

If you want the job done right, hire a succubus

PAY-PER-KILL



ELIZA HENDRIX

Pay-Per-Kill

Prequel to the Succubus Hitwoman series

Mortal Blow – Book 1

Lethal Blow – Book 2

Fatal Blow – Book 3

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Warning: this story contains strong language, graphic violence, and explicit sexual situations.

*Intended for readers 18+

Chapter 1

Dick Peterson slips the sheet of paper across his slanted office desk, the scraping sound making the tips of my claws come out.

Okay, his name isn't actually Dick—it's Dan, but I like to call him Dick because... well, he's a dick.

"Two thousand," he says, his voice monotone. He's either bored or doesn't give a shit.

The guy's a total douchebag. Every time he offers me a job with that nonchalant attitude of his, all I want to do is shove some Prozac down his throat.

When I don't respond, the patchy moustache over his lip twitches and he wipes a line of drool off his chin. Along with it come doughnut crumbs and strawberry filling. It takes everything in me not to grab him by the greasy hair on his head and smash his face into the dozens of sticky mug rings on his desk.

The offer of two thousand dollars to kill someone is extremely insulting. My usual going rate starts at ten grand—and that's *cheap*. Clenching my jaw, I breathe out slowly, reminding myself that this is what happens when I start a new life.

Alyssa Miller—that's my new name.

New identity, new passport, new city, new body.

Some might say being a succubus isn't all it's cracked up to be, but if you ask me, it's pretty fucking awesome. Even more so when you have a thousand years of experience under your belt. Maybe that's why this is so insulting. This guy has no idea what I'm capable of, but that's the problem with this line of work; you have to make a name for yourself, which isn't exactly easy when your slate's been wiped clean.

Dick reaches for another doughnut, and I pull my tank top down to showcase what this new body has to offer—big round boobs that make you want to sink your teeth into them. And all-natural, might I add. Along with this, I gave myself a perfect hourglass shape: that bootylicious bottom guys and girls stare at

every time I walk down the street and hips so curvaceous I make bystanders fantasize about gripping them from behind.

Pulling my long blond hair up into a ponytail, I lean forward, bite my lip, and throw my Lure out at Dick. “Oh, Dan... I’m sure we can come to some sort of agreement. I think five thousand would be more reasonable for the amount of professionalism I can offer.” My eyes roll down toward the underneath area of his desk.

I can typically get just about anyone to want to fuck me with my looks, but using my succubus Lure guarantees it. It’s almost a form of brainwashing, if you will. Anyone who gets caught in my Lure ends up drooling over me like a dog over a steaming seared steak.

But for some reason, it isn’t working on Dan.

“The price ain’t negotiable. And you’re a first-timer. Don’t know how you managed to find me, but ya did, and now you gotta prove yourself before we can discuss negotiating your pay.”

I’m a bit taken aback; my Lure always works—well, almost always. Some fae are immune to it. I won’t go into detail about all the different demons and faeries that can escape my bittersweet touch, but it’s obvious Dick here appears to be one of them. I should have known walking in here. His office, being in the middle of Butt Fuck Nowhere—all right, the town’s called Jormane—looks like something one might find in the poorest neighborhoods of big nearby cities.

Some days, I miss the big city, but I spent my last thirty years working in New York City, and I figured it was time for a change. Besides, thirty years is pretty much the maximum period of time I can go pretending to be human. No matter how much skin product someone uses, or how regularly they exercise, no one can look the same age for *that* long. My cover? I always give myself the body of a thirty-year-old. That way, I can pass as someone in her twenties and also pass as a hot forty-year-old. On paper, once I’ve reached my late forties, it gets to be a bit suspicious. And unless I want to live in the shadows as the vampires do—without money, identification, or housing—I have to keep resetting the clock, along with my body.

At some point, I’ll make my way back to the big city. I’m considering San Halos, which is about an hour from here and is known for its large fae population, but we’ll see. I think I’ll lay low for a while.

Pushing my tongue against my cheek, I gaze around Dan’s office, wondering how long I’ll survive this small-town life. His floorboards are uneven and split in certain areas, and the large blindless window behind him is so smeared with greasy handprints you’d think this space, having likely never been cleaned, used to be a daycare.

Dick chews loudly as bits and pieces of his crispy cream doughnut sprinkle out onto his desk and into his mug of coffee. “Take it or leave it, lady.”

If I had something else to fall back on, I’d leave it. Especially given that people who pay two thousand dollars to have someone killed are often involved in gangs or drug trafficking. It’s a risky business, and if you want it done right, you want a professional handling the case. That means whoever put in the request is desperate to get rid of someone. Should I feel bad? Maybe. But I don’t, and here’s why—if someone is willing to pay such a cheap price to have someone taken out, it means they’re desperate, and when someone is desperate, they’ll go to almost any length to get what they want.

So at the end of the day, my mark should be thanking me.

If I don’t do the job, someone else will... likely violently. What I offer is way more humane, and quite honestly, a privilege. Who wouldn’t want to meet their fate in the middle of the most amazing sex of their life?

Besides, I’m starving. If I don’t eat soon, I’ll become depleted of energy, and I’d much rather get paid to feed.

Breathing in the stench of cigarette and stale doughnut, I close my eyes. “All right. What’s his name?”

“All right there on the paper, sweetheart.”

He doesn’t even bother looking up at me. Instead, he wiggles a slimy finger at the poorly printed sheet of paper and takes a sip of his coffee.

“Has this circulated?” I ask.

Sighing, he slams his coffee mug down. From underneath his thick bushy eyebrows comes another flat-lidded gaze. “Lady, does this look like an interrogation room?”

See? A dick.

“I like to stay informed,” I say. “I want to ensure I do this right—”

“Just kill the man, okay? Here.” He slides me a burner flip phone. “Take a picture of the body, bring it back, and you get paid. Do you need me to write you a step-by-step guide? ’Cause I charge extra for that.”

Was that supposed to be a joke? Because it wasn’t funny.

Snatching the piece of paper and the phone, I stand, the rusted chair under me catching one of the cracked floorboards. “I’ll have it done by tomorrow night, and I expect payment in cash.”

He nods absentmindedly and takes another sip of his coffee.

There’s no point arguing with a man like Dick. For his own sake, I hope he has my money by the time I get back. Without a word, I step out of his office and slam his door behind me. At the same time, the handle tears right off and a huge cloud of dust explodes over my head.

Staring at the rusted door handle in my hand, I smile. This is exactly why people like Dick shouldn't make people like me angry. No one wants an immortal with super strength as an enemy.

Chapter 2

Staring at the sheet of paper in my hands, I sweep the dozens of empty coffee cups off my passenger seat and drop my new phone. This ten-year-old Honda Civic might be nothing like my old BMW, but it gets me from point A to point B. Besides, Civics are reliable and it was the best car available on the lot—the only lot known for selling vehicles without asking questions. I might have a new identity, but forking up fifty grand for a nice ride is a sure way to get the authorities involved. I’m biding my time. Once I get a front business up and running, I’ll be better equipped to start laundering my cash.

This hunk of junk might not be as comfortable as the luxury vehicles I’m used to, but it’s not like I drive all that often. At night, I prefer to fly, even though it’s against the law for people of the Underworld to reveal their true selves to feebles, or as feebles call themselves, humans. If I get caught flying, the Council of Elders will send people after me.

That’s *if* I get caught. I’ve been doing this for centuries, and they have yet to catch me.

I stare at the slip of paper. Although the ink is faded and the text is difficult to read, the information is all there:

Name: Ross Xtreme

Okay, it’s clear that’s some sort of street name. What a dork. I’ll be able to find the guy, but that goes to show you how unprofessional Dick is. He shouldn’t be accepting requests without receiving full legal names.

Date of birth: Unknown

Areas spotted: Trinity, King Street, Industrial Avenue

Under the text is a blurry image of a man wearing a blue baseball cap. At the front of the hat is a logo of some kind... A crown perhaps? In the picture, he’s reaching for his ear, and on his left forearm is a tattoo of a chain. It’s ugly as fuck, but who am I to judge?

Trinity... that’s the town’s main nightclub. It isn’t much, but a lot of young

people go there to party on weekends. As luck would have it, it's Friday.

I set the key in my ignition and start the car. It rumbles a bit longer than I'd like, but the engine turns over. Grumbling to myself, I stiffen my back and stare at my bright blue eyes in the rearview mirror.

"Six months... maybe a year," I tell myself, "and you'll be rolling in money again."

Rolling in money is an understatement. In New York City, I owned a million-dollar condo, three cars, and a motorcycle. A bit much? Maybe. But I'm a thousand years old. I need toys and pretty things to keep my life interesting.

I scan over the other two locations: King Street and Industrial Avenue.

This information is pretty much useless. Chances are the guy was spotted doing a drug deal once or twice, and there's no guarantee he'll be going back to either of those locations. I'll check them out if nothing turns up in Trinity, but I'm certain I'll get all the information I need tonight.

All I need is a hot outfit to get this job done.

And that... I have.

Starting a new life might mean giving up my assets, but clothes and weapons will continue to follow me wherever I go. Pushing the gearshift into drive, I speed through the streets of Jormane and make my way to my temporary home.

As I park alongside the road, dozens of eyes turn on me. Although not as dangerous of a neighborhood as some in the Big Apple, this place isn't a gem, either. Litter decorates the lawns as if someone placed it there on purpose to cover bare patches of grass. Some of the townhomes have interlock, and I wish they didn't. Weeds have popped up so far through the cracks it's hard to tell there's interlock paving in the first place.

One old man steps out of his slanted house and makes his way toward his dying garden. With trembling hands, he waters it, and when he catches me staring through my passenger window, he pulls his upper lip back to reveal a set of sharp teeth. To everyone else in the neighborhood, the guy looks like a poor schmuck trying to make the best of a shitty situation.

But to me—being fae, or as some fae-haters like to call me, a demon—I see who he truly is.

A Crimmus demon.

They aren't worth much in the sense that they're powerless. His red, hideous skin gives him away, although through the eyes of a feeble, he's simply an old man. Crimmus demons may be strong and immortal, but I'm stronger, smarter, and more powerful.

They don't scare me.

Not much scares me these days, aside from insects. Despite having traveled to various dimensions and planets full of strange-looking creatures, I can't stomach the little bastards. I'd rather face an entire coven of vampires than have to walk into a dark room filled with spiderwebs.

With a swing of my upper body, I pull myself out of my little Honda Civic and flash the Crimmus demon my set of fangs. It's enough to make him snap his head sideways and focus on the weeds in his garden. With my three-inch heel, I kick my car door shut and make my way to my apartment building. It's the only one in town and stands tall with a total of ten stories.

Taking it all in—the chipped bricks and the broken windows—I can't help but feel like I'm staring at one of New York City's offspring. Maybe in a few years, they'll add more floors and it will look like an actual apartment building instead of a runt.

As I make my way to the elevator, a few other residents glance sideways at me as if trying to figure which celebrity I am. I have that effect on people, especially in a small town like this. That's what being a succubus is all about—luring people in, even when I'm not trying.

The second I step into the elevator, two middle-aged men clad in construction gear inch closer to me.

"Hey there," one of them says.

With my head held high and aviator glasses still on, I stare straight ahead. "Not happening."

His lips make a sticky sound behind me, like he's trying to taste my perfume. I ignore him, waiting for the elevator to reach their floor. It does at last, a soft dinging sound resonating around us.

Unsurprisingly, neither one of them steps out.

Rolling my eyes, I stick my leather boot between the doors before they close. "Whose stop is this?"

Nothing.

This isn't the first time men try to follow me to where I'm going, and it won't be the last.

Sighing, I spin around and slap a hand on my curvy hip. Their jaws immediately go slack.

Behind me, the door goes to shut again, and I kick a leg backward.

"Hello, boys."

The man on the right wipes a line of drool off his chin.

"Do either of you know where I can find the nearest bar? I'm just dying to wet my... throat."

This time, the man on the left swallows hard, a loud gulp echoing

throughout the elevator.

“Um...” he stammers. “Yeah. There’s Peterson’s Pub right ’round dat corner over there.”

He points at nothing.

Smiling, I tilt my head. “Why don’t you both meet me there in... oh, I don’t know, twenty minutes?”

Grins stretch their faces so fast it looks like their cheeks are being yanked by invisible wires.

When they don’t budge, I tilt my head forward and give them both a full up-and-down look over my sunglasses. Wiggling a finger in the air, I say, “I expect you both to get cleaned up, first.”

They nod briskly, staring at me like obedient dogs. I’m about to tell them to get a move on when they charge for the door at the same time.

“Louis, watch it!”

“You watch it, man.”

They elbow each other, trying to get through the door, so I do what any Good Samaritan would do—I press my heel into the one nearest to me and apply a bit of pressure.

Being a succubus, a bit of pressure is like pointing a garden hose at a freshly seeded lawn and having pressure come out at 3000 psi. With a yelp, both men go flying out of the elevator and tumble atop each other in the hallway of the third floor. The thickest of the two smashes his head into the drywall, creating a dent.

“Whoops,” I say, placing a finger over my plush lips.

He rubs the back of his head and looks toward me, but the doors close in the nick of time.

“Fucking idiots,” I say.

The elevator continues up to the tenth floor and opens with another ding. I make my way to apartment number 1026, which is conveniently located at the far back corner. It’s also the only room with a decent patio, hence why I chose it.

I walk into the stench of feeble but remind myself that I won’t be here long. Besides, I don’t have much longer before the tenant comes back. Two days ago, which coincidentally was also the same night I flew onto her balcony and forced my way inside, the tenant agreed to take a little vacation. Five grand in cash will get most people to leave their home for a few days, and Calla was no exception when I offered her the envelope. I may or may not have made the offer after pleasuring her for hours, but that’s irrelevant. She’d have taken the money and left anyway.

I’d say that was pretty fucking generous of me, given that I could have

sucked her dry and dropped her body in a river. But those days are far behind me. It's taken a few centuries to move past my anger and to control my powers, but I'm finally here.

Being a hired hitwoman is pretty new, too.

When I moved to New York City, I found myself patrolling the streets at night, hoping to find someone worth feeding off of. The problem with hunting down feebles is that you never know whether or not they're innocent. And feeding off fae, well... it isn't as fun. Don't get me wrong, I'll choose fae over nothing, but feebles have a certain *je ne sais quoi* to them. Their mortality and zest for life give their energy that extra kick I crave so much. Maybe that, and the fear.

March 2, 1987.

I'll never forget the date. It was the first time someone offered me cash to take someone out, ultimately kickstarting my career as a hired hitwoman.

It's a fulfilling career because everybody wins. My mark—who is destined to get killed, if not by me then by someone else—dies a beautiful death. And me? I get paid and I get laid.

God, I love my job.

Chapter 3

I check the lock once, twice, and then a third time. The act itself might be a bit of a compulsion, but anyone else in my shoes would do the same thing. This old trunk of mine has over a million dollars in cash waiting to be spent, and that doesn't even include the sale of my condo. Instead, I had Ouru take my sale money to pay up my century-old debt and to ensure he'll continue to provide me his services.

By services, I mean identity changes whenever I need them. He makes me disappear and creates a new identity for me on paper. It was easier to get away with shit way back when, but the moment they created photographic identification in 1876, things got a bit more complicated for me. Fortunately, that's when I met Ouru. He is one of a kind, with wrinkled skin pulled back in a ponytail and a skeletal body that makes him appear emaciated. He isn't—that's just what it is to be a Weizar demon. There aren't many of them left on this planet, which is unfortunate. They're all about peace, so much so that they're often referred to as the "Buddha demon"—two words that should never be used together.

He never asks for money, which I may have taken advantage of, but all of that ended when I gave him half a million dollars. The rest of my cash, well, that's all job-related.

So now, the plan is simple: as soon as I can get a bit of cash flow going, I'll start my front business and buy myself a real house again. Purchasing a house with cash isn't the easiest thing to do, but my Lure can get almost anyone to shut their mouth... or open it; it all depends on what I'm looking for.

The hard part is building my credit. All right, it isn't hard; it's time-consuming and I'm not a patient person.

Why does the twenty-first century have to be so difficult?

Sighing, I make my way over to my oversized luggage bag, reach inside, and pull out my laptop along with a warm Red Bull. If there's one thing I learned

about staying in people's houses, it's ensuring I have access to their internet. On Calla's coffee table is a sticky note with her Wi-Fi password: OrangeAT91, whatever the fuck that's supposed to mean.

I connect, launch my VPN, and get cracking.

It's amazing what you can dig up on people these days, particularly when you use an open-source operating system like Linux and you know what you're doing. I crack my Red Bull open, lean back, and place my laptop on my lap.

After ten minutes of clicking and research, I find what I need, which explains why this mark is so damn cheap. This is like taking candy from a baby—a sleeping baby who has never eaten candy before.

Ross Xtreme:

Real name: Ronny Echkinson.

Charges:

- 1) Aggravated assault with a weapon
- 2) Larceny
- 3) Drug possession

Age: 42

Prison time: 6 years

If I'm reading this right, the dude got out of prison last week. He must have pissed off quite a few people to attract a hit. I don't document any of this. Rule number one? Never leave a trace. If someone were to ever get a hold of my laptop, despite all the protective measures I've put into place, they'd find nothing. I'd be a moron to keep a Word document full of information on my murder victims.

My VPN protects me, along with Calla, being that I'm borrowing her internet. What a lot of people don't realize is that internet providers keep track of internet browsing history: websites visited, time spent on them, and even geographical locations.

Thanks to my trusty VPN, I'm logged in through France with a different IP address.

I chug the rest of my drink, place my empty down, and make my way over to my travel luggage. From it, I extract my favorite skintight black dress with an open back, along with my three-inch gold heels.

I'm betting Ross is going to be at Trinity tonight, and if he isn't, someone will know where he is. While I could use brute force to get what I want, I'd prefer not to make enemies in this town.

I slip into my dress and heels, grab my case of makeup, and make my way over to Calla's bathroom. I plug in her straightener and stare at myself as I wait for it to heat up.

It's a strange feeling to look at a reflection that's different from the one you've known for the last thirty years. Changing identities isn't easy. It's downright exhausting and painful, but it has to be done. Leaning forward, I purse my lips and apply a thick layer of red lipstick.

"Lucky for you, Ross, I'm your hitwoman."

Smiling, I allow my true self to come through—black horns, long silver-white hair, icy blue eyes, and claws so sharp I have to avoid making a fist. On either side of me, I expand my black leathery wings, filling the entire bathroom. This is my fae form, my true self that's remained intact ever since I was young. This is also the last sight Ross will see before I suck out his life force, and while to anyone else it may be terrifying, my reflection brings me comfort.

I lick my lips, my fangs poking out on either side of my tongue, and kiss the air in front of me.

"Nice to see you again."

Chapter 4

Compared to one of New York's nightclubs, Trinity is a joke. That said, I shouldn't make fun of small-town culture. The fact that Jormane even has a nightclub to begin with is pretty impressive.

With my leathery wings folded behind me, I crouch at the edge of Jormane Inn's rooftop. It's one of the tallest buildings in the city with at least twenty levels, which makes it the perfect place to land on at night. It's also conveniently positioned a block away from Trinity, making it a fantastic vantage point.

Below, young partiers enter the club. The bouncer, who appears to be a social magnet more than security staff, chats with people as they walk by. What's up with him? Why does he look... friendly? Where's the menacing scowl, the big muscles, and the accusatory finger? And why isn't there a lineup?

Oh, right... Small town.

I've spent so long in the big city that I forget how things work in places like this.

Overhead, the moon peeks through a thick layer of clouds, causing a white glow to shimmer off my pointed claws. There may not be thousands upon thousands of city lights illuminating the sky, but there's something charming about Jormane. Sure, it's a little rough around the edges... but for the most part, people seem happier.

I close my eyes, listening to the city's hum—car tires rolling across the pavement, car doors slamming shut, people laughing, a few people shouting, and the faint whistling of a breeze.

It's so quiet I wonder if maybe I've fallen asleep.

A burst of loud laughter catches my attention, and I gaze below at a young couple entering Trinity. Behind them, a group of guys wearing bandanas, baggy pants, and thick chains around their necks follow the couple inside. The bouncer glances sideways at them but doesn't stop them.

That's my cue.

I blast my wings, propelling off the edge of the rooftop. I freefall down the twenty-some flights, a rush filling me in an instant. Right before I crash face-first in the back alley, I expand my wings again to break my fall.

God, I love that rush.

With my head held high, I walk around the building, down the sidewalk, and toward Trinity's front doors. The moment I get closer, the bouncer's eyes roll my way. I smile at him, and it looks like his knees buckle.

"H-hi there," he says.

"Hey," I say nonchalantly.

"First time here?" he asks.

Again, I smile. "Sure is. Any pointers?"

He scratches the back of his head and gives me a shy look. "Um, nah, not really. Just have fun, and, um, you're always welcome to come out here if you smoke or want some fresh air or something."

I wink at the guy and brush past him. Inside, blue and purple lights flash across the walls and the floor as loud techno-pop shakes the club. People dance, some more than they probably should, while others lounge around in booths with drinks in their hands.

The lighting in here might make it difficult to spot this Ross Xtreme dude, but I'm not worried; I always get what I want. I make my way over to the bar where a few lonely guys watch me approach. I avoid eye contact; the last thing I want is to be shooing drunk guys off of me while I'm on duty.

The bartender—a young man in a slick purple suit—approaches the bar opposite me and leans forward. "What can I get for you, sweetheart?"

Sweetheart? You have no idea who you're talking to, pal.

I lean in, my breasts resting atop the shiny countertop, and point in the general direction of his liquor bottles. "Whatever's good. Surprise me."

This seems to please him. He pulls away fast like a kid being told they can draw on the walls and starts mixing different liquids. As he pours, I turn to the guy closest to me—a trucker with a red hat and a gray hoodie that looks like it should've been washed last month.

"Hi there," I say.

He grunts and swats the air as if to say, *Not interested.*

I lean in closer, my stool scraping the floor under me, and reach for his arm. At first, he flinches like he's about to elbow me in the face, but I don't give him the time to get angry.

Instead, I project my Lure onto him.

It takes a split second to kick in, and he turns toward me with a goofy smile on his face.

“Oh, um, hi there, miss. Sorry, I didn’t realize—”

I stroke his forearm, my Lure in full force. “Don’t worry about it. Say, do you know a lot of people around here? I’m looking for something.”

“I—um,” he stammers. “Yeah, I guess I do. Who you lookin’ for?”

I lean even farther, my breasts now grazing the sleeve of his shirt, and move my lips up to his ears. “Ross Xtreme.”

He lets out a scoff and shakes his head. “Lady, you got me mistaken for the wrong guy. I’m not into that kinda stuff and I’m not getting involved, either.”

I smile, now drawing circles on his arm. “I think for me, you’d make an exception, wouldn’t you?”

“For you...” he breathes, looking like he’s on the verge of face-planting into the bar.

“Here you go,” says the bartender, sliding a fancy cocktail up to my hand. “Something special for a pretty lady.”

I fight the urge to roll my eyes. “I would’ve been happy with tequila, but this is fine, too.”

He looks bummed out, as if I told him he sucks at arts and crafts. Not that his feelings matter right now. What’s important is that I find information on this Ross guy. I turn to the trucker again.

“What’s your name, big guy?”

“M-Mike,” he says.

As his dark eyes aim down toward my cleavage, I poke a finger under his chin and raise his head. “Focus, Mike. Where can I find the person I’m looking for?”

“God...” he breathes. “You’re so beautiful.”

“Where?” I ask again, holding back my anger.

“I wish I could tell you,” he says. “But I got no idea. Like I said, I’m not into that stuff. I mean, I know a guy. A buddy o’ mine. He might know. If you give me a minute, I’ll call him.” He lights up, then struggles to reach for something in his pocket. “Yeah... Gimme a second.”

“Thank you, Mike, but that won’t be necessary.” I abruptly stop projecting my Lure, slap a ten-dollar bill on the bar top, twirl off my bench, and move on to the next lonely guy sitting at the opposite end of the bar.

With a rounded back, he sits on the corner stool in silence, watching a hockey game on the big screen above the bartender’s head. His skin, a dark brown, lights up every few seconds as the blue and purple lights make their way around the club. The music is so loud that you can’t hear any of the low-volume commentary coming from the TV, but this doesn’t seem to faze him. He sips on his beer, rubs his bald head, and slams a fist on the bar when one of the players

misses a shot.

Without a word, I throw my Lure at him and sit onto the barstool next to him. He immediately stops staring at the TV and turns to look at me. “Oh, hi there. Um, hi. Can I get you a drink?”

I wink at him and raise my fancy cocktail to say, *I’m good, but thanks for the offer.*

His stare lingers like he’s trying to read my mind.

I love how my Lure turns grown men into mindless baboons. Women, too. Only they’re a bit more graceful about it.

“I’m looking for someone,” I say. “You think you can help me with that?”

He nods fast. “I’d love to. Yeah, of course. Anything.”

Just as I did to Mike, I bring my lips up to his ear, and his entire body shivers. “Ross Xtreme.”

When I pull away, he remains silent. He looks confused with his uneven brows and bared gummy teeth—a look that doesn’t do him any favors.

“Do you know him?” I ask.

He shakes his head. “Sorry, miss—”

Something cold suddenly touches my wrist and I flinch. Next to me stands a woman with red hair, gray eyes, and skin so white you’d think she was a ghost. Yet it’s clear she isn’t because I can smell her.

She smells like death, which means one thing—she’s a vampire. Her high cheekbones are a pretty obvious clue, too.

She observes me with her light eyes, her cold clammy grip still wrapped around my wrist. I want to shove her off me and tell her to keep her disgusting corpse fingers to herself, but by the way she’s staring at me, it’s obvious she has some kind of influence around here.

It’s probably best to see how this plays out rather than jump straight to violence.

“Girl on girl,” says the dark-skinned man. “That’s hot.”

“Shut up,” says the vampire.

He takes another sip of his beer and turns back to face the hockey game.

“This isn’t your territory,” the vampire hisses at me.

“Excuse me?” I say. I’m about to break every single one of her fingers to make her let go, when she jerks her head sideways and glances at three large tables in the far-right corner of the club. Around them are men and women dressed in fancy high-end clothes. Around their necks and wrists are shiny jewelry, and the majority of them are as white as this woman, resembling glow-in-the-dark bowling pins at the end of a bowling lane.

Vampires.

Fucking great.

They're like goddamn cockroaches. No matter which city I end up in, there they are, stirring shit. There's a reason fae refer to them as the mafia. While the Council of Elders may legally be in charge of anything nonfeeble, vampires tend to run things under the radar.

The other problem with vampires is that they're like packs of wolves. If you piss one off, their entire fucking coven wants you dead. So the last thing I want is to disrespect a vampire.

"This club belongs to us," the vampire says. Her eyes glimmer a shade of red and she licks the tip of her right fang. "We've noticed you poking your head around our club, looking for information." She glances toward her gang again, and I follow her gaze. Like wolves, they all look hungry for blood.

"I'm looking for a bit of information. That's all," I say begrudgingly. "Not looking for any trouble."

"We don't give a shit what you're looking for," she says. "Fae aren't welcome in our club."

My jaw drops and I almost burst out laughing. Not because any of this is funny, but I feel like an idiot for having assumed that Jormane would be any different from New York. Vampires are greedy motherfuckers, always wanting to own the nightclubs.

I raise my hands in surrender. "All right, sorry. I'm new to town, and I had no idea."

She sucks on her fangs, her icy stare making me feel like a fresh meal. I slide off the barstool and peel her fingers off my wrist. "Tell your little crew they can relax. I'll stay away from Trinity."

Saying nothing, she watches me as I leave the club instead. I'm beyond pissed off that once again, vampires dictate where I can or can't go, but there's nothing I can do about it. When it comes to vampires, violence isn't the answer. Even if I somehow kill a dozen of them, another dozen will come hunting for me.

They just aren't worth it.

I storm out of the club, grinding my teeth.

"Hey, hey, gorgeous," says the bouncer from earlier. "You coming to have a smoke with me?"

I force a crooked smile. "Sorry, man. I don't smoke. That shit's bad for the lungs."

He nods slowly, lighting the tip of the smoke in his mouth. He sucks in hard, then releases, a cloud of white circling his head. "You heading out already? You coming back tomorrow?"

I stare at the sky and sigh. “Not unless someone kills all the cockroaches.”

He doesn't answer, maybe because I sound like I'm high. I adjust my leather jacket and walk away, my heels clicking against the sidewalk. When I reach the darkest alley I can find, I turn into it. Bending my knees, I blast my wings out on either side of me, then propel myself into the night sky.

Time for plan B.

Chapter 5

As I soar through the thin clouds, I gaze at the city streets below, trying to locate Industrial Avenue. King Street was the other street where Ross was spotted, but when I checked out the map, that street was located across town. I might as well check out what I'm closest to now.

I drop several hundred feet to get a closer look, my massive wings wavering as the wind sweeps underneath them. After a while, I spot it—Industrial Avenue. I know it's the right spot because I can see Hymark Corporation from here. It's the largest paper company in the state, with giant mushroom-shaped domes and massive tubelike vents constantly pumping out pollution.

Again, all a part of my research.

I float down to the sketchiest-looking area of Industrial Avenue—a small roundabout road with storage units, busted cars, and cracked streetlights. If I'm trying to find a drug dealer, what better place to investigate than an area that looks like it's inhabited by drug users. Maybe someone around here will have the information I'm looking for. Or, maybe I'll piss off the wrong person and get jumped.

Either option is fine by me. I have nothing better to do with my time on a Friday night, anyway.

I land behind a run-down storage unit with peeling paint and a missing light. My landing is quiet—a soft tick of my heels—and I immediately retract my wings.

If I didn't have the strength to crumble a brick with my thumb, I'd be a little sketched out walking this area alone at night. But unless I'm about to step into vampire territory, I don't give a shit who's out here.

The sound of my heels ticking spreads down the quiet street and up the garage doors of storage units. Something nearby rattles loudly, and out from an overflowing garbage bin comes a huge raccoon with a half-eaten burger in its mouth.

I continue down the road, hoping to run into some poor schmuck I can force an answer out of, when out from the darkness emerge two scrawny guys with sunken eyes, sticks for legs, and heads that look too large for their bodies.

“Well, aren’t you a pretty thang?” says the tallest of the two.

The shorter one sucks his teeth—all of which look rotten—and moves toward me with fidgety hands like he’s singing along to a rap song.

“What you doin’ all by your lonesome self out here?” the tall one asks, his Southern accent strong.

“I’m looking for someone,” I say, matter-of-factly.

“Oh, I bet you are,” he says, moving closer to me.

“That’s close enough,” I warn.

The shorter one lets out a laugh so abnormal I blink twice to ensure I’m not looking at a hyena. “Ya hear that, Tipps? She’s lookin’ for someone!”

Tipps, who I assume is the tall one, elbows his friend in the ribs and laughs along with him. “Ya think she’s lost her mind, Wes? I’m willin’ to share if you are.”

“No one’s sharing squat, assholes,” I cut him off. “You’re either going to tell me what I want to hear, or I’ll pull it out of you.”

Their laughing subsides, and Wes takes a step toward me with bony fists on either side of him. “Is that supposed to be a threat, miss? ’Cause we don’t take too kindly to threats.”

“Yeah, it’s a fucking threat, dipshit. Touch me and I’ll snap you like a twig.”

Tipps takes a stride twice as long as Wes, moving closer to me. He scrunches his nose at me as if I’ve insulted his entire family.

Why don’t people listen? I tried warning them politely.

“Listen here, ya little bitch—”

Before he can finish saying something I’m going to make him regret, I grab him by the throat and throw him as hard as I can. His body flies through the air, before bouncing on the street’s dimly lit street like a stone skipping on water. When he stops bouncing at last, he smashes headfirst into one of the storage unit’s garage doors, denting it right down the middle.

Wes turns to me with eyes protruding from his face.

“Oh, I’m sorry,” I say. “Was I not clear enough when I told you to keep your distance?”

He swallows hard—a loud gulp—and raises his hands in submission. “Yep, yep. You were clear. I don’t mean for any trouble, miss—”

“Too late,” I say, moving in on him. I grab him by the collar of his shirt and pull tight, his face plumping in an instant. He tries to swallow, but his Adam’s

apple gets stuck on top of my thumb. “Ross Xtreme,” I say. “Where can I find him?”

“I-I don’t know who that is, lady—”

I squeeze tighter and a blood vessel bursts in his left eye.

“Okay, okay!” he says, his strangled voice jumping two octaves. He slaps at my wrist, but I don’t let go. “I-I know him. I do.”

That’s better.

I loosen my grip and he reaches for his neck.

“Tell him I want to meet with him,” I say.

Still rubbing his throat, he looks up at me. “Now, why would I do that?”

I take one step toward him, slamming my foot down, and he squeals like a pig. “Okay, okay. He’s my dealer. Relax. I-I’ll call him now. But he’s gonna have questions, lady.”

I’m sure he will. Asking to meet up with a drug dealer out of the blue is going to raise some red flags. Luckily, I’ve already thought this through. I reach into the inner pocket of my leather jacket and extract a thick cash bundle of five thousand dollars. Smirking, I run a finger through my bills, smiling as the smell hits my nose. “Tell him I’m interested in buying.”

Chapter 7

The sound of tires squealing echoes down the dark, damp street before a black Escalade pulls up. It comes at full speed, almost as if the guy driving it is purposely trying to intimidate me. What he doesn't realize is that I could wrap one of his tires around his neck if I wanted to.

Fucking loser.

He comes to a full stop, the smell of burning rubber intoxicating my nose, and lowers his black tinted window. I'm about to comment on how anything that dark is illegal, and how he's an idiot for taunting the police, considering he's fresh out of jail, but I keep my mouth shut.

As the window goes down, a white face with an unkempt brown beard appears from inside the darkness of the Escalade. The man stares at me, his eyes brown, almost black, and gives me a full up-and-down look. Above his left eye is an eyebrow piercing—a small silver loop—that hangs loosely, as if toddlers have made a game of tugging on it. His nose, a square brick, looks too big for his face, yet it oddly suits him. He jerks his head sideways and says, "Get in."

And there's the invitation I was hoping for.

I stroll in front of his car, walking slowly to allow his bright headlights to accentuate the hotness of my ass, and open his passenger door. He gives me a flat-eyed look that says, *I don't have all day, woman.*

Grabbing the open door, I pull myself up into the raised Escalade.

"Lift kit?" I ask.

He ignores me.

"Looks good."

Again, nothing.

"I heard you been askin' for me," he says.

His eyebrow ring sparkles as he inches his face closer to mine. His breath smells like the rest of his car—weed, cigarettes, and alcohol. With his left hand, he tightens his grip around the steering wheel, likely trying to look tough. It

makes the snake tattoo on his forearm expand along with his muscles, and when he catches me looking, he sucks on his front teeth.

“You gonna talk, or what? I ain’t got all day.”

“I’m looking to buy,” I say. I reach into my pocket, prepared to extract the cash he’ll never get his hands on, when he reaches inside his belt and pulls out a Glock.

He taps the barrel’s tip against his temple, winks, then aims the gun at me. “You think I’m stupid, lady? Who the fuck are you? My source tells me some blond bitch has been lookin’ for me. Goin’ around Trinity Nightclub and shit, askin’ about my name.”

How the hell does he know about that?

Vampires.

Those fucking shit stains.

I shouldn’t be surprised. Vampires have a habit of getting involved in drug rings.

When I don’t respond, he presses the tip of his barrel under my chin, forcing my head up. “You’d better get talkin’, bitch.”

“Ross,” I say sweetly, reaching for his forearm.

At the same time, I fill his entire fucking Escalade with my Lure.

His pressure reduces, and inch by inch, he pulls his gun away.

“I think we can work something out,” I say. “Don’t you?”

He stares at me, at his gun, and then out of his windshield. The poor schmuck has no idea what hit him.

“You seem stressed,” I say. “I can help with that.”

“I, um...” he stammers. “Fuck, you’re hot.”

I slide my finger down his forearm, up his bicep to his shoulder, and down his chest. He squirms in his seat as I slowly make my way down to the hard bulge between his legs.

“What do you say, Ross? Can we be friends?”

I squeeze his muscle gently and he throws his head back against the headrest.

He wants this more than anything, and the hornier he gets, the hungrier I become.

“Take off your belt,” I order.

Without hesitating, he tears at his belt, breaking the buckle. I yank it out, a high-pitched whistling sound filling the space around us, and climb on top of him. His bulge sits against my kitty and I thrust back and forth, driving him insane.

I grab his face, bite his ear, and lick his neck. “You want me, bad boy?”

“Fuck, yes,” he breathes.

He digs his fingers into my ass, and with his thumbs, raises my dress to my hips.

Fuck, I’m hungry.

I unbutton his jeans, tear his zipper down, and reach inside his boxer briefs. He’s hard and hot to the touch. I pull him out, stroking him as I slide my panties to the side.

“How bad do you want me, Ross?”

“B-b-bad,” he stammers. “So fucking bad.”

If I don’t hurry, he’ll become aggressive and try to take control. Right now, I’m in control, and that’s how I want it to stay. I sway my hips back and forth, teasing him as I squeeze his manhood in my palm. He lets out a shaky breath and rolls his eyes.

I feel my wetness against his jeans—with my Lure in full force, I want this as badly as he does. And as much as it’s killing me not to have started yet, I enjoy the sexual torture. It only makes the feeding that much more ecstatic.

He squeezes my ass again, begging me to pull him inside.

Gripping him, I raise myself onto my knees, place him into position, and slowly slide down. He fills me instantly—a silky slip—and we moan at the same time. I pull my body against him and he grabs my waist, pulling me up and down.

Every time he squeezes, I slide up and down, and he hits me deep. Condensation fogs the windows as we breathe heavily, our movements getting faster.

“Fuck, you’re hot,” he breathes, now thrusting himself even deeper inside me.

As I move up and down, my breasts bounce in front of his face, and a wet clapping sound fills the car. A primal urge runs through me, and without thinking, I reach for his seat-adjustment handle and force his seat down. He’s now on his back, and an excited smile pulls at his lips.

He wants to be dominated.

He fantasizes about it, and I’m his fantasy come to life.

I bring my fangs up close to his neck and graze his skin. “Who’s in charge here, Ross?”

“Y-y-you are. You are. Fuck. Yes.”

He pumps harder and my head almost hits the roof.

He feels so fucking good inside me. I don’t want this to stop.

I thrust harder and harder, causing the Escalade to jerk back and forth. To get a better grip, I dig my claws into the leather of his seat and a tearing sound

echoes around us. He doesn't notice. All he cares about is the ecstasy he's feeling.

"Holy shit," he breathes. "Holy shit..."

It's coming.

Fuck, yes.

I thrust as hard as I can, our moans filling the car, when he tenses up and releases himself inside me. Veins bulge out on either side of his temple, and he clenches his teeth so hard his jaw pops. I throw my head back and moan out as an unearthly ecstasy fills me, making me want to ravage him over and over again.

Without warning, my wings expand, shattering the windows on either side of me. I feel my horns emerge from my forehead, and on either side of my face, my long hair lightens to a silvery white.

The dreamy gaze that sat on his face mere seconds ago disappears in a flash. He stares up at me as if witnessing the apparition of Satan himself, and I smile down at him.

This is the best fucking part.

With my claws, I grab his face and pry his lips apart. I lower my lips to his and kiss him hard. As I pull away, a bright purple mist escapes his mouth and enters mine, energizing me instantly. It feels like a high-voltage electrical current coursing through my veins, rendering me capable of doing anything.

It's better than cocaine, ecstasy, heroin, and even all three combined.

As I suck out his life force, black squiggly veins spread across his face like ink spilling on a white canvas. His eyes, dark and full of life only seconds ago, have turned a cloudy shade of gray inside deep, purple bags.

I breathe in loudly, my lungs expanding to their full capacity. Beneath me, Ross stares at the ceiling, his eyes now glazed over and his dry pale lips parted a little.

With my hand on his chest, I pull myself off of him and readjust my dress. "Thanks for the fuck, Ross."

I reach under the driver's seat, where his Glock fell a few minutes ago, and grab the gun by the handle. I readjust his seat, bringing his dead body into a seated position. His head rolls forward, so I readjust it until it sits straight on his shoulders. Without hesitating, I cock the gun and place it into his right hand—the same hand he used to point it at me. Fortunately, rigor mortis only sets in after about two hours, so his fingers are nice and limp. I place his index finger on the trigger, aim the gun at his temple, and fire.

The blast makes my ears ring, so I stretch my jaw, waiting for the ringing to subside.

His brains, along with bits of bone and blood, explode out of the busted window. Some of it remains inside the car, but I don't give a shit. It isn't like I'm going to bother cleaning anything up. The whole point of this cover-up is to make it look like a suicide. If my hunch is right—if the vampires and Ross were working together—I'll be their first suspect if the guy turns up murdered.

But if he killed himself, well, that's a different story.

And those two guys I ran into? The ones who brought Ross here in the first place? I'm not worried about them, either. No one will believe a word they say.

I reposition the gun in his hand without bothering to wipe my prints off—I don't have any. I burned those off ages ago and continued to burn them off every time they tried to heal. After about two hundred times, they stopped healing. And my DNA? I'm not worried about that, either. Fae DNA has a habit of turning up inconclusive in feeble research.

Sucks to be them.

Reaching into the pocket of my leather jacket, I extract the burner phone Dick gave me and snap a picture of what's left of Ross Xtreme's face.

I slip the phone back into my pocket, reach above my head, and press the button next to the sunroof. It opens up smoothly, revealing a black clear sky full of sparkling stars.

Squatting on the passenger seat, I position myself at the right angle, aim my face at the sky, and throw myself out of the sunroof. My wings catch the air, and I launch myself toward the full moon.

Chapter 8

“I expect cash,” I say, tossing a sealed yellow envelope with the burner phone on Dick’s desk.

Without looking at me, Dick cuts the envelope with his thumbnail, reaches inside, and powers up the phone. When the picture pulls up, his lips form a pout and he nods slowly, almost as if impressed that a woman could do something so gruesome.

“How’d you—” he starts, but his black eyes roll up at me. “Right. No questions.”

Sighing, he reaches into a drawer near his feet, grunting as if the struggle is equivalent to a five-mile run, and brings back a fluffy envelope. He slides it across the desk and says, “Here.”

I grab the envelope full of cash, even though I don’t care about the money. I have plenty of cash waiting for me in my temporary apartment. That’s not the issue. What I’m after is respect and a name. I want to be Dick’s top player so I don’t have to worry about relying on my savings. Two grand isn’t going to cut it. In New York, I made thirty to fifty thousand on certain jobs.

Dick reaches for his stained yellow mug and takes a sip of his coffee. “Gotta say, Alyssa, you did this faster than I expected.”

Is this supposed to be his way of paying me a compliment?

I’ll take it.

I offer him a smug smile. He has no idea how good I can be. Maybe now he’ll give me a better job—

“Here,” he says, handing me a small slip of paper. “You’ve earned it.”

I reach for the paper and raise it to eye level. It’s a picture of a woman, maybe midforties, with perfectly combed blond hair and a sociopathic look about her. Under the image reads her name: Mary Lavington.

“Who’s this?” I ask.

Dick cocks a brow. “Your rule goes both ways. You don’t ask questions

about your job.”

I roll my eyes. “How much?”

“Four.”

“Grand?” I ask.

“Dollars,” he says sarcastically.

I clench my teeth. “Four thousand dollars? My last job was two. How is this an upgrade? Admit it—I’m the best hit person you have. I finished a job in less than twenty-four hours. Have any of your other employees done this? Come on, Dan. If you don’t value your employees, they’re going to walk out—”

“Then walk,” he says, his voice icy.

I’m a bit taken aback by this. I’m used to being well-respected and feared. Starting from square one after that isn’t an easy pill to swallow.

“This ain’t the Big Apple, sweetheart,” he says. “Or wherever it is you’re from. Ya seem like a New York kinda gal.” He reaches into his drawer, pulls out a metal case, and lights a cigarette. “We don’t have high-profile cases around here. We got a few bad seeds waiting to be dealt with. Don’t get me wrong... I’m glad you’re as good as you are. The Ross case should have been dealt with years ago. And this chick”—he points his cigarette at the slip of paper in my hand—“has been wanted for months. My best-payin’ client brought her to me.”

I can’t believe what I’m hearing. “You’re telling me this is the best job you’ve got for me?”

He nods. “This ain’t no lucrative business, love. The only competition you got is one other guy. Course, I can’t tell you who it is. But he’s the only hitman in town, and you already showed him up. I wish I could do better for ya, kid, I really do. But this is all I’ve got to offer you. Take it, or leave it. If you can’t handle the small jobs, then I suggest you get on outta here and head back to that big fancy city of yours.”

How am I supposed to respond to something like that? I came here for a quiet life, and I should have expected that there would be sacrifices to make. I can’t go back to New York. At least, not yet. Jormane is exactly what I need, and if that means laying low and having a more simple life for a while, then I guess I’d better suck it up and take what I can get.

He takes another sip of his coffee, and before even swallowing, sucks on the tip of his cigarette.

Well, that’s disgusting as fuck.

“So, what’s it gonna be, sweetheart? You in, or not?”

This is where I want to be right now, so it’s not like I have a choice.

Sighing, I crumple the piece of paper and stuff it into my pocket. “Yeah, whatever. I’m in the mood to do a woman, anyway.”

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Amazon Release Dates:

Mortal Blow (book 1): February 17, 2021 – [Pre-order on Amazon](#)

Lethal Blow (book 2): March 10, 2021 – [Pre-order on Amazon](#)

Fatal Blow (book 3): March 31, 2021 – [Pre-order on Amazon](#)

For a teaser preview of **Mortal Blow**, keep reading.

Chapter 1

“He’s getting away,” comes Jamieson’s rugged voice in my ear.

His English accent is sexy, but that doesn’t make us friends.

I press the little speaker in my ear and nod as if he can see me. He can’t, but I don’t give a shit. Right now, all I care about is my \$50,000 mark leaving the party.

This job is huge. I can’t mess it up. Besides, this evening gown wasn’t easy to get. If I don’t finish the job, threatening the store clerk’s life will have all been for nothing.

My mark’s name is Adam Shaw—a young billionaire who inherited daddy’s company and now makes his dollars off the backs of others. It’s my job to know about my mark, and even more so when it comes to a guy like Adam. Everyone knows him, which is why the payout is so damn big. To prepare for this, I’ve spent months researching everything I can about the guy, so I’ll be damned if he slips through my fingers because of some unforeseen situation.

“Don’t fuck this up, Alexis.”

I’m about to tell Jamieson to shut that rotten hole in his face, but he’s my boss. He can treat me however he wants if it means I get to pay my bills for another few months.

Adam Shaw exits the hall through the main entrance, his posture as stiff as a piece of plywood. He moves around like he owns the place... which, technically, he does. Still. It makes him look like a jackass. His hair, a clean shave on either side, is a yellow blond that almost looks transparent under the overhead lights. The top of his hair is combed back and gelled with something so organic millennials would probably line up for hours to get a good sniff of it.

“Have a great night, Mr. Shaw,” says one of the guards at the front.

Adam smirks back at him—an attractive smile that he’s totally practiced a thousand times in front of his overpriced mirrors. He wraps his black-sleeved arm around the stunning woman standing next to him.

She's the problem... she's getting in the way. The plan was to seduce Adam myself and take him home, but everyone knows that Adam Shaw's a playboy. I knew there was a possibility that another girl would get to him before I did.

While I rarely lose sleep if innocent feeblies get in the way—that's lingo for nonmagical people and admittedly derogatory—I do my best to avoid hurting anyone who isn't involved.

This girl isn't involved, and I don't want to hurt her, but I need to get the job done. Adam's closest bodyguard, Mo Thompson, left for a trip to the Bahamas two hours ago. The man replacing him is on the men's restroom floor, knocked out from the tranquilizer I injected in his neck.

Didn't see that coming, did ya tough guy?

Adam Shaw turns around, likely wondering where his trusted protector is, but it's obvious getting laid is more important than trying to figure out his bodyguard's whereabouts. That's Adam's downfall—he thinks he's untouchable with his guards, his security system, and his money.

What he doesn't know is that while he was celebrating his recent business achievement here, I hacked into his home's security system and deactivated everything.

Placing my glass of chardonnay down on one of the server's trays, I rush through tall marble columns and down a narrow passageway that leads to the side exit of the building.

This is my job.

I'm good at it.

Not only did I pull up blueprints for all of Adam Shaw's house, I also studied this conference center's entire architectural structure before doing my hair this evening.

My heels tick as I run, so I tear them off midway, my feet slapping against the cold floor. From a distance, I hear the sound of a car's beep, which is the exact sound made by the one and only sky blue Bugatti Chiron Adam owns.

Everyone knows it's his; no one else in the city drives a car that expensive.

That means he's about to get in.

Bolting around the side of the building, I charge straight toward his car. His engine rumbles and his headlights turn on, looking like two prison spotlights in the dark.

Shit.

I need to move faster.

Running as fast as I can, I lunge at his front hood. The surprise is enough for him to slam on his brakes, causing his shiny black tires to squeal across the pavement. My body smashes hard against his perfectly waxed hood, and in a

less-than-graceful posture, I roll up his windshield, over his roof, and straight into the air.

I knew what I was getting into, but that doesn't make the impact any less unpleasant.

My arm snaps and my left shoulder dislocates, but that's not what bothers me—I cringe at the sight of the tear in my dress that looks irreparable.

Son of a bitch.

Behind his car, I now lie flat on my back, his exhaust fumes polluting my lungs.

Around me, dozens of people gasp like a flock of seagulls circling a loaf of bread. One old man limps toward me in a hurry, the few strands of hair on his head holding on for dear life as he runs through an evening breeze.

“Oh my goodness... Are you all right, miss?”

Typically, I wouldn't have made such a drastic move to get my mark. My job is to remain as discreet as possible, and getting hit by Adam's car is enough to lead the police to believe I had a motive to take him out.

But I spent months preparing for tonight, and I'll be damned if some little Barbie doll keeps me from earning my \$50,000 paycheck. Jobs like these don't come around too often, and with how I've been managing my money lately, well... I could use the extra cash.

Turning my face away from the crowd, I snap my broken bone back into place and pop my shoulder into its socket.

“I'm fine,” I mumble, refusing to show the man my face.

“Are... are you sure?” comes his old, quivering voice.

While I appreciate the kindness, I can't be seen.

“I said I'm fine,” I hiss, and my succubus horns nearly tear out of my skull.

Adam jumps out of his car, his thick brows meeting over the narrow bridge of his nose. Instead of coming around back to check on me, he hurries to the front of his car and inspects for damage by delicately grazing his metallic baby.

Oh, how I'm going to enjoy tonight.

“What's wrong with you?” he snaps, now storming around his vehicle.

He must have found a dent.

Good.

Maybe I should have left my broken arm, well, broken. Would that have stirred up even an ounce of remorse in him? Should I pretend to be hurt? Should I cry?

Alexis Rayne doesn't cry.

In fact, I can't even recall the last time I genuinely cried, which is saying a lot given that I'm over a thousand years old. I'm the epitome of a succubus—

strong, dominant, and seductive.

He moves toward me, his features contorted so profoundly that I'm tempted to dig my claws around his hairline and pull back. Maybe a facelift will eradicate that hideous scowl of his.

Instead, I slap my hand on the trunk of his car and use it as support as I bring myself onto my feet. As I get up, I push a little harder than necessary on his car, causing his suspension to squeak. It pisses him off, which is what I was hoping for. I may be a powerful demon capable of snapping his neck like a twig, but watching him get all worked up is so much more enjoyable.

"What the fuck, lady?" he shouts.

My left eyelid flutters as I fight the urge to dig my claws into the metal of his car. As much as it would satisfy me, I'll never reveal my true self in front of feebles. If anyone finds out I'm fae—or a demon, as many like to call me—I'll be forced to get my identity changed once again, which is beyond exhausting.

Pushing my succubus self back inside, I stare him cold in the face.

"Are you okay, young lady?" someone asks.

"Did you see that?"

"How is she standing?"

"Are you okay?"

Impatient, I wave a hand at the crowd of people who remind me of crows around a dead carcass.

"I'm fine."

"Are you sure?"

"I said I'm—" but I cut myself short, feeling Red build up.

My new therapist tells me to call my anger Red. Apparently, that gives my anger a persona, which makes it easier for me to control. I'm also told I have a need to control things. When Red builds up, I risk being unable to suppress my demon self, and the last thing I need is for innocent bystanders to see me full-on succubus—sharp blue eyes, long platinum-white hair, black horns, and massive dragon-like wings.

If that ever gets out, I'll be done for. Jamieson's made it clear that he doesn't work with shadow dwellers—a term given to nonfeeble (fae, vampires, witches). Some shadow dwellers hate the term because it insinuates we should remain in hiding, but heck, I kind of like it. It's dark, mysterious, and sexy.

Jamieson doesn't know what I am, and he can't find out, either.

Inhaling a long slow breath, I calm my heart rate despite Adam Shaw's hateful gaze. He's shouting something, though I'm not listening. I don't give a shit what he has to say. His thick lips flap up and down and his hands wave in front of my face.

That's when I let it happen.

My Lure.

I smile at him, waiting for the tantrum to stop. Immediately, his big blue eyes soften and he stops talking, clears his throat, and tugs at his tuxedo's collar.

"I... um," he stammers. "I'm so sorry. How about I take you back to my place and get you all cleaned up? I'll replace your dress. I'll pay you. Whatever you want. You deserve the best treatment."

He stares at my chest, my lips, and then my eyes again.

Smirking, I raise my chin and stare back.

"Are you fucking kidding me?" comes a woman's shrill voice.

His date storms out of the car, slamming the door behind her, and marches straight toward me. Her dress, a silk red sheet held in place by two cordlike straps, accentuates her petite but curvy shape. The deep V-cut on her chest reveals two perfectly round, supple breasts that are most definitely natural.

Biting my lower lip, I take her all in.

"Who do you think you are?" she snaps, dropping her leather purse to the ground. She scowls, no doubt preparing to ream me out, but the moment she makes eye contact with me, her jaw snaps shut.

"I, um—" she mumbles.

Slowly, I scan her body with narrowed eyes, admiring the perfection in her curves. Beside her, Adam fidgets with his thumbs and clears his throat. Under his belt is a large bulge, which tells me that if I don't do this quickly, he might get aggressive and try to fuck me on the hood of his car.

It wouldn't be the first time that happened. If I throw my Lure at a victim for too long, they can't handle it and shit gets intense. I'd be lying if I said I minded it. At the end of the day, I'm more powerful than any feeble, so if fucking me hard is what gets them off, I'm willing.

You want me to devour you? I say in my mind.

I don't make a habit of talking to my prey when they're entranced, but in certain situations, it works wonders. They don't hear me, per se—it's more of a brainwashing technique than anything.

Tilting my head, I bite my nail. "I'm sorry about your car."

"No, no," Adam says quickly.

His date chimes in, her eyes never leaving my chest. "Oh, please. It's no problem at all. Why don't you, um, come with us? We'll get you... cleaned up."

This wasn't the plan.

Adam's the mark, not her. But I'm too far in, and if I plan to finish the job, I can't stop now. Besides, I don't want to stop now.

I'm too hungry.

I elevate my chin. “Well, what are you waiting for? Let’s go.”

Chapter 2

We don't even make it into Adam's bedroom.

The moment we step into his multimillion-dollar mansion, he grabs me by the waist and lifts me into the air. I wrap my legs around his body, feeling his bulging manhood against me.

You want me, bad boy?

"I fucking want you." He breathes hard like he's high on something.

Dragging the tips of my concealed claws against the back of his skull, I lick the side of his neck, tasting primal excitement mixed with crisp, high-end cologne.

"God, I want you," he says again.

This time, he grabs me by the back of my hair and forces my lips against his. His breath, hot and minty, fills my mouth as he slips his tongue inside.

He carries me into his living room, his lips never leaving my neck. The room is massive—easily the size of an exclusive shopping boutique—but I'm too preoccupied with what's going on to inspect the interior of his house. Besides, I already know what it looks like in here.

I could even tell you where he keeps his coffee mugs, or where his housekeeper stores her cleaning supplies, but those details are irrelevant.

All I care about is feeding.

He throws me onto his white leather couch, his chest heaving and the veins of his neck popping out. With legs crossed and my arms spread out on the backrest behind me, I watch him.

So pathetic, I think to myself.

He grunts a bunch of nonsense, then tears off his shirt and desperately tries to unbuckle his belt. At the same time, his date rushes to her knees in front of him, her cheeks as rosy as his.

They're so entranced by my Lure that they'll do anything for me—all I have to do is tell them what I want.

“Untie it,” I order, and the woman tears so hard on Adam’s belt that his hips sway back and forth. When it unclips, she yanks the entire thing out, the leather making a sharp hissing sound.

Smiling, I rub my neck, my chest, and my thighs. Although tempted to feed off both of these feebles at the same time, there’s a much better way to go about this.

Adam’s hungry eyes roll my way as his date reaches inside his briefs, cupping his bulge. While he may be enjoying her hot breath against him, what he wants is to be inside of me.

I get up, the sound of my heels echoing throughout his house. As I make my way around him, he watches my every movement like the pathetic dog he is. He closes his eyes and shudders when I drag my fingernails across his forearm, extracting speckles of blood.

He’s never wanted anything so badly in his life before.

I press my lips against his neck, his shoulders, and his back. Grazing his warm skin with my lips, I make my way back to his earlobe. “How bad do you want me, Adam?”

He’s too entranced to respond. Instead, he nods as thousands of goose bumps erupt all over his body.

In front of him, his date lets out a feminine moan as she teases him with her mouth. He swallows hard, his throat sticking, and stops breathing when I press my breasts against his back.

Adam swallows hard as I press my breasts against his back. Slowly, I wrap my fingers around his neck, feeling his heart pulsate in his carotid artery.

He wants to be dominated—most feebles do when I’m involved.

As I grab him around the throat, the sounds of wet kissing and slippery sucking fill the air around us and Adam rolls his head back. His date moans, her sounds rhythmically following his as she fills her mouth with him. She suddenly digs her fingers into his bare ass, and his pulse quickens.

“That’s it,” I breathe, my succubus fangs hovering close to his ear.

He swallows hard.

“What do you want, Adam?” I say.

“Y-y-you,” he stammers.

“Would you do anything for me, Adam?”

“Y-y-yes,” he moans. “I’d do anything for you.”

With fangs bared behind him, I press the tips of my claws into his neck but stop myself before I sever his head in front of his date. With how hypnotized he is, I could easily tell Adam to get a gun and blow his brains out. He’d do it, but what fun would that be? I’m hungry, and I’ll be damned if I waste a decent meal.

“I want you to do something for me,” I say.

“Anything,” he says over the sound of his date’s wet sucking.

“Sit down and watch,” I order.

He pulls himself out of his date’s mouth, moves to the couch like a robot, and sits down, his erection aimed at the ceiling.

The woman, seemingly confused, wipes her slobbery lips and glances up at me.

“Get up,” I order.

She does as she’s been told and stands up, her eyes glazed over.

Without allowing her to see my claws, I reach for her dress’s right shoulder strap and I slice through it. It slips off her shoulder like rainwater through a downspout and falls right below her right breast. It’s round, smooth, and her nipple is hard. With lips parted and cheeks as red as a poinsettia, she stares into me.

Staring back, I cut her left strap and her dress slips down her naked body, revealing a smooth belly, and goose bumps over her entire body.

“That’s better,” I say.

She wants to speak, but she’s too hypnotized to think.

“It’s okay,” I say, pressing a finger against her lips. “You don’t need to speak.”

Slowly, I lead her backward until her legs catch the sofa and she falls into a seated position.

“Lie down,” I say, and she lies across the sofa with one arm above her head and her legs slightly parted. I can hear her racing heart from where I stand. This woman has wanted nothing more than this in her entire life.

Smiling, I climb on top of her, my thigh slipping against her wet kitty. She breathes out hard, digging her nails into my back as I retract my claws and spread her legs apart.

I kiss her neck, her jaw, her erect nipples.

“What do you want?” I breathe, my tongue sliding down her abdomen.

“You,” she moans.

While I’d much prefer to play with my food before feeding, I don’t have the luxury of time. When I’m on a mission, my goal is to get in and get out—no pun intended.

With two flicking fingers, I tease her, but it’s obvious she can’t handle it. She grabs my hair, pulling my body closer to hers, and I turn my face sideways to spot Adam on the sofa, stroking himself.

“I want you to fuck me, Adam.”

I spread my legs and he grabs me by the waist. As he slips inside me, I slide

my fingers inside his date, warming them instantly. Curving my fingers, I hit the right spot and she arches her back and lets out a high-pitched cry—one that translates to, *Holy fuck, don't stop*.

I repeat this motion over and over again, reaching deep inside her as Adam fucks me from behind. My arm jerks back and forth, as do my hips, and the three of us move together so perfectly it feels choreographed.

“Faster,” she breathes.

I pump harder, as does Adam.

He feels fucking amazing, and for a moment, I forget that I'm working a mission. Sex as and with a succubus is a mind-blowing sensation that can only be described as euphoric. Those who have survived to tell about it often equate it to having sex on ecstasy... tenfold.

Adam thrusts hard again, my ass slapping against him, and at the same time, I push my fingers deep inside his date, curling them to hit the *spot*. She arches her back, wordlessly begging me for more.

With my teeth inches away from her neck, I get rougher about it, causing her supple breasts to bounce on her chest. I may not be a vampire, but sex brings out the most primal side of me. It takes everything in me not to hurt someone during sex. I need to consciously remind myself that my teeth and my claws are powerful enough to kill a feeble.

The biting and the tearing of skin are reserved for fae only.

She thrusts her hips as if trying to get me to go even deeper and digs her nails into the skin of my back.

“That's it”, I say, feeling it coming.

Behind me, Adam grunts with pleasure, his grip tightening around my waist, while under me, the woman screams so loud I'm forced to turn my head away. Our movements slow as the three of us experience unearthly euphoria... our bodies drenched in sweat and our skin hot to the touch.

When it's over, I slip my fingers out and smile down at the woman's red face. Her eyes roll up at me, but it's like she doesn't even see me, which is typically what happens after sex with a succubus—my victims fall into a drug-like state. She beams as if she's had sex for the first time in her life, but the joyous look on her face doesn't last long, and I know why—my true self is coming out.

After sex, I can't help it; my succubus can't be contained.

Out of my head come curved black horns, and out of my back, massive dragon-like wings. My long black hair lightens to a platinum white, and my blue eyes do the same.

The look of horror on her face makes me feel guilty, but I can't control my

urge to feed. Cupping her jaw with my claws, I lower my lips against hers and breathe in deep, pulling from her mouth an indigo purple mist. As it fills me, I'm energized.

There's no feeling in the world more satisfying than feeding. If I were to describe it, I would equate it to the feeling feebles might experience when I fuck them.

For her, however, my feeding causes the opposite effect.

Her skin lightens in color until it looks as though she's on the verge of decaying. Her eye sockets sink as squiggly black lines run across her skin, her neck, and her chest.

"What the fuck—" comes Adam's voice.

If I don't stop now, I'll kill her. But she tastes so goddamn good. I suck harder and harder as her cheeks begin to cave. I may have learned to control myself, but stopping midfeed isn't something that gets easier over time. Though I'm not proud of it, I've slipped up a few times in the last decade.

She isn't your mark, Alexis. Adam is.

Suddenly, I'm reminded that I have a real meal at my disposal.

Digging my claws into the sofa's cushion, I pull away. Her lifeless eyes roll into the back of her head as she falls into a comatose state. There's no telling when she'll recover. Sometimes, it takes hours, though I've seen feebles require several days for a full recovery.

What matters is that she won't remember any of this.

"What... What are you?" says Adam.

I turn around, my wings sweeping through the air. At the sight of my demon self, he stumbles backward, his skin blanched.

He stares at me, mortified, and before he has the chance to figure out what's going on, I throw myself at him. Our lips lock, and I inhale his life force. It fills me up, energizing me completely. When I finish feeding, his head rolls to the side and he gazes into nothingness.

Mission complete.

And holy fuck do I feel amazing.

I jump up with a bounce and make my way over to the small purse I dropped earlier in Adam's foyer. From it, I extract an earpiece and spy camera, which I tucked away en route to Adam's house. Jamieson doesn't get to see how I go about doing my business—all he gets to know is *when* I locate my mark and confirmation that the job's been done.

Turning the camera on, I crouch next to Adam's dead body and aim it at his face. Then, I spin my lip ring—a secret microphone—and say, "Target down."

"How'd you pull that off?" Jamieson says through my earpiece.

I turn off the camera. “How many times do we have to go over this?”

I’m being polite. We’ve talked about this many times, and what I want to say is, *Would you stop fucking asking me that?* I don’t ask him questions about who he wants taken out, and he doesn’t ask me questions about my methods. All he gets is a one-second glimpse of the dead body for confirmation.

“All right, all right,” he says. “Good work, Alexis. I’d say thank you, but I think you’re the one who should be thanking me.”

God, he’s such a jackass. What does he want? For me to climb on his lap and call him *Daddy*? Thank him for giving me such an incredible opportunity? I’m not that kind of woman. I was asked to do a job, and I did it. Sure, I want the money, but he needs me as much as I need him.

“Contact me when you have another job,” I say, and before he gets the chance to slide in another snarky remark, I twist my lip ring to turn off my microphone.

Chapter 3

I flick the syringe a few times to get the bubbles out and stick the needle into Adam's median cubital vein—the big blue vein inside his elbow. Inside this syringe is a lethal dose of heroin, which means when the cops find his body, they won't suspect foul play. Instead, they'll think he overdosed.

His date gets the second injection, but hers is microdosed. It's a tactic I've been using for several years now, and it hasn't failed me yet. Not only will she not remember who I am, but on the microscopic chance that she remembers a third party being present, well... her testimony won't be reliable. No one's going to trust a witness who was on heroin the night of Adam's death.

I stretch my neck to the side, a satisfying snap echoing across Adam's mansion.

"Look at this place," I say aloud. "You're one rich son of a bitch."

I glance over at Adam's lifeless body, knowing he isn't going to respond.

As I examine his house with curious fascination, I realize I could earn a lot more than \$50,000. Should I feel bad for robbing a dead guy? Of course not. He was an asshole. Besides, I'm a murderer. Being a thief on top of it won't make me any more of a criminal.

I cross his dining room and enter his kitchen, jealous of his enormous fridge.

A thing like that could fit hundreds of beers.

I'm about to make my way into his bedroom—the one place I know he keeps countless brand name watches—when I spot a bottle of 1952 Dragon's Tear whiskey. It sits enticingly, its rich golden hue shimmering beneath the kitchen's overhead light. The bottle is shaped like a dragon with an ornate tail twirling around its body.

That limited-edition whiskey sells for over \$60,000, but that's not what has me slack-jawed. What confuses me is that everyone knows that vampires own the distillery that produces this stuff, and they're uptight about who's allowed to

purchase it. So why does Adam have a bottle sitting in plain sight? It's been said that the alcohol isn't intended for feeble... they aren't even supposed to know about it. Some people have even said it was distilled using feeble blood.

I peer into the living room at Adam's colorless body, wondering if maybe my senses are off. As of late, they have been. Is he fae? He can't be. I've been following him for months.

I know my mark, but... what if I missed something?

Closing my eyes, I inhale a deep breath.

There's no scent of fae whatsoever here, but something's up. Without thinking, I snatch the bottle and make my way upstairs and into his bedroom. Placing the bottle of whiskey down on his mahogany dresser, I slide my fingers across the very same box I've seen him open numerous times during those nights I observed him from his bedroom window.

His watches.

Adam may have been a dick, but he wasn't a moron. This box isn't simply a storage box—it's a safe, which means I can't take it and run. As I stare at it, wondering how I might go about taking the watches without leaving any indication of a robbery, I catch a glimpse of myself in his bedroom mirror.

My torn dress clings to my body, and my long black hair drapes down my back. While I may be beautiful on the outside, I'm still adjusting to my new appearance. Taking a step toward the mirror, I reach for the pale skin of my cheek and stare into my sky blue eyes.

I've changed appearances so many times I'm losing sight of who I am.

Three years ago, when I became Alexis Rayne, I let go of my wavy blond hair and green eyes along with a city I'd come to think of as home. I lay in bed for weeks following my morph. Despite how many times I've tried to explain to my best friend, Draxomus (I call him Drax), that morphing my physical appearance takes an immeasurable amount of strength, it's as if he thinks I'm exaggerating, and that no matter what happens, I'll always be able to change my appearance, my name, and my town.

While he may not have minded uprooting his entire life and starting anew in a different city, it was one of the hardest things I've had to do in over a century.

I stare at my reflection, thinking back to my old life and my old home tucked away on Aspen Private at the center of Jormane—a small town on the outskirts of San Halos. As I tour my home within my memories, it isn't my rich red oak flooring I think about, nor my \$10,000 leather sofas.

What lingers in my mind are colorful crayons spread out across the kitchen tiles, sketches posted on the refrigerator, a lunchbox sitting on the kitchen island,

and laughter bouncing off the walls as Mr. Mushroom prances around with a small sneaker in his mouth.

What I wouldn't give to go back in time.

Sighing, I turn away from the mirror, grab the bottle of Dragon's Tear whiskey, and crack it open. As I tilt it, the fluid slips down my throat, burning my insides, and a sense of relief washes over me.

I may be breaking my own rule by drinking on the job, but the job's finished, and the only thing I want is to *not feel* my pain. I want to forget.

I pace back and forth in Adam's bedroom as the alcohol burns my throat, focusing my energy on figuring out how to break through his safe without leaving evidence behind. I may not have fingerprints anymore—I burned them off in the late eighteen hundreds when investigators started using forensic science to identify criminals—but I'm a professional, and I refuse to leave any evidence that may cause suspicion. I've never been one to worry about my hair falling out; my succubus DNA always turns up inconclusive. Feebles don't realize it, but demons are often the reason so many murder cases become cold. Our DNA doesn't show up the way feeble DNA does, which makes it impossible to track us down.

As the alcohol swims through my blood and my inhibition fades, I stare at the safe full of watches.

Would it be so bad to smash it and run?

What do you care, Alexis? It's not like they'll trace any of this back to you. No one saw you come to Adam's house. You were careful. Besides, these watches, along with Jamieson's paycheck, could get you out of your shitty apartment.

Fuck it.

I crack my neck, form a fist, and smash the top of the small safe. The wood snaps and the metal of the box warps, leaving a space between the lid and the frame.

The joys of having super strength.

With my index finger, I widen the crack of the box until the lid snaps off. Inside are a red velvety material and six glistening watches—all of which look more expensive than Adam's car.

F. P. Journe.

Richard Mille.

Vacheron Constantin.

Holy fuck. These watches are worth thousands.

I slip my claws through each watch and shake my wrists until they slide down my forearms.

"Thanks, Adam," I mumble, grabbing the bottle of whiskey by the neck.

With a wobble in my walk, I head toward the bedroom window and pull at the latch. It doesn't open, which makes me feel like a total idiot. Am I *that* drunk? I tug again, and this time, something clicks.

The problem is that the window is still locked, which means the clicking sound didn't come from the latch.

The sound of someone clearing their throat resonates behind me.

I swing around, Adam's watches clinging against each other on my wrists, only to find myself standing face-to-face with a man carrying an automatic rifle. He stares at me from behind the gun's barrel, his eyes dark and menacing. His hair, a cool jet black, sits messily atop his head, matching the short unkempt scruff on his face. Black tribal tattoos run down his neck, his arms, and even his knuckles.

"Who the fuck are you?" he asks, a thick gangster accent rolling off the tip of his tongue.

I'm tempted to try to seduce him, but with how much alcohol I consumed, it might interfere with my powers. What the hell was I thinking? This is why I don't drink on the job. Shit can get messy.

He jerks his gun in the air as if to say, *Well?*

I could attack him and tear off his head, but I don't exactly feel like getting shot in the face, even if I'm immortal. So, I do the one thing I can think of. With the bottle of whiskey gripped in my hand, I dive headfirst through Adam's bedroom window. Glass shards explode all around me as I tumble from his second story, but right before I land in his perfectly trimmed courtyard, I spin my body around, expand my wings, and blast myself toward the full moon.

Mortal Blow

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