**Chapter 11: The Woman She's Chasing**  
💋 *"Almost spared him. Almost spared herself. Left the stain for someone else to find."*  
🎵 **Track:** *“The Rip”* – Portishead  
💦 **Fluids:** Squirt, Blood, Cum, Sweat, Tears  
🕯️ **Ritual Tags:** Sacred Hesitation / Obsession Spiral / Relic Theft / Prayer Collapse

The motel room was soaked in the kind of heat that didn’t come from the radiator. The kind that clung to curtains and skin. The kind that made the air taste like breath and regret.

Vivien Vale straddled the man on the bed, her thighs slick and trembling, her hands pressed flat against his chest. His name didn’t matter. His cock was thick and curved—too close to Ellis's to be ignored.

She hated that.

But she was riding him anyway. Slow. Grinding. Her slip shoved up to her waist, her breasts bouncing with each motion, sweat streaking the valley between them.

He groaned beneath her, hands clutching her hips like he thought they belonged to him.

"God, baby—fuck—you feel like heaven—"

Vivien's voice stayed low, distant. "Then pray harder."

She fucked him harder. The sound of their bodies slapped the walls—wet, obscene. Her cunt was soaked, his cock disappearing and reappearing like a ritual. Her thighs trembled. Her hair clung to her face. The moment teetered.

She almost felt.

Almost.

Then it happened.

She squirted.

Hard.

Her whole body locked, then let go—a hot, wet pulse gushing from her cunt, splashing his stomach, her thighs, the sheets. She gasped—more from shock than pleasure—and froze.

The man moaned. Smiled up at her, stupid and eager. "Holy shit. Fuck, do it again—"

She looked down at him.

For half a second, she saw another face—Ellis, mouth open, blood misting the air. The memory slammed into her gut like a car crash.

Her breath hitched.

The knife was already under the pillow.

It always was.

Her hand slipped beneath it.

He saw the glint. Opened his mouth.

She slit his throat in one clean, furious arc.

The blood came fast. Hot. Arterial. It sprayed across her chest, streaking the squirt still glistening on her skin. Her thighs trembled again. Her cunt clenched around his dying cock.

He twitched.

She came again.

Harder.

Silent, violent, holy.

When it passed, she didn't move at first.

She sat astride his hips, trembling, the knife still slick in her hand, blood bubbling from the raw seam in his throat. His cock twitched once inside the cradle of her thighs, a dying reflex. She could feel his life leaking out against her skin—warm, obscene, necessary.

The motel window rattled again. Rain pushing harder now. The stink of iron, sex, wet carpet, and cheap detergent thickened the room until it tasted like regret.

Vivien blinked.

For a moment—a terrible, aching moment—she saw Ellis.  
Not the way he'd died.  
The way he'd looked after.  
Soft. Slack. Beautiful in ruin.

Her fingers moved before she could stop them. She brushed the man's cheek—light, almost reverent—feeling the heat already starting to lift from his skin. His eyes were glassy, mouth ajar, an unfinished plea.

She flinched back like she'd been burned.

**No tenderness. No fucking tenderness.**

The squirt between her thighs was cooling now, tacky against her skin. Blood streaked her slip, her belly, the insides of her trembling thighs. Her hair stuck to her throat. Every breath felt like it was pushing broken glass through her lungs.

The void opened up inside her, hungry and wide.

It almost swallowed her whole.

Instead, she wiped her hand slowly, deliberately, across her chest—smearing blood into her skin like perfume, like warpaint, like something holy she didn't deserve.

The man's body gave one final twitch beneath her.

Vivien tilted her head.

"Almost," she whispered. Her voice cracked. "You almost got spared."

She laughed then—sharp, hollow, splintering through the room like a gunshot that nobody answered.

She staggered off the bed. Her bare feet slapped wet onto the carpet.  
Her slip clung to her hips like second skin.  
The blood, the squirt, the sweat all dragged at her as she pulled her trench coat on, not bothering to wipe herself clean.

The knife slid back into the lining like it belonged there.

She glanced once more at the body.

Something shimmered on the nightstand, catching the motel’s flickering neon through the half-shut blinds.

A cigarette case.

Silver. Ornate. Too nice for this dump.

Vivien smiled faintly, a private joke between herself and the grave.

She lifted it, snapped it open. Inside, tucked neatly between crumpled cigarettes and a matchbook, was a business card.

Not just any card—one she recognized.

The embossed seal of The Pyramid Rose.

A jazz bar.

A haunt.

A place where Ellis once kissed her behind a velvet curtain while Chet Baker moaned overhead.

A place tied to the mayor's men.

Vivien’s fingers tightened around it.  
**A new lead. A new confession waiting to be carved.**

As she slid the card into her coat, her eyes caught another glint.

His right hand.

A ring. Not a wedding band. Heavier. Thicker. Stamped with an insignia she’d seen before—on another man she’d bled.

The same twisted brotherhood.

Rage and sorrow twisted low in her gut.

**This wasn’t random. This was ritual. This was rot.**

For a heartbeat, she considered taking the ring. Slipping it free. Tucking it into her pocket like a relic.

But no.  
Better to leave it.  
Better to let Cruz find it.

Another breadcrumb. Another confession waiting to be swallowed.

She straightened, the card burning a hole in her coat, the storm clawing at the window.

And left.

The rain greeted her like a slap. Cold. Relentless. Alive.

She welcomed it.

It reminded her she still could bleed—even if nothing inside her ever wanted to heal.

By the time Cruz arrived, the scene was already crawling.

Beat cops loitered outside, leaning against patrol cars, smoking, trading jokes.

"Looks like he went out with a bang," one said, flipping his notebook closed.

His partner chuckled, lighting a cigarette under the sagging awning. "Shit, if I gotta go, let it be with a woman half as wild as that."

They laughed, the sound bouncing off the wet concrete, hollow as a drum.

Cruz didn’t laugh. She barely breathed.

She ducked under the yellow tape. The rain had turned the pavement slick, reflections of neon blinking like dying stars across the puddles.

The motel manager hovered nearby, reeking of wet wool and cheap gin. Someone had already vomited in the stairwell. A wet trail of footprints led up the cracked stairs.

Cruz stepped inside.

The smell hit her harder than the heat.

Metal. Sweat. Sex. Death.

A humid confession clinging to the walls.

The man was naked. Throat gaping. Blood pooled around his shoulders like a red collar. The sheets were soaked. The stink of it—heat, cum, wet cotton—choked the room.

But what caught her breath—

Was the silk scarf.

Half-tucked beneath the pillow.

Soaked.

Not just in blood.

In squirt.

Her pulse kicked.

She knelt, gloved, careful. Bagged it—standard procedure—her hands trembling slightly as she zipped it into plastic.

She tucked the bagged scarf into the inside pocket of her coat, feeling the weight of it against her ribs like a hidden prayer. Hot. Wrong. Alive.

Footsteps behind her.

A beat cop leaned into the room. "You find anything good, Detective?"

Cruz froze.

Too long.

"Nothing that'll help," she said, voice tight.

The cop shrugged, chewing his gum like a cow in a slaughterhouse, and wandered off.

Cruz exhaled slowly, the scarf burning a hole in her pocket even inside the bag.

She turned—just as Gallagher finally stepped in, rain clinging to the shoulders of his jacket, cigarette dangling from his mouth.

"You always get the fun ones, Cruz," he said around the smoke, eyeing the room with a grimace.

She shrugged, trying to look like her insides weren’t clawing their way out.

Gallagher squinted at her. "You look like you need a drink. Or a goddamn exorcism."

He crouched by the body, squinting at the blood patterns.

"By the way," he added casually, flicking ash toward the door. "Finally gave that tape a listen."

Cruz stiffened.

"The Vale interview," Gallagher said, voice loose but watching. "You ever notice how she steers the conversation? You think you’re leading, but it’s her hand on your back."

He exhaled a long, lazy drag toward the broken ceiling fan.

"Weird broad," he added, almost like an afterthought.

But his eyes stayed on her a beat too long.

Cruz swallowed hard. Forced her body into motion. Pretended to jot notes on the blood pattern even as the scarf’s scent—salt, musk, something floral and sharp—wrapped itself around her breath.

Gallagher said nothing else.

But Cruz knew.

He was watching her. He was waiting.

And somewhere, deep in her gut, she knew she was already bleeding.

Later that night, she lay in bed.

The scarf on her pillow.

Still damp through the bag.

She should’ve left it in evidence.

She should’ve burned it.

She didn’t.

She unzipped the bag. Pulled it out. Brought it to her face.

The scent hit her like confession.

She didn’t pray.

She didn’t speak.

She just touched herself.

Slow. Careful.

One hand pressing the silk against her mouth. The other sliding down between her legs.

The wetness there wasn’t fear.

It was want.

It was worship.

She rocked her hips against her hand, muffling her whimpers against the scarf. The fabric clung to her lips, her breath hitching, her thighs shaking.

Images crashed behind her eyes—

Vivien Vale, straddling the dead man.

Blood splashing her breasts.

Mouth open.

Eyes wild.

Moaning.

Cruz came with a sob, muffled and messy, clenching the scarf so hard it left fabric burns on her fingers.

Her body twitched like a broken thing.

Sweat pooled between her breasts. Her thighs stuck to the sheets, slick with need and shame.

When she pulled the scarf away, it left a ghost of itself across her cheek—a faint, raw imprint that would darken by morning.

She lay there, gasping, body wrecked, chest rising like a prayer she didn’t dare speak aloud.

*Hail Mary, full of grace,* she thought bitterly. *Blessed art thou among sinners like me.*

Forgive me, she thought.

But the room stayed silent.

Only the rain answered, tapping against the window like a priest too tired to knock.

She didn’t want to catch her anymore.

She wanted to be caught.

She wanted to be the next relic Vivien left behind.

And somewhere deep, in the place prayer used to live, Elena Cruz moaned Vivien Vale’s name into the dark and didn’t ask for forgiveness.