick glance showed Benny's guy was out cold. From the swelling on the guy's face, Benny went for an old school knock out. Obviously, he took the embracing of his inner Batman pretty seriously.

They tossed the guys into the security gate room. It was tiny and didn't even have a coffee pot. Where the hell did they take a piss? The cheap bastard should have splurged more on his employees. Asshole.

Dropping to his knee, Benny removed zip ties and tape from his black bag.

With haste, they tied up the guards with their backs together and placed duct tape over their mouths. They were going to be pissed when they came to. Thorne looked down at the slumped bodies. "Sorry, boys. Just doing our job. Apparently, better than you."

They exited the small building. Sticking to the greenery and hiding in the shadows, they hurried up the long cobblestone path toward the mansion. It was easily over twenty thousand square feet, a little too flamboyant in Thorne's opinion. The landscaping was outrageous: tress shaped into animals and large ceramic fountains scattered throughout. The asshole was just asking to have his throat slit.

*If you're going to steal money, at least keep it somewhat on the down low.
Idiot. Thorne thought. And don't target little old ladies.*

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5

Following Benny's lead, they worked their way to the main house.

The inside of the house was even gaudier. They were greeted by statues that looked like they belonged in a museum, while priceless paintings hung on the walls. A grand piano sat in the corner of the main room. Thorne wondered if anyone in the house even knew how to play it. Probably not. This guy was all about the props and the eye candy to impress everyone.

Either their timing was good or the target was skimping on his security manpower, because they didn't encounter any more guards along the way. Climbing the spiral staircase, they passed way too many rooms for a single man. Thankfully, he had Benny or he'd have to clear each room, a laborious task in a house this size.

Finally, they stopped in front of a closed, double door. The door was huge and had a Middle Eastern flair to it with intricate woodwork and iron handles.

With a tilt of his head, Benny indicated that the target was in the room behind the closed door.

Oh yeah, Thorne thought and grinned. Without bothering to check if the door was locked or not, he stepped back and then drove his full two hundred and thirty pounds into the kick, his foot landing close to the door handle. The doors blew in with the force of an explosive charge. Thorne followed the kick into the room, moving toward the middle in order to dominate the area. Now it was his turn to be center of attention.

The target was sitting behind a large mahogany desk, the glow of a laptop computer illuminating his terrified face. *Obviously on battery power and must have been turned off earlier*, thought Thorne. Otherwise it would have been disabled when he hit the alarm and backup generators with his power.

Smiling, Thorne said, "Hello, shithead. It's time to pay the motherfucking piper!"

"Who the hell are you? How did you get past my security?" The target stood up like he could somehow take back control of the situation. He was barely five foot eight, skinny as a twig with a receding hairline that bordered on criminal. It was almost comical to think he could do something

to stop Thorne. But money did that to a person. Made them think they held all the power.

“Who we are isn’t important. Neither is the status of your security. What you should be worried about is whether or not you’re gonna die quickly or slowly. Given that you’ve stolen millions,” Thorne paused and looked around the room, “and have questionable taste in how you spent it, I’m gonna say slowly and not too pleasantly either. What do you think, Benny?”

Benny nodded in agreement. “Works for me.”

Thorne grabbed the man by his arm. With his supernatural strength, he nearly pulled the target’s arm out of the socket as he flung him across the room, crashing him into the wall and knocking down furniture along the way.

“You see, this is a burglary gone wrong,” Thorne said, while he leisurely walked toward the crumpled man. “I’m gonna beat the crap out of you because you’re too stupid to just *give* me the code to your safe. You do have a safe in here, don’t you?”

“Yes, yes! I have a safe! I’ll give you the combination. Just please don’t hurt me anymore! Whatever they’re paying you, I’ll double it. Triple it!” the target pleaded. Gone was his early bravado.

Oh how quickly the weak fold, Thorn observed.

“Well, I’m waiting.” He stood over the cowering fool.

Stuttering, the target told Thorne the safe combination.

Benny didn’t have to ask where the safe was located. He walked over to one of the paintings hanging on the wall and tore it off. He tossed it aside before typing the code into the keypad. Thorne heard the safe pop open.

“Nice!” said Benny. “Looks to be at least a hundred grand, some bearer bonds and an assortment of jewels. You’re quite the high roller, aren’t you?”

“Please, take it. I have more. Just name your price!” their target begged. It was funny how easily he gave away money that wasn’t his.

“Really? You think you can buy my integrity?” said Thorne. “First off, my net worth is significantly larger than yours. Second, once I take a job I always complete it. There is no renegotiating of the contract. And third, I don’t like you or people like you. Fucking leeches who steal from others, because they’re too lazy, greedy or just plain bad and don’t want to earn it themselves.”

Thorne grabbed the man, dragged him back to the desk and pushed him down into the large leather chair behind it. Keeping a grip on his shirt, Thorne reached into the back of his pants and pulled out the Ruger. Letting go of the sorry excuse of a human, Thorne took his time as he attached the silencer. "I told you that you were too stupid to give me the code." He placed the barrel right on the left kneecap and fired a round into the coward's leg.

A look of horror and shock crossed the man's face. Before he was able to utter a sound, Thorne moved the pistol to the right kneecap and shot it, too, then stepped back, watching the man. Tears were running down his face. The target was crying so hard, he couldn't get a word out. It was embarrassing to watch.

There was no turning back at this point. Thorne leveled the weapon right between his eyes and pulled the trigger. A small hole appeared right in the center of his forehead while the back of his skull mushroomed out and sprayed the wall behind the chair. It took a few seconds for the body to slump to the side.

"How was that?" Thorne looked at Benny. "Not too overly dramatic, was it? You know how I love good theatrics. But it's gotta be the right mix."

Benny shook his head, "Yea, you're a regular Shakespeare alright."

"What's up with you? Still in a pissy mood?"

Benny shook his head in disgust.

Thorne laughed as he tossed one of the books off the shelf at him. "My gig. My hit. You can be Batman on your own fucking time."

Benny's hand shot out, and he caught it before it could make impact. He flung the book across the room and hit the wall with a thud. "I hate fucking weasels like that prick. You should have dragged it out longer."

"You think?"

"Nah. You did good. Let's get the hell out of here."

"Not just yet." Thorne started tossing the room, making it look like the burglars were looking for something, or anything for that matter. Once done, he turned to Benny. "I think that'll do. You ready to blow this pop stand? I could use a drink."

"What about the jewels and the cash?"

"Grab it. Maybe Ragner can return it to some of the old ladies that were conned."

Benny nodded before making his way to the safe. He dropped to a knee and tossed the loot into the bag.

As they turned to leave, they were caught by surprise by a fluffy calico cat sitting in the doorway, watching them.

“How long has that thing been in here?” Thorne asked, narrowing his eyes at the animal.

Benny shrugged. “First I seen of it.”

“Whatever. We gotta get out of here before someone shows up.” Thorne stepped over the mess and made his way out the door with Benny close on his heels.

The cat led the way.

6

Just as they were about to exit the house, the cat rubbed up against Thorne's legs, its green eyes pleading. He nudged his leg, trying to dislodge the damn thing, but it kept rubbing up against him, purring. What the hell? Animals never liked him.

Benny scratched the top of his head. "Ah, Gods. We gotta take the cat."

"What? Why the hell would we take the cat?" Thorne asked, looking at Benny like he'd lost his ever-loving mind.

"Look at it. We can't leave her in here by herself. You don't want to know what cats do to dead bodies."

"No, I don't, and I don't care. I'm not taking the cat."

"I'm telling you – it's bad juju if we leave it."

Thorne rolled his eyes. Benny held onto some strange superstitions from their old life. "Well then, you take the cat home. I don't want anything to do with an animal. They stink, leave hair all around the house and then they die. Can't we just leave it outside of the house? I'm sure someone will take it in."

"Yeah, I guess we can do that." Benny reached down to pick up the cat and started walking towards the door. The cat hissed and squirmed out of his hands, returning to Thorne.

"He's obviously picked his owner."

What the fuck! As if he didn't already have enough on his plate. The last thing he needed was a scruffy fur ball. Thorne reached down and picked up the animal. It immediately rubbed its face against Thorne's chin. He scratched the cat behind the ears. "What's the matter with you? Don't you realize I just blew your owners brains out?"

The cat crawled up more and laid its head on Thorne's shoulder. Maybe the cat hadn't liked the man either.

"I'm not keeping it," Thorne said, glaring at Benny.

As soon as they walked out the door and down the steps, Thorne dropped the cat. It meowed and then ran to catch up with them.

"Maybe it's your familiar," Benny said with a laugh.

"Shut the fuck up," Thorne said, annoyed. Once they reached the car, he glared down at the cat. "Sorry, buddy. I'm not taking you home. I can't even

keep a plant alive, let alone an animal. Trust me. This is in your best interest.”

The cat howled as if it had understood and Thorne’s words had wounded it. He opened the car door and slammed it shut. The cat jumped on the roof, and Benny laughed.

“Drive. It will jump off,” Thorne said between gritted teeth. In all his time on earth, he never allowed himself the luxury of having a pet. It would just be another loss he would have to face.

Benny started the electric car, which made no noise to alert the cat. Slowly he backed out of the parking spot. The cat placed its paws on the windshield as if it was begging for Thorne to help it.

“Fuck it!”

Grinning, Benny hit the brakes. Thorne slung his long legs out the door. Before he was able to stand up, the cat had leapt from the top of the car and was sitting on his lap. He closed the door and stared down at the feline. “I’m not keeping you. This is just temporary until we find you another home.”

The cat settled into his lap and fell asleep.

Absently, Thorne found himself running his hand down its soft fur. *Still not keeping it.*

“What are you going to name her?” Benny asked.

“I told you. I’m not keeping it.”

“Right...”

Deciding it was best to ignore his friends gloating, Thorne grabbed his phone out of his jacket pocket. He punched in the numbers and waited for the familiar voice to pick up.

“Hello.”

“Ragner. Just wanted to let you know that present you sent me out for...”

“Yes?”

“Taken care of.”

“I knew I could count on you.”

“You need anything else from me while I’m still out shopping?” Thorne said.

“Not at the moment, but I’m sure you’ll hear from me shortly.”

“Works for me. Tell the wife I said hello.”

“Fuck you, Thorne.”

Thorne laughed loudly. “You know I’m just messing with you.”

“Sure. Tell that to Garrison.”

Thorne looked out the window and watched the trees blur by. Maybe he should get a place out in the suburbs. Nah. He liked the city life way too much. “Garrison’s a little punk, and if he took care of his woman the way she needed, Celeste would have never shown up on my door.”

“You caused their divorce.”

“That’s bullshit, and you know it. But hey, if you want me to find another venue ...” Thorne’s chest tightened at his words. The last thing he wanted to do was lose his position. Especially for subpar sex. He should have turned Celeste away. He knew better, but she looked so fucking hot. And when she opened her jacket wearing nothing underneath, well ... that was the nail in the coffin.

One freaking night. He kicked her ass out like he did all of them. In a fit of anger, Celeste told her husband she’d been having sex with him. Needless to say, things had been tense around the workplace since then.

Ragner sighed. “I’m not saying that. You put me in a precarious position. Garrison has been my vice president for a very long time. Just keep your head down and pants on when it comes to the people closest to me.”

“Yeah, yeah. I’ll do my best.” Thorne hit the end button on the phone and laid his head against the seat.

“You have to admit that wasn’t one of your finest moments,” Benny said, glancing over at him.

Thorne shifted in his seat. “It was stupid. I get it.”

“You can’t go swinging your dick around everywhere you go.”

“Really? Swinging my dick around? Is that how you see me?”

“Hey if the shoe fits.” Benny paused. “When was the last time you didn’t have a companion?”

Thorne rubbed his jaw and thought about it. “I sleep alone almost every single night.”

“Yeah, sleep. That’s cause you kick their asses out as soon as you’re done with them. You’re a man whore.”

“So? What’s wrong with that? I assure you they are all brought to the height of pleasure by honed skills.”

“And do they leave your place happy?”

Thorne recalled the departure of his last guest.

After he tossed her clothes to her and told her he had to get some sleep, she’d cursed him out in several different languages. He’d just stood up,

walked to the door and held it open. She clobbered him with her shoe on the way out. At least he gave her time to put her clothes on.

Or what about the woman the night before that, she left sobbing because she thought they had something special. *Whatever.*

“Yeah, I’d say for the most part they leave happy.” He’d honesty never really given it much thought until Benny asked. Thorne had always been upfront, that he was not the kind to settle down. He was definitely a love ‘em and leave ‘em type of guy. A rambling man. And he had no remorse. It was better that way for everyone involved. If they didn’t like it, they could find some other poor slob to hitch themselves to.

“Speaking of. After I go home and clean up I’m going to go back to Apotheca. You going?”

Benny scratched the side of his face. “Ah, who knows? I’ll probably end up back there at some point.”

Thorne laughed. “We’re really not much different. You just don’t want to admit it. I’m fine with the fact that I’m an asshole. You want to cling to your noble roots or some shit.”

“We’re nothing alike.”

“Right. And how many women have you cycled through this week?”

Benny tapped his fingers on the steering wheel. “Yeah, well, at least I give them breakfast in the morning.”

“Only because you hate being alone.”

“Whatever,” Benny mumbled under his breath as he pulled up next to Thorne’s bike. “I’ll catch ya later.”

“Thanks for the ride.” Thorne was still smiling as he slammed the door. Quite the pair the two of them were. But at least they still had their bearings. Some other immortals were not so lucky. Unable to contend with the thought of living forever they’d lost their damn minds. It made Thorne sick to his stomach when he’d see someone from the old world living on the streets. Sad.

Suddenly, he realized he was still holding onto the damn cat. He dropped her onto the ground. The cat jumped up and sat on the motorcycle seat. *Lovely.*

Sighing, he picked up the cat and stuffed her into his leather jacket. She moved around for a few seconds, getting comfortable. How the hell did he manage to get a freaking feline? He wanted to throttle Benny.

Thorne peeled out of the parking lot, lost in thought on his way home. The conversation with Ragner kept playing over in his mind. Normally he had no regrets when it came to women, but he'd screwed up by fucking Celeste. Garrison was one of the few humans that knew what they were. He was the one that handled all the human hits. He did the guy a favor. Celeste didn't give a shit about him and was just using him for his money.

Oh well, what was done was done.

There was no such thing as turning back the clock.

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7

Thorne threaded his way through the crowded bar, scanning the immediate area in search of someone to take back to his place and blow off some steam. He always loved a good fuck after a hit. For some reason, the release helped to keep some semblance of balance in his life.

He didn't make it very far before a petite, dark-haired woman caught his eye at the end of the bar. She must have liked what she saw, because she raised her glass and smiled coyly. Oh, yeah she would do.

Just then Ginger tried to sneak up behind him, something she damn well knew pissed him off. He turned before she could touch him and grabbed her by the wrist. "What do you want, Ginger?"

"Oh, I think you know what I want." She practically purred.

Releasing her, his eyes darted back to the woman on the bar stool. "Sorry, not happening. There's a pretty little brunette over there calling my name."

"You're such an arrogant bastard." Ginger snarled. Her eyes shown red in the strobe lights. She raised her hand to hit him but thought better of it and placed it limply at her side. Like a good girl.

"Yeah, yeah heard it all before. There are plenty of assholes in here that would take you home in a heartbeat. It's just not going to be me. Not tonight."

The crazy bitch actually pouted. As if he would feel sorry for her. He might have to ditch Ginger, for good. She was getting way too clingy for his taste. Without another word, Thorne walked away, leaving her pissed off.

Taking his time, he stopped and talked to a few people before he sauntered up next to the woman at the bar.

She was even prettier close up. Wide blue eyes, delicate cheek bones, full lips, soft wavy dark hair that hung just below her shoulders and a body so petite it looked like he could break her like a twig. Waifish.

"Not likely," she said before taking a sip of her drink.

"Huh?" Thorne asked, knowing he hadn't said anything.

"I'm not as fragile as I look."

Startled, Thorne's gaze locked on hers. "Ah, fuck, a mind reader?"

She shrugged her narrow shoulder. He imagined his lips trailing down the side of her neck, stopping to suck on her small, pert breast through the flimsy cotton.

The woman laughed. “Getting a little ahead of yourself, aren’t you, Thorne?”

Gods! Mind readers were annoying as hell. But she was so fucking hot, he might be persuaded to make an exception. “How do you know my name? I’m quite sure I wasn’t thinking it.”

“Everyone knows your name. Hell, it’s written all over the bathroom stalls. For a good time call Thorne.”

A lazy, arrogant smile turned up his lips. A part of him wondered if she was making up the writing on the bathroom stalls. He’d have to take a peek someday. “I’ve never seen you before. There’s no way I could forget an angelic face like yours.”

“Oh, you’ve seen me before. I just looked different.”

In the blink of an eye, the small dark-haired beauty morphed into a tall blonde with hazel eyes, and then into an auburn siren with big tits and a narrow waist. Either one of those versions, he’d happily take back to his place. Fuck - he’d take all three.

He pulled back a bit, observing her with interest and suspicion. “What the fuck are you?”

She turned back into the original version and leaned in closer. Slowly, she ran the soft pad of her thumb over his lower lip, causing his cock to harden instantly. “Whatever you want me to be. Tonight you were looking for a raven-haired beauty on the petite side.”

“Was I? I guess I was, since you caught my attention so quickly. I have to say, I usually like women with a bit more meat on their bones.” Thorne held up his hand for a drink, trying to gain control of the situation. The bartender turned away and quickly came back with his usual drink. This woman had him a little off kilter. Something told him he should walk away, but he was intrigued. “I’ve seen it all. A fucking mind-reading chameleon.”

With a smile, she pulled the glass to her perfect lips. He couldn’t wait to feel them wrapped around his cock.

A blush rose up her neck. *Interesting.*

“What’s your true form?” Thorne asked as he reached for his drink, scotch on the rocks.

“One you’ll never see.”

He tilted his head back, allowing the warm liquid to flow through him. “Fine by me. I like what I’m seeing right now.”

A smile graced her beautiful face. “I know you do.”

A sudden thought crossed his mind. “You’re not really a man are you?”

She laughed loudly. He found he liked the sound of her laugh. It had an almost musical quality to it.

“No, I’m definitely a woman. I can’t even change into the male form, thank goodness.”

He glanced down at his empty glass. “Well, that’s good to know. Sorry, but I didn’t catch your name.”

“You never asked,” she murmured, giving Thorne a seductive, sidelong glance while running her finger around the rim of her glass.

“I’m asking.” He pushed his empty glass across the bar and signaled the bartender for another. He felt her gaze roaming over him. The sexual chemistry between the two of them was practically palatable. He wanted to touch her skin, smell her scent and bury himself deep between her thighs.

She nibbled on her bottom lip. “Does it really matter? I know you’re not going to remember it tomorrow. I’ll just be another one of your conquests, tossed aside like that poor vampire earlier.”

Leaning closer, he lightly skimmed his fingers down her bare arm. Her skin was silky smooth beneath his calloused hand. “I wouldn’t ask if I didn’t want to know. You’ve done something not easily done—intrigued me.”

She reached for her drink and pulled away. “Well, then, let’s keep it that way. My name is of no concern to you.”

Thorne smiled despite himself. “My, my, my. A feisty little one, aren’t you? So do we need to play the game and go through the motions? Or do you want to leave right now, so I can throw your legs over my shoulders and fuck you till you can’t think straight?”

She finished her drink and picked up her little black purse. “It took you long enough.”

Thorne watched as she sashayed in front of him. Even though she was tiny, she had curves in all the right places. A miniature hourglass. Heads turned to watch the way her hips swung with each step. He couldn’t wait to get back to his place and tear her clothes off.

If they even made it that far.

Once they reached outside, Thorne grabbed her by the arm and spun her lithe body into his. His hand slid from her neck to her breast. His thumb slowly stroked her already taut nipple. A small gasp escaped her lips. Pushing her against the building, he used both of his hands and massaged her breast roughly, causing her to cry out. Oh, yeah, he loved the responsive ones.

Her gaze fastened on his, and he could see the sensuality and intensity in her eyes. It was going to be a very good night.

The little vixen wet her lips. Thorne dipped his head to catch her mouth with his. His tongue slid between her lips and into her mouth. She tasted like vodka and mint. As his tongue swirled lazily, her hands roamed under his shirt. She molded her hot little body to his. His cock was so hard, he thought he might burst long before they made it home.

As he was kissing her thoroughly, her fingers went to his belt, but Thorne stopped her. "Not here. I want to get you back to my place so I can enjoy every inch of you. I want to watch your every expression as I bring you to the edge," he said thickly. Damn! He wanted this woman more than he'd wanted anyone in a long time.

He interlinked her fingers with his and walked her to his bike. Grabbing his extra helmet, he held it out to her. Unfazed, she pulled the helmet over her head and tightened the straps. He hated when chicks balked at the idea of riding on a motorcycle and was satisfied when she didn't.

She hopped on the back and wrapped her arms around his waist. He nearly groaned when she pressed her chest against his back. Shit, he should have just taken her outside of the club. Cock throbbing, he took off like a bat out of hell down the road.

8

Never in his life was Thorne happier to see his elevator. He barely noticed the doorman holding the door open or the couple that passed them on their way in. As soon as the doors closed, he mentally disabled the camera, and roughly pushed her against the wall. Her arms went up around his neck. His hands greedily roamed her body, sliding down the hollow of her neck, lingering at her breasts, moving to her ribs and waist. Fuck, the elevator was taking forever. He tilted her face up and kissed her long and hard as his callused hands roamed up her narrow back. Her mouth was warm and soft against his. Damn, he was drunk with need for her, something he hadn't experienced in a *very* long time.

Every muscle in his body was unbearably taut, like a coiled predator ready to strike. If he didn't get her naked and wrapped around his cock soon, he was going to explode.

She tilted her head to the side, giving him more access. Roughly he kissed the underside of her jaw down to the hollow of her shoulder. The woman arched her back into him, until her body was flush with his, her nipples straining through her top and rubbing against him.

A low moan trembled through her throat.

As soon as he heard the ding signaling his floor, he lifted her up. Her eyes flickered open. She wrapped her legs around his waist and rocked forward. The move pulled her short skirt up so his hands were cupping her bare ass. Too impatient to bother with the door, he willed it to open. As they got closer to his apartment door, it flung open with a bang and slammed shut behind them. That was one of the positive things about bedding a non-human; he didn't have to hide his power. The lights came on as he walked through the rooms. The damn cat meowed and rubbed up against his leg. He nudged it away.

Once he reached the bedroom, he dropped her to the floor. "Take off your fucking clothes," he growled.

Tilting her head to the side, a look of uncertainty playing across her beautiful face.

Thorne proceeded to take off his shirt and toss it to the side, watching her with interest. Was she going to back out?

“Hell, no! I’m not backing out.” A grin crossed her face as she tore off her shirt. “I’m just not used to giving up control.”

He could have fun with this mind reading stuff. *Lay on the bed, legs spread open wide for me.*

She laughed. “You’re just a little more forward than I expected. That’s all.”

He kicked his jeans to the side. “You’re not naked or on the bed.”

“I’m a little distracted,” she said as she unhooked her bra. Her breath caught. Her pale blue eyes were riveted to his torso, soaking in his six-pack abs and thick, hard cock. It was times like this that he loved being the descendant of a god.

“Like what you see?” he asked as he sat on the bed and pulled her toward him. Looking into her eyes, he slid his hand beneath her skirt and up her smooth thigh. She groaned when he palmed her. He could feel the moisture through her thong. Slowly, he ground the top of his palm on her nub. Her body arched in response, and she went up on her tiptoes.

Much better. He pulled her onto his lap, straddling him.

Lowering his head to her breast, his stubble chin scraped her delicate skin. Gods! She was so soft. He found he wanted to wreck her, ruin her for any other man.

Shifting to the side, he dropped her back on the bed and hooked his fingers on the sides of her panties, ripping them off with a tug.

Pushing her back on the bed, he straddled her. His weight caused the bed to dent beneath them. He dipped his head and caught one of her nipples between his lips. He sucked hard, and she moaned, dragging her nails down the side of his arms.

Gods, she was tiny! He hoped he didn’t hurt her.

She laughed at his errant thought.

He flicked his tongue over her nipple, making several quick passes till she was begging for more. Her legs dropped to the side as he eased his way down her body. He parted her warm folds, before driving his fingers into her supple flesh. She squirmed beneath his touch. Leaving his fingers deep inside her, he used his other hand to push back her thick folds and made a long, slow stroke with his tongue against her clit. Her breathing grew ragged, her hips moving with his hand as he continued to tongue and finger fuck her. But he wasn’t ready for her to come just yet. He wanted to drag out the pleasure.

He slowed down the pace, until she was pumping her hips and begging for release. “Not yet, baby. Not until I’m good and ready.”

Bringing a woman to the edge was a beautiful sight, one he didn’t think he’d ever get sick of. His cock twitched in anticipation, unable to hold off anymore.

“Come for me,” he said harshly before putting as much pressure as possible. He lashed his tongue across her clit as his fingers worked furiously, until he felt her begin to convulse around him. Her face was flushed, and she screamed out his name. There was something thrilling about hearing his name screamed out by a woman who looked as though she were in pain, but who he knew was experiencing incredible pleasure.

Before she had time to recover, he grabbed her thighs and threw them over the crook of his arms, driving into her. She was wet and tight. A wince crossed her pretty little face as he thrust deeper. His cock pulsed from her tight sheath.

“You okay?” he asked, pulling back and almost bringing the tip of his cock out of her. She nodded eagerly.

He drove deep inside of her. She cried out as he ground his pelvis against hers. He couldn’t help himself. Usually he would take his time, but with her, he hammered deeper and harder with each stroke.

Reaching up, she grasped the bed rails, holding on as if her life depended on it. Her head thrashed from side to side, her responsive body almost bringing him to orgasm. Shifting positions, he turned her to the side and held both of her small ankles in his left hand. Her tight little ass was lifted high in the air, begging for attention. The large palm of his hand fit perfectly across her backside. Slowly, he ran the palm of his hand in a circle. Her eyes snapped open, and he grinned. Instead of smacking her ass like she was expecting, he ran his hand back and forth across her ass as he thrust into her slowly.

Groaning, she met him thrust for thrust. Her small tits bounced around nearly making him come undone. Each time he came close to release he’d stop and change positions. He wanted to make it last. Fucking was one of the few enjoyments left in his life and he liked to savor it.

Pulling out, he grunted, “Hands and knees.”

She didn’t hesitate. Just seeing her little ass high in the air and her narrow waist begging to be grabbed caused an animalistic growl to escape his mouth.

It was starting to piss him off that he didn't even know her name. A primitive masculine need to possess her came over him, too compelling to deny.

He grasped her silky hair in his hand and yanked her head back. "You like me fucking you?"

"Yes," she cried out, her voice raspy.

"You want me to drive my cock into you until you can't think straight?"

She nodded her head, whimpering.

Taking the tip of his cock, he rubbed it back and forth up the crack of her beautiful little ass. She groaned and wiggled.

He leaned down, his hot breath on her neck. "Then tell me your fucking name, and don't lie to me."

"Wh-what?" she tried to turn her head, but his hand was wrapped too tightly in her hair.

"Your name." He reached down with his free hand and rolled one of her hard nipples in his fingers, his cock still nudging her without entering.

"No." She spat out.

A warning bell went off in the back of his head, but he ignored it.

Gods, his cock was throbbing. It took all his self-control not to push her down and fuck her senseless, until he came. What the hell did it matter if he knew her name or not? She was right when she said he wouldn't remember it anyway. But there was something about this woman that bugged him. He didn't trust her, and yet he wanted her so bad, his cock hurt with it.

Fuck it. He leaned forward and pressed her body against the bed flat so she couldn't move and entered her from behind in one hard thrust. She gasped. He couldn't tell if it was from pleasure or pain and didn't really give a shit either way. All he knew was he needed to come deep inside of her. The intensity of the need was overwhelming.

After a few quick thrusts, he slowed down, watching his long, hard cock slide in and out of her. It was a beautiful sight. He felt the pressure building. "Turn over." He slapped her ass hard. "I want to see your face when I come inside of you."

She shifted on the bed, staring up at him with a flushed face and her breath coming in short gasps. Oh, yeah, she was enjoying it just as much as he was.

"Name?"

She shook her head and dropped her knees to the side. Thorne cursed under his breath before grabbing her legs and throwing both of them over his left shoulder. This angle gave him the perfect view of both her tits and ass. He drove his cock into her slippery slit, each thrust harder and faster than the last. Arching her hips, she met him thrust for thrust. She cried out in ecstasy, her body trembling beneath his. He quickened his strokes, until he felt the release coming just at the edge of his awareness.

His body slick with sweat, he came so hard he could have sworn the walls shook.

The full weight of him collapsed on top of her, both of them struggling to settle their breathing. He could feel her heart hammering.

Realizing he was probably squashing her, he rolled over onto his back. He closed his eyes, willing his heart rate to settle. Fuck, that was amazing.

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Once was not enough. Over the next few hours, he brought her body to pleasure so many times, he lost count by morning. He still couldn't get her name out of her. By now it had become a game of sorts, one he was losing.

Thorne stood up, went to the bathroom and then grabbed a drink before returning to the bedroom. The tiny brunette laid sprawled across his bed. He could tell she was exhausted but unwilling to admit her body was spent. With his immortality, he could go on for days. Hell, weeks if he wanted.

Walking over to his dresser, he opened the draw and pulled out two sets of handcuffs. She wasn't long enough to reach the bottom of the bed. His lips twitched as an idea crossed his mind, and he grabbed two silk ties as well. "Turn into the tall shapely blonde you showed me earlier."

She narrowed her eyes at him. Obviously, she didn't like that her current form wasn't enough for him. Well, tough shit. His house, his rules. "Fuck you."

"Change or leave."

Within seconds, she had morphed into the tall blonde, and, like a good girl, her hands and legs were spread eagle waiting to be bound. Without a word, the cuffs floated through the air and simultaneously locked her limbs tightly in place. He could get used to this. Two different girls in one night with very little effort. Of course it would be better if she was able to project herself into another form at the same time for a ménage a trois. But he wasn't about to get picky.

She narrowed her eyes and glared at him. It was strange to see the hazel eyes staring back at him, instead of the clear blue. He had to admit that he preferred the petite brunette, but it wasn't his fault she was too short for what he had in mind.

"I hate you." She pulled at the binds.

Thorne laughed. It was nice to hear that her voice hadn't changed. For some reason, it really turned him on.

Watching this woman sprawled out naked on the bed, squirming, made his cock throb. Lucky for him he had patience. He wasn't sure he'd even touch this version of her.

His resolve didn't last too long. "No, you don't," he whispered as he settled himself between her thighs. "If it makes you feel any better. I prefer the smaller tits of the brunette." He used both hands to knead her much larger breasts. He felt her body relax beneath him. Women were interesting creatures.

"I'm not going to untie you until you tell me your name."

Her body jerked beneath him, trying to toss him off of her. Laughing, his tongue swirled around her large pink nipple. "Oh, you love it, and you know it. Believe me. There are worse forms of torture."

"Why do you want to know my name so badly?" she asked, yanking at her arm in an attempt to release herself.

He shrugged. "Because you don't want to tell me. And I always get my way."

"Not this time." She stared defiantly up at him.

"Guess we'll see about that." He disengaged himself from her body and walked back to the dresser. He looked back over his shoulder at the woman, trying to decide what would work best. Ah, yes. There was nothing a little clit stimulator couldn't take care of. He reached into the draw and pulled out a clear plastic nub for the lack of a better word. He wasn't really into toys himself, but over the centuries, it was always fun to find out what the latest and greatest was. Interestingly enough, there hadn't been huge advances in this market.

"Lift your hips," he demanded.

She obeyed, without a word, much to his surprise.

Kinky girl. He attached the belt around her waist and positioned the toy between her folds, so it rested on her most sensitive part. He flipped the stimulator on and watched her intently. She was trying hard not to react. He observed her for a few moments before he walked out the room. A ghost of a smile crossed his face as he heard her yelling, threatening to kill him, when she was untied. It was funnier, because her breathing which was as haggard as her body, betrayed her pleasure.

Taking his time, he made his way into the kitchen. He poured a glass of ice tea and made a turkey sandwich. A quick glance at the clock informed him it was after three in the morning. He should be tired, but he wasn't.

A short time later, he strolled back into the room. The blonde's face was a deep shade of red as she glared up at him.

“Name?”

“Fuck you! You freaking asshole!” she screamed.

Thorne threw back his head, laughing. She had spirit; he had to give her that.

She closed her eyes as he moved across the room. With one hand, he grabbed the strap that held the toy in place and ripped it off her. He tossed it behind him. It made a thunk as it hit the wall.

Her snatch was swollen and dark pink from the multiple orgasms, a truly beautiful sight.

Easing himself between her thighs once more, he slowly ran his tongue between her folds, enjoying the way her body quivered. She tried to pull her legs together, but it was useless. And she knew it.

“Name?”

“Go to hell!”

He gave her a wicked, lazy smile, before he dipped two of his fingers into her supple flesh, while his tongue went to work devouring her. In a matter of seconds, her body convulsed in orgasm. “That wasn’t so bad was it?”

“You’re more of an ass than everyone says you are.” Her words were stilted as she tried to regain her bearings.

He watched her breasts rise and fall with each breath. Smiling, he traced the tips of his fingers up her flat stomach, until he reached her chest. He supported one breast with his hand, his thumb brushing across her erect nipples.

“You can leave at any time.”

“Yeah right.” She pulled at the restraints to make her point.

In a flash, the restraints were released. Thorne rolled over to the side, allowing her the room to leave. Instead, the woman transformed back into the brunette and climbed on top of him. “You’re lucky I can read your thoughts, or I’d have kneed you in the balls by now.”

Automatically, one of his legs turned in. “Don’t even joke about that.”

Her small hand wrapped around the base of his cock, and she guided him into her. Damn she was tight. And so fucking warm. He nearly groaned aloud when she rocked her hips forward, grinding her clit against him. Her small hands roamed up his body and lingered over grooves in his abdomen. Painstakingly slowly, she made her way up his chest, the whole time rocking slowly. One of his hands was splayed across her lower back while

his other gripped the back of her neck and pulled her down till her lips met his. She caught his lower lip between her teeth.

Okay, maybe he didn't care what her name was. She closed her eyes and gave herself over completely to him. He could feel the shift in her energy. She rode him hard and with abandonment, until she was screaming his name out as pleasure coursed through her.

The night continued on in much the same manner. He couldn't recall a time when he tried so hard to impress someone. They fucked all over the room, in every position imaginable, and even made good use of the shower. At some point, they must have dozed off.

When he drowsily awoke, Thorne's arm was haphazardly thrown across Laurie's waist. He moved in closer and spooned against her. Her long auburn curls tickled his nose. His hard cock pressed against her ass. Laurie parted her legs, giving him the access he craved. Damn she felt so good. In a sleepy haze, he made love to his wife. He loved the feel of her soft body on his. Their bodies merged in such a way that they had to have been made for each other. Soul mates.

"I love you," he whispered into her ear as he came.

"Thorne?"

His eyes snapped open at the unfamiliar voice. He rubbed his hand over his face.

Fully awake, and staring at the face of his long dead wife, rage welled up from deep inside. "What the fuck kind of game are you playing?" he demanded of the nameless woman he'd taken to bed.

"What are you talking about?" Laurie's beautiful green eyes stared back at him, looking confused. It was like a knife through his heart being twisted. How long had he dreamt of seeing his wife again in the flesh? Just the sight caused his chest to clench.

This bitch was fucking with him.

"Who are you? Who sent you here?"

"Thorne you're freaking me out." The woman who resembled the love of his life sat up, covering herself with the sheet. He couldn't stand the sound of another woman's voice coming out of Laurie's lips. He wanted to kill her, but it would be like killing the only person he ever really loved.

Unable to control himself, he reached over and wrapped his hands around the woman's neck. Her eyes widened in fear.

“Why the fuck are you in Laurie’s form?”

The woman looked down, surprise crossing her face. In a flash, she turned back to the small brunette. “I-I’m sorry,” she gasped.

“Get the fuck out of my house!”

“I-I don’t understand what happened.”

“That makes two of us. Get out.”

He practically pushed her off the bed. He tossed her clothes at her.

Ready to cry, she shimmied into her skirt and threw on her top, not bothering with her bra and underwear.

He walked her to the door, holding onto her arm, about to toss her out. They stood for an endless moment, staring at each other. Thorne reached for the door, and she finally spoke then.

“Thorne?”

His body tensed. “What?”

She moistened her lips and ducked her head before meeting his gaze. “My name is Kataya.”

Thorne narrowed his eyes, seeking any sign of deception. He saw none. Of course, he didn’t have her mind reading ability, but he’d been around long enough to be able to tell when someone wasn’t telling the truth.

“I’ll kill you if I find out you’re lying to me.”

She shook her head. “I’m not. My name is Kataya Clarke.”

He pulled the door open. She hurried out the door, looking behind her.

Thorne didn’t trust her. And yet the thought of her leaving didn’t sit well with him either.

What in the hell was going on? Had the gods sent someone down to torture him? Why would they do that? What had changed?

Slamming the door, he stalked across the room and grabbed his phone. Someone had to know who the hell the chameleon was. The only problem: he hadn’t seen her true form, which was going to make her identification difficult. At least he had a name.

Kataya Clarke.

Who the hell are you?

Gods, seeing Laurie's face again...

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