

Lea Monde

By: Daniel "Pendragon"

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Rated: *R for Restricted*

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Chapter 8: The Gray Lady

I awoke alone... but as I rose, breasts lifting off the bed long after I did, I found a single crimson rose laying on the bed beside me, and rolling over in bed I smelt the deep scent of the flower before sliding its silken petals against the flesh of my breasts and chest. Salt from sweat had crisped onto my body and my fur was matted in places while the mane atop my head was wild from lovemaking.

Never in my life had I felt so sated. I felt filled! Though that man had filled me with so much seed that I was probably still filled with it. Rubbing my sex in the memory of the maleness that had pierced it, I folded both thighs about that hand to create a little added pressure in my loins, and letting the rose floss between my fingers, I pulled that hand from between my legs and then promptly pushed a tit upward into my face, mashing it against my lips and drawing from the creamy hind milk.

My earlier suckling, combined with Mad's had allowed access to the deepest, warmest, thickest, richest and sweetest milk in my breasts... and I drew upon it like it were a vanilla malt.

"In my entire life... I don't think I shall ever consider seeing anything so sexual or arousing... and years down the road I will awake in a drunken stupor from the memory of it and needing a clean pair of shorts." A voice said and I gasped, my tit falling from my mouth as the voice seemed to come from everywhere.

"Who's there?!" I demanded, and from a chandelier that wasn't there when I was staring at the ceiling a day after coming here, a figure vaulted outward trailing a glittering string before it swung down in front of me, a few pendulum passes that were slowed with some long fingers dragging against the carpet on the wooden floor slowed the figure to a stop... a black-garbed rat with barely visible white fur beneath the black wrappings.

"Charmed, Susan." He said, hanging upside down with what looked like a metal wire wrapped about one leg, and his pink tail wrapped around the wire, and he gave an upside down flourish with one arm.

The sheets were still covering my lap, so my sex was guarded. At the moment I didn't care about my breasts being naked in front of him. The six lowest ones weren't erect anymore, and the tertiaries were hidden beneath the secondaries and the secondaries were barely visible beneath the primaries.

"Remy, you're incorrigible." I said and blew a wave of hair flowing before my face away.

"But incorrigible at what?" he said pulling black face wrappings off his snout and lifting an etched and slitted black-metal visor from off his eyes.

"That I'd wager once you're in your old age that you'll still be chasing skirts, even if that's with a hospital gown gapped open in the back and a walker."

“With pride... but I would like to say again that you’re the most erotic creature I’ve ever laid eyes on. I say again... it is a pleasure.” And he bowed upside down again.

“Really...” I smirked. “And how long have you been here?”

“Shortly after you man left in the early morning. Definitely spent, I must say, a little flustered after being bested by you... or were *you* bested by *him*?”

“That remains to be seen, now why are you here, Remy? Other than watching me sleep in the nude.” I sighed.

And in answer he reached into his belt and removed the glass vial, filled with a substance that was a dark, dark red. Darker than any red I was familiar with... this was nearly black. It was like it glowed with a red event horizon.

But...

“You got it!” I gasped and rose, throwing the sheets away and forgetting that I was supposed to be hiding my sex from him in my eagerness to get the vial. But then again... fur was like a body suit anyways... there wasn’t much to see... lest I was horny. Else wise all the fur covered most of it up. “How on earth did you draw so much blood from one man without his notice?”

Remy folded his arms. “I’m a rat. We steal things... I have my ways.”

“Yeah whatever Splinter... now how’d you really do it?” I asked and gave him a nudge that forced him to turn in mid air before he unfolded and fingered the floor to straighten himself again.

“Don’t joke about Splinter. He’s a rat hero.” Remy smirked. “But if you really want to know... I did it with a piece of wire pinned into his tracheal artery leading to the vial. To him it might feel like a mosquito prick, and when done while sleeping the mind typically ignores things like that.” He paused as I inspected the vial, careful not to drop it. “And there’s something you ought to know, Susan...” He said and rubbed the bristly scruff on his chin.

“Does he know you took this?! I’m surprised at you Remy. I heard the rats stole a whole city once.” I spoke quickly in my amazement.

“We did, and no he doesn’t know, or if he does he didn’t let on. No... Sue when I took this from him, when he was sleeping, it was while he was sleeping in a coffin.”

“A coffin?!” I blanched.

“Yeah I know... there are only two kinds of weirdoes that sleep in coffins. Those with a death fetish – lots of Goth do it or so I hear – and... vampires.”

“Vampires? Drake?” I moaned. “Are you certain?”

“Sue... he *sensed* me when I was hidden. Ninja masters can’t do that because they’re still *human*. There’s something supernatural about that guy. The evidences are pointing to the truth. The probability that he and this fine hottie that was with him aren’t vampires is... I mean females don’t get breasts so perfect, so round titties unless they’re supernatural beasts! Kinda like you.” I blushed. “And this chick had just the biggest most hugest...” and I grabbed his hands amidst him making cupping hands before his chest to show me exactly how large they were.

“Enough. I get the picture Remy.” I said.

“I mean not as big as yours and Fell’s are but they were just... just...”

“I understand.” I laughed and tilted his head so that he was looking upward before I kissed his forehead. “Thank you so much for getting this for me.”

He sighed and shivered and then slipped till he landed on his head, and then the rest of him just slumped to one side.

“Remy! Are you ok?!” I gasped but then he sprang up immediately with a hand on his head.

“It was worth it!” he said, and with a jerk on the wire and a twirling of his arms he wrapped up the wire and caught a two-pronged hook that fell from the ceiling with the wire already wound into loops.

“I’m glad.” I mentioned. “Now could you get out of here? I’m dirty and I need to wash. And it’s best that you leave before...” and then there was a knock and the door opened. “...Fell gets here.”

“Buffy! I heard some crying last night are you...” and she stopped, seeing me naked and Remy standing before me with a wire and a clawed hook in one hand.

I couldn’t help but laugh as Fell surged into the room and began chasing Remy around, throwing whatever she could at him to get him out of the room, all while Remy did his best to aggravate the situation, sticking out his tongue and thumbs in ears while wriggling his fingers, giving Fell a nice wet raspberry on his way out. Fell slammed the door to my laughter.

“Ok... that was fun.” I said and hid the blood vial between the mattresses of the bed as she turned to me huffing with a look of horror. “But perhaps I should explain some things to you.”

Laying back in the tub of magically heated water, my knees up in the air because of how small the thing was and my breasts floating in the water, I soaked now that I’d washed all the grime of sweat and love off me. My emptied breasts were soothed now that the flesh no longer felt stretched or the nipples ached from the pressure of all the milk, while my loins were soothed at long last now that I’d gotten a good dicking.

Fell sat beside me on a stool, legs crossed and elbow on one knee as she rested her chin on that hand, the other hand wrapped about her middle as it rested over her lap while I sighed repeatedly with the memories of last night, my thighs rubbing against each other while pinching my hand between them.

“So it wasn’t Remy trying to tie you up with wire and have sex with you, it was him bringing you something after you and that Madoushi guy spent the night with each other.” Fell was saying then.

“Mmm-hmm.” I sighed contentedly and slid my fingertips against the outside of the basin.

“I’m not sure which one I think is worse. You and that Mad guy or you and Remy.”

“What’s wrong with Madoushi?!” I demanded, lifting my head as my eyes snapped open.

“Easy.” Fell said and lifted a calming hand. “I’m just saying, Sue... that we’re in a strange place, possibly trapped here. You’re falling for the guy who works for the even stranger Master Drake who lives in an even stranger castle that to me looks to be the source of everything strange in this entire place! If you’re trapped here then what sort of meaningful relationship are you going to get with this guy, and if you leave how are you going to take him with you?”

“I’m working on that.” I pouted and let my fingers dangle in the water as I rubbed my legs together again. Man that boy’s love lingered in you. “Hand me that towel?” I asked Fell as I rose and sat on the washcloth on the edge of the wooden rim to the copper basin, and she tossed me the towel after I’d strained my hair and rose out of the bath.

“I will say one thing about your man.” Fell mentioned. “He’s made you glow from the inside out. Lee never did that to you. I assume he touched you deeply.”

I blushed. “Deep enough.” I replied and we both laughed.

With blood hidden and bag of bones secured over one shoulder, I quickly made my way to the arboretum with the deep blue roses, and sure enough, sitting on the edge of one of the stone planters, a small leather-bound notebook in hand, sat the Devil.

“You’re right on time.” He managed, placing a pen into the notebook and closing it before buckling it shut.

“What do you mean right on time?” I asked immediately, pausing just inside the door.

“I calculated the time it would take for you to retrieve the items requested. You’ve arrived at the moment I expected.” And he rose, his tail waving lazily as he opened his hand and gestured for the items.

“First... where’s my payment?”

“You’re working with the most literal legal system in creation, Susan. The items first.”

“Don’t I get to peruse what I’m buying and determine if they are really of worth to me?”

“That’s not in the contract. You bargained for information... not the amount of information. I have boundless patience, Susan, but you are trying it right now with your incessant feminine demands.”

“If not for my feminine demands, you’d have my soul right now, so I find myself ahead of the game at the moment. But you’re right. A contract is a contract.” And I placed the vial and the bag of bones in his hand and he weighed them briefly.

“This will do.” He replied. “And now for my part of the deal.” And he lifted his other hand with a neatly folded and wax sealed letter.

Taking it and cracking the seal, hearing a light scream wail from it as wisps of blue and white light that looked like little ghosts rose from the seal, I flipped it open and read.

“In the night without a day, pass through death to retrieve your scroll, found before the lowest gate before hell after the undeath falls? Then travel through the door that will not open, through the unseen wall and sunder the world

before travelling through death again to leave through the unseen door to exit into the place of the remembered dead?’ What kind of bull-shittery is this?’

“Your information.” The devil replied with a smirk. “For those aware of their situation that answer is perfectly open.”

“It’s a couple of statements filled with allegory!” I accused. “I feel gypped!”

The devil smirked. “Then perhaps we can bargain further... to help enlighten you?”

“You’re not getting my soul.”

“Then perhaps a moment of your time. In exchange for your participation in a... ritual... I will give you further enlightenment upon your current situation.”

I stared at him and balled my fists, the paper crumpling in my hand. I wondered at the moment on how hard I could hit him.

“Make your contract.” I said and he did, and I read it carefully... thrice. The ritual was described perfectly. As was a time...

I sighed... this was the third day... I didn’t have time to go gallivanting around like this! But I needed all the help I could get... and this was something small. Even a little enlightenment would help.

I am Fellania Bloodclaw.

I was happy for Sue. Really I was. Lee was a good guy, but Madoushi was better. Madoushi wasn’t a boorish, brainless, all dick super masculine, me Tarzan you Jane sort of person. He wouldn’t force Sue into being a barefoot and pregnant mom working in the kitchen for the rest of her life, he’d take care of her. Now if only that all this didn’t happen inside of damnable purgatory.

But as I thought of congratulating her, at the same time and in the same breath I wondered... where was my man? Where was the person who’d be my husband, the father of my children? I knew two aches, one was someone to love, and the other was a child between us. I wouldn’t tell anyone about this, I didn’t share with Sue my deepest most secretes of secrets, not because I feared her ostracizing me, but I feared that she’d actually try to help.

Countless blind dates and such, with a long chain of men who would make the ache hurt harder and harder and...

I was getting myself worked up.

I had this feeling, though... that I had a destiny that would eventually lead me to the right guy. Only time would tell.

Nevertheless, thoughts like these permeated my mind at the same time that I continued a mantra in my head to keep reminding myself of who I was. There was a spell here, I was aware of it now, and it was trying to grip me in its power, but I wouldn’t let it. But the greatest reprieve I got was to actually exit the castle... go for a walk... go anywhere but here. Something in the castle was acting as the source for these unsure thoughts that kept making me

think in ways I normally wouldn't. All this whining over a man and a child, thinking I wasn't feminine enough and all that rubbish.

I am Fellania, I am a daughter of the Bloodclaw Clan of Werebear. I am strong, I am feminine, I am beautiful...

Stupid castle.

Down to the town far below, walking along its streets, growing familiar with the place, I found people walking about me, largely ignoring me as I walked amidst a town that had grown monstrous... a city even. Nothing huge like Saint Paul or London or similar, but a good sized city that was miles across, with easily one, two or maybe even three hundred thousand people in it.

I found that I was still a large woman in comparison to the other women that were here. I was greatly shrunken but still nonetheless, I was still taller and stronger than any other woman around... and... larger stacked too.

The city, or town or whatever it was, of Deadwood was rather industrious, though there was an unnerving sensation in the background of everything that truly set me off. It was like a sixth sense of impending danger telling me to run away.

And then I saw people raising umbrellas and covering themselves in unison, and I blinked at it for a moment right before a deluge began, and lifting my face to the rain as it pattered against me, I looked up blinking at the sky from the rain drops, and felt that even something so natural as rain... felt unnatural.

Stepping out under an awning of a building front, I stood and listened to the world.

The powers of a Druidess were in my blood. The female line of my clan had always been potent druids and shamans, like the very Earth itself was permanently bonded with us. But instinctively, further learned at a very early age, we Bloodclaws, and all druids and shamans for that matter, learn that the world has a voice. Fire, the Rain, the Earth... all of it had a voice that was mostly tranquil... gentle... soft...

As I stood there, listening to the rain, I could not understand the language, which meant it wasn't of the earth, but regardless it sounded as if the rain were in torment. It was a depressing sensation no matter how you sliced it.

But then to mimic the sound of torment, I heard someone screaming behind me, and turning, looking at the front door of the building I was before, one of the more modern buildings, I found that this was the one with the grand star of the marshal across it.

Curious, I stepped forward and into the marshal's shop, hearing the insane screaming beyond an open door.

Marshal Cal was laid back licking a rolled cigarette closed just prior to lighting it up.

"Mornin'." He greeted with a nod.

"Morning." I replied. "Sorry, curiosity got the better of me. I heard screaming."

"You heard The Vagrant." Cal said rolling his eyes. "He needs to be caught once every five days. A danger t' himself, a danger t' others, so we's gots t' lock him up. No other choice."

"Why? What's he done?"

“He attacks people. Screaming at them to ‘Kill me! Kill me!’ Deadwood gets to people sometimes, and it’s said that he’s been here for a very, very long time. No one knows his name, not even he knows his name.”

I edged over to see a man shaking the bars, trying to escape. He was in ratty clothes, torn and shredded, he was dirty with yellow teeth and wild eyes.

“Is there anything I can do?” *I offered. I might be tough, I might be stalwart... but deep down I was also a helper. I couldn’t leave a person when they were obviously suffering.*

“Best you leave that boy alone.” *Cal mentioned quietly, now smoking a cigarette that smelled of natural tobacco... before the cigarette companies loaded them with all sorts of chemicals to cause addictions.*

But regardless, I couldn’t leave well enough alone, and ventured into the back of the marshal’s place, finding three wrought iron cells. In two of them there were people who were crowded against the far walls away from The Vagrant, whereas the Vagrant was leaping around, hitting the walls, rattling bars, screaming.

“Kill me! Kill me! You have to Kill me! Her eyes... *her eyes!*”

“Who’s eyes?” I asked and the vagrant stopped immediately, staring at me with eyes that were electric blue... a bright, light blue to almost be considered inhuman. They looked like ice and shone from his face as if they were casting a light of their own.

“New. You’re new... new here, new at Deadwood.” *and he clucked his tongue while shaking his head.* “More... more to sacrifice, more to kill, more to die. Dead... all dead... over and over and over again... never ending... not till the eyes are satisfied. She watches... she always watches.” *He slammed against the metal bars and reached out for me with yellow fingernails and grit yellow teeth.* “Precious creature, beautiful creature. You must kill me! You must kill me before it starts again. You must kill the others... others... others like me... need to die. Save us. Kill me!”

I stared unblinking at him as he began to jibber like a squirrel with a nut while Cal’s clinging stirrups signified his arrival nearby. Turning to him, he had his hand on his pistol.

“See what I mean missy? He’s plum out of his gourd. It would be a relief to kill him, but our town charter strictly prohibits me from executing him without due cause.”

“Is there a doctor? Anyone who can help him?” *I asked quietly. Nothing upset me more than a person in pain that I couldn’t help.*

“He just scratches and bites them.” *Call mentioned, his cigarette bobbing with every word, and then I began to approach The Vagrant.* “Careful missy. That dog bites and may as well be rabid.”

I ignored him, and continued toward Vagrant, who calmed as I approached. He was sobbing.

“Blessed Angel. You can kill me. You can end me. Please... please...” *I laid my hands upon the bars of the cell and he moved quickly to me and began rubbing his cheek through the bars against my breast.* “Please...” *his voice cracked as I palmed his head.*

“No one deserves to die. I can’t kill you... not just like that.” *I soothed, and the Vagrant reacted so quickly I couldn’t react, and with a screaming wail he scratched at me, dug his fingernails into the back of my hand and scratched me deeply.*

“Rah! Whore! Slut! Bitch! I will make you kill me! Kill me!! **Kill me!!!**” *he screamed as I hissed and stepped immediately back, and there was a bang from a gun as Cal shot the Vagrant in the shoulder.*

The vagrant fell back as I hissed, looking at the crimson blood slipping from the back of my hand.

“No don’t kill him!” *I cried.*

“Don’t you worry... I only clipped him. Now you come along, missy... no more playing with the dangerous animals.” *Call hauled me out and slammed the door, leaving the screams muffled beyond as Cal sighed. “Let me get you some water and a bandage.”*

“Don’t bother... it’ll heal.”

“Nonsense you stupid woman. It’ll get infected. Hold out your hand.” *And he opened a hip flask and poured a stinging thing onto the three wounds on the back of my hand before taking a kerchief from a lunch pail to wrap around my hand. “There. That’ll do.”*

I sighed looking at my hand. “Thank you Cal.” I grumbled.

I was feeling bad about the Vagrant. I tried, but what else can I do. Damage to the mind was far harder to heal than damage to the body. The only person who could heal damage to a mind was the mind itself. Sure, counselors and psychiatrickerists could help you reprogram yourself, but ultimately you couldn’t heal a mind unless the healer was the owner of the mind itself. Even Psionics had limited effect on a broken mind. Psychosis were faulty programming. Once in place, mental reactions were hard to re-record.

The Vagrant was clearly out of his mind... and clearly out of my league to heal.

“I thought I could help.” *I said at last.*

“Kind of ye, missy. But there’s no helping that one. He’s a downright animal, I’ll tell ye what. Now ye git. This not be the place for someone so gentle as ye.”

I merely nodded and headed out of the jail, and made my way along under the conjoined awnings here, thinking of returning to the castle for shelter. But then right before, I decided to remove and dispose of the handkerchief.

It was covered in my blood, which was bio-hazard. Every Lycan was trained not to leave traces of their own blood lying around. Of all our bodily fluids, blood was the most infectious of them all. A droplet of blood if ingested or added to the blood of another human being could turn them. Oh sure, there was also milk from a female’s breasts and ejaculate, but blood was easily the most problematic. A Lycan could nurse or even have sex with a human... so long as it wasn’t on the three or four days of the full moon. Blood on the other hand was infectious all the time.

So removing the handkerchief near a fire barrel in which several individuals across different times and areas of the world were warming themselves, I paused and looked at the back of my hand.

The scratches were still there.

Lycanthropes were rapid healers. To allow for our transformation abilities, our cells split fifty, a hundred, sometimes even a thousand times faster than any human beings could. It allowed us to regrow limbs, and in the most extreme of cases even heads. A simple scratch for me should've healed in about a minute, and yet here I was still with open wounds. True it'd stopped bleeding, but the wounds were still there. At the very least it should be a fading scar by now.

There were only three things that could truly harm our regenerative abilities. The first was the most potent of bio-hazards. But I'm talking about level four bio-hazards like Ebola, the sort of viruses and chemicals that will turn your insides into liquid sludge. To us it would affect us no greater than the common cold in humans, but nonetheless it would slow our healing abilities way down.

I didn't feel sick.

The next was silver, or in certain species of Lycanthrope like the alligator, gold. This scratch wasn't caused by silver, which was my weakness.

The third was the scratch from another lycanthrope...

Biting my lower lip and tossing the handkerchief into the fire to burn, I turned away and magically healed the wound before stepping off quickly away from the individuals around the fire barrel. This required more investigation, surely. Unless the Vagrant was infested with a level four super virus, there was another Lycan in the town of Deadwood.

Alice was overjoyed to see me. We played house a little and hugged each other through the glass... well tried to. All we really could do there is press our bodies against the glass. But... strangely, I could feel her energetic little heart throbbing through the glass and into my bosom.

I wanted to hold her, carry her... and that motherly instinct only grew as I went to see Jenny.

"Twice in one cycle. I feel honored." She smirked, but by the look in her eyes she was truly overjoyed that I'd come back.

She drew my picture, a wonderful likeness I must say, and when I left a while later I caught her folding it into quarters and hiding it into the bodice of her dress. It made me feel good that a child, let alone two, wanted me to be near them like that.

That day... a third sensation entered me, followed by a fourth. They were the sensations of being pulled in a direction, some stronger than others, some changing in intensity from time to time. Two pulled me in one direction, and another pulled me in a second direction. But also... an emptiness I'd realized that I'd felt for nearly my entire adult life had waned considerably. I'd always felt it, even before I'd become a Lycan, I just didn't recognize it. Palming that feeling at a spot right where one's Chi or Ki was, the spot of the Sacral Chakra, I realized that it was... filling.

Why now? Why here?

And then as I walked down a hall, I found a maid who was dusting.

Being the first person of the castle other than Master Drake, who was apparently a vampire with from what I heard three other women that either Remy had directly seen or I was told to by others, I was interested in the fact that the castle indeed did have others within its confines.

She was dressed like a French maid, right down to the high cut panties – or perhaps it was a teddy – that she wore, that showed off the fine swells of her bottom and hips, with a garter belt around one thigh and stockings that came up to her mid thigh. Polished shoe buckles, frilly apron, frilly pleated skirts, and a bodice that was definitely ample. The cut of her outfit was a heart shape over those breasts, held up by a webbing of straps around her neck and across her bare back.

As I passed her she turned promptly to curtsy.

“Greetings miss.” She greeted quickly before returning to her work.

“Greetings.” I replied and passed by.

I only took my eyes off the hall for a second to look at her, but by the time I looked back there was another servant, this time a man, who was cleaning the brass fixtures with polish. He was in a tight cut shirt and jacket with long pinstriped black pants that covered a pair of black polished shoes covered in white spats. When I turned again there were more servants, three of them now, hanging decorations.

After a brief moment of vertigo, I closed my eyes and shook my head, and when I opened my eyes the ceiling had lifted by a good six inches, only to have a headboard appear along the top of the hall that was made of some light wood and was etched repeatedly by red etching lines that were too rhythmic to be random. Likewise, the floor now had an open recess lined in copper in it where the floor met the wall. The floor was now a long circular thing the length of the hall like I was now walking atop a showcase runway at some fashion show. The red carpet emblazoned with Drake’s emblem didn’t help that sensation either.

The groove and headboard now exhibited every hallway, and immediately I found that there were a lot more rooms to explore that weren’t there before. Ballroom, grand dining hall, library... hoping to defeat the devil, I looked through every book I could in what felt like an ever-expanding library that though it was a study when I entered it, became a three-tiered library the likes of most city libraries, complete with carved stone columns and vaulting archways and high rise walk ways with stairs and balconies and study areas. But I should’ve known. I didn’t feel a draw to the scroll in this room... not once. It was elsewhere. What was worse was that it felt like it was continually moving.

Sighing and putting the book down, nearing the appointed hour, I started following one of those sensations in me... following it like a compass, having to backtrack and pause often since all of them felt like they were moving, till at last I wandered into a kitchen and stopped abruptly.

Ugh...

Here I paused again, but not to tell where the sensation was coming from. The kitchen looked like a death trap. There were metal hooks hanging from the ceiling, and a plethora of cleavers and knives. I couldn’t help but think about horrific scenarios involving those meat hooks. It was at that moment that a door opened and a great big lumbering cook with a big round belly and ears that were bent down at the tops lumbered in, resting a huge cleaver on a shoulder and smoking a cigar. He looked like a great big piggy.

He looked like he wanted to eat me.

He eyed me with one squinty eye, the other eye didn't look like it would ever close, and then swinging his cleaver it stuck in the thick chopping block that was on the counter and I hurriedly made my way out of the kitchen before he could cleave me in two with that thing.

Panting I stumbled into a side room and felt my insides lurch immediately. Holding onto that spot in my belly, I paused and turned, and then suddenly found myself turning slowly to find Madoushi here.

"Susan." He said, standing there with a polishing rag in one hand and a plate of fine china in his other hand.

"Mad!" I gasped in excitement and then I surged to him, and he embraced me as I clutched onto him.

And inside me that spot that I'd been following to its source suddenly clicked like a magnet as I pressed against him, and immediately soothed now that I was making physical contact like this. It solved one of those curious feelings in me. It was a drawing toward him. But what then were the other two feelings?

But nonetheless my concerns soon soothed as I sighed and rubbed my cheek against his chest, murring inside my throat.

"Hnn..." I sighed nasally. "You left too early. But I loved your gift."

Mad set the plate aside and embraced me, kissing me on the forehead, and I lifted my chin, taking his mouth by the next kiss.

"My life is cursed, but I praise the Creator for bringing you here." He remarked to me, his hands folding about my middle.

I looked up at his smiling face in wonder. Those were very nearly the words that I wanted Lee to say to me... but Lee couldn't say it. Instinctively I gripped at his clothing... I didn't want to let such a catch like him go.

"Kiss me again, Mad." I said quietly and he did... without hesitation.

And then he kissed me again, and again and I swooned as he cradled me. He slid the door shut as I was sat against a stone trunk on the floor as we kissed and kissed again, and pressing his face into my neck, kissing and licking spots upon my collar as he pushed the skirts of the dress I wore upward, he then pulled down on the bloomers I was given to wear to uncover my sex. With a jingling of a belt and a repositioning, we were again making love again, and I felt that thickened meat log penetrating the gates of my vulva before he and I made to unleash the swollen mammaries I possessed, the pair hanging over the corset that I was wearing as a part of the ensemble.

Amidst cradling me, spreading the cheeks of my bottom open so that he could penetrate deeper, his nads pressing against my bottom while I wrapped my legs about his waist, bloomers hanging off one ankle while I embraced him, I felt instincts settle into me.

I'd not even done this with Lee, never thought to, never felt driven to, but nonetheless my body accomplished a partial transformation. Fingernails lengthened into claws and teeth grew into fangs as I licked his neck. It was instinct in a cat to give her lover a love bite. A little nip to imprint the DNA of her lover into her mind. Sometimes this was done with exceedingly close friends, but one's chosen lover got to endure something else...

And so the long upper and lower fangs of my teeth bit into his flesh and my tongue with its growing tongue comb licked at his blood as I blushed, my eyes opening lazily as I actually drank a single mouthful of his hot passionate blood before lapping at the wound to seal it.

In essence... subconsciously at least, I'd chosen Madoushi as a mate.

The castle was changing more quickly now.

As a rat, I had free reign to nearly every nook and cranny of the place. And there were many nooks and crannies in a castle. The only problem was that there were other vermin crawling about the castle now.

And what does a rat call vermin? Insect Hordes, Devil Rats, that sort of thing. I swear... it was ridiculous on the sort of things I had to contend with. Getting down into the crypts even I had to run away from a horde of scarabs even. Scarabs! What the hell were Egyptian desert insects doing in a Black Forest area?!

Regardless, a little fire Ninjitsu stopped them cold... I mean hot. But all in all, I was definitely able to case this joint pretty well from top to bottom, identify threats and more.

The doctor called Victor was a scientist that was using electricity as a tool, constructing things with spikes on them out of hard steel while at the same time running a chemical process that involved what even today would've been thousands of dollars of glassware and lab equipment. That meant he was bleeding edge in science for the era that he undoubtedly came from, and therefore a threat.

The cook... yeah... I'd have to make him my bitch some day. He was going to get it for chopping off my tail. But nonetheless, a cook was a master of knives. Their very lives revolved around sharp metal instruments and how to wield them to cleave things... therefore a threat.

Regardless, if we had to make a break for it, I'd identified small priceless items in nearly every hallway now that I could make off with.

And now if I could only solve the conundrum of the castle.

Looking up once again, standing on my hind legs with both fore paws folded together before my chest, whiskers twitching as I smelt the air, I could see that the copper basin of the unknown apparatus was now nearly completely ringed with copper tubes now. I surmised that when the ring was complete, whatever it was that this machine was for would be brought to fruition. I didn't know what all these tubes were for, but they were made to transit lots, and lots of liquid. Gallons upon gallons of it.

The castle was at the top of a mountain, so they didn't have to worry about flooding, there were no saunas or baths as of yet to carry steam, the tubes weren't complete for a messaging system like they used in old department stores to transfer forms across long areas by suction, not pneumatics because there were no pistons or anything...

I spent my time searching out all the tubes, and found that they didn't connect to any of the water or sewage pipes, but what they did connect to where all the grooves and grouts in the floor. What sort of occurrence were they expecting where countless gallons of fluids were going to be spilled on the floor?

I didn't want to alarm Fellania or Susan, but something felt definitely sinister about this apparatus. Rat instincts were built to keep us small and weak creatures safe. They warned us of impending danger on a subconscious level. I felt as if I were in danger.

So it was, later on, that I found myself outside in the rain, covered in a cloak with a leather hood and shoulders to keep the rain from soaking into those spots as I walked toward the front gate.

“Hey... gatekeeper.” *I said aloud and there was a metallic screech as the face swiveled around to face me.*

“Ah. The master comes to visit me. I feel... *so honored.*” *The gate mentioned while rolling its eyes.*

“Cut the crap. Are you the face of the castle or not?”

“Some... might consider me as such.” *The gate face mentioned warily.* “Why do you ask?”

“Well... I'm wondering something. The house servitude seems to be coming out of the wood work lately. Quite literally even, but that's neither here nor there. What I'm interested in is why they're decorating. I'm not familiar of any upcoming holidays.”

“Didn't the Master tell you when you all arrived? We're celebrating the six hundredth anniversary of Deadwood.”

“Really... then why isn't the village preparing for celebration as well?”

“Well... they are peons.”

“Even peons celebrate, Gate.” *I mentioned.* “Before a special event, peons talk about it, they prepare special stashes for it, prepare wine and food, decorate in what little way they can, but life down below in the village has been quiet. So if you're preparing and they're not, then that means they're either not aware of it, or it's not a cause of celebration for them. So cut the bullshit. Why is the castle servitude preparing?”

“Ok... ok... you got me. If you must know, the Lady with a set of dignitaries will be arriving.”

“The Lady?”

“Sure... Lady... as in feminine version of a Lord. And she'll be bringing a duke and duchess, a baron and so on. Drake's castle becomes the center of the celebration.”

“Hmm...” *I managed aloud.* *If this place was cyclical, then that meant that there was a celebration every six days. And the Lady... came every time. Who then was so special that she held higher clout than even Drake?* “So there's another town nearby that these dignitaries come from? Where is it? I might want to journey there.”

“How the hell should I know? If you haven't noticed, I'm kind of stuck here. You know... rained on all the time, having to stay up to deter vagabonds and vagrants and that sort of thing. So I have no idea where these other towns are, only that people arrive from them.”

“Much thanks... you've been most informative.” *I said and smirked.* “My... you're quite verbal with a solid iron ring in your mouth.”

“Bite me.”

“Bite you? Aww... and here I was going to pay you for your information. A little something to keep you warm.” *and I twirled my fingers and produced a thin cigar.* “I only have a couple of these left. This is called a Cuban where I come from.”

“C-Cuban? A cigar from Cuba?” *The gate said. I never knew iron could drool.*

“That’s right. They wrap the tobacco leaves with the leaves of the cannabis plant. Wrap it so tight that it takes *forever* for the cigar to fully burn down. Damn burnt my fingers off the last one of these I smoked. But if you’re going to tell me to bite you...”

“N-no-no-no... sorry. Sorry Master Remy... please... be a pal. I’m in so darn need of a drag. I haven’t had one in such a long time.”

I smirked and flipped the cigar and inserted it into his mouth once he spat his ring out, and with a flick of a pair of special rings on my thumb and middle fingers, created a spark to light it with, and I watched as the fence began to smoke it deeply.

“Better watch out... you have a customer.” *I mentioned.*

“What? Oh damn.” *And the fence opened his mouth wide and brought the cigar inside his mouth before falling into the ground with the rest of the fence, even as Fellania walked distractedly past me. The fence came back up and the cigar came out, and I waved two fingers to the fence before turning to follow Fellania, sweeping the cloak off my shoulders to lie it against hers before flipping the hood up.*

“You’ll catch your death Fellania.” *I mentioned as the rain fell against my white shirt as we walked.*

“What? Oh... Remy... hi.” *She mentioned and we continued to the front door.*

“I feel privileged. We’re walking together and we haven’t even exchanged insults or jibes yet. You seem distracted.”

Fellania stopped and then turned to me, and noticed that she was wearing my cloak now.

“Thank you.” *She mentioned and pulled the cloak tighter around her.* “Remy... something’s going wrong around here. I just came from the village. The Marshal has locked up a lycanthrope, but he doesn’t look or even smell like a lycanthrope. When I probed him for information... well he may just be too insane at the moment, but I don’t even think he realizes what he is.”

“A lycanthrope that doesn’t smell or look like a lycanthrope?” *I asked and she nodded.* “Interesting.”

“Why’s that interesting?”

“A theory... one that I don’t want to state lest I can prove it... one that I don’t want to believe lest I can prove it... but if I were you, I’d stay away from the village for now. Go inside, have a nice warm bath... enjoy the warmth of the castle, however much there is to have.”

Fellania smirked at me. “So you can sneak in and watch me bathe naked?”

“Fellania. I want to do you rotten... not just watch you naked.” *I smirked.* “And a promise is a promise. I’ve promised not to assail you with my lecherous ideals, and I’m a man of my word. I will not touch you or impugn your honor without your say so... regardless of how tantalizing the prospect might be to grope you... or watch you naked in a pool of soapy water as your rub yourself. Whew... it’s good that we’re outside in the cold rain.”

“You’re a gentleman... my that you’re an odd one, but a gentleman nonetheless.”

“With charm.” *I grinned and bowed.* “Now get inside... I got some sneaking to do.”

She nodded and I promptly turned and skipped forward into a run. Though it took more energy to run in short quick strides on the tips of your toes, it was nonetheless faster, and a ninja, let alone a rat, wasn’t good at the task lest they could keep themselves astride a span of open water while doing it. Kinda like when a dolphin rides the water on the tips of their tails. But this movement carried me toward the gate where I leapt over it with a somersaulting dive, hand-sprung on the other side, scurried quickly to the edge of the road that curved down the mountain and leapt off it toward the town of deadwood below.

Several hundred feet I fell, twisting and somersaulting to redirect my trajectory toward something I could slow my descent on, and grabbed the iron pole of a church steeple and whipped myself around in a full circle twice before vaulting away several blocks away to slow my descent on the slope of a roof, sliding up it slightly and then back down it toward the top of the roof. Then in a flash, I leapt across the rooftops to begin snooping.

Fellania wasn’t stupid. If she sensed a problem then there was a problem. Time to do a little information gathering to find out exactly what.

There was a grand hall, an armory of sorts perhaps, or a trophy hall. There were battle standards and shields, full suits of armor from around the world. Samurai, Chinese pike men, a Templar’s full plate mail and tabard with cloak... a multitude of armors ranging from ancient byzantine to a semi-modern rifleman with musket and bayonet. But at the far end was an image of such strange iconology that I could never consider it being found in such a place like this.

With my loins freshly filled with my lover’s love sauce and my breasts freshly siphoned of their excess milk, he went back to work... and so did I.

This was the room where I was supposed to meet the devil himself, and at the moment, this strange image was what drew my attention.

It was a crucifix, but not on a cross crucifix, but rather an X crucifix. And instead of a Christ figure... this one was of a naked woman. Hands and wrists were tied and nailed to the board, as were her ankles and the tops of her feet, and she was chained about arms, legs and waist to the post, with steel hooks from the ends of the chains hooking into her flesh. A wrapping of a wire garrote was choking her. But the most interesting thing of this porcelain workmanship was that on her back were two tattered wing stubs that had been painted to be bloody along with the gashes of the chains and her throat. It was a nudist depiction with a cloth wrapping about her shoulders of grey cloth hung in tatters about her shoulders, and another wrapping, like a bandanna, covered her eyes and brow.

Her body was that of a muscular woman, with definite long yet slender pipes, with thick thighs and rounded calves. Her breasts were engorged and rounded, with stunningly detailed puffed out areola and thick, erect nipples. There

was the barest semblance of a belly with a six pack and lats, with wide shoulders and hips framing that narrow tummy with its sunken navel. Her vulva was thick and powerful, with a deep slit.

As I looked up at her, she seemed to have been caught in that one moment of torment, frozen... this effigy appearing as if it was a real thing.

“Magnificent, isn’t she?” a voice asked and I whirled around with a wobbling of breasts and a flurry of skirts to see the devil standing there, his case on the floor at his feet, both hands resting on his cane while his spaded tail waved back and forth behind him.

“W-who is she?” I asked and dared to turn back to the figure.

“She is the Gray Lady. A figure mostly lost to history... she dared to make bargains and consort with Death itself, and for her crimes her people bound her, tortured her, plucked out her eyes for she’d seen Death and lived, and then crucified her like this.” He paused and rubbed his nostrils with the index finger of a white glove. “Beauty is fleeting, Susan. She bargained her soul to keep it forever, but not to me or the people I represent. Instead she chose eternity with the most dreaded specter in all of creation. But when a woman continues to be young and vibrant while other women around her grow old, the aging women grow jealous, and they gossip. Their gossip becomes a measure of contention between them and their husbands, and either to please her or just shut her up, their men go and do something about it.

“Talk of witchcraft was made; eventually the people stormed the castle, assailed her... and crucified her. Chains of iron that were blessed by the church anchored her down, and she eventually died with her beauty right here in this very room.”

“Ok... so now that I’m here, what do we do now?” I asked.

“We’re going to bring her back.” The Devil said, letting go of his cane and it propped itself upward before he stooped and picked up his case and opened it.

“Wait... you’re bargain was with her?!” I said and pointed at the statue of the woman in her crucified position, her mouth open in a baleful scream that seemed to me as if her tongue had been plucked out too.

“No... actually. She is a prize for he who I have a contract with.”

“He... who...?” I ventured, but the Devil reacted like he usually did.

“That’s not in our contract. Your duty here is to exchange a service for favors and more information from me.” And he removed the vial of blood and the bag of bones from his bag – the bag of bones being much larger than the space it’d just occupied – and dropping the bag he then approached me, handing me both of them. “Beware. Do the ritual perfectly... or you’ll replace the Gray Lady in her torment.”

“Great.” I managed warily as I accepted the items, and pulling out the slip of paper the contract was written on, I began following the instructions.

Using the cork on the vial as a brush, I kept washing the blood against the cork and made a magic circle around an opened pentagram... a five-pointed star that didn’t close but instead wound up creating the first circle it was in. It was a form of pentagram, but one I’d never really used before, but nonetheless I continued with other circles and copying emblems of arcane symbolism. One circle where the power would be made, another for the caster to stand,

another for the bones to lay, all connected by a line that joined each circle to the next. A half moon shape projecting toward the statue of the Gray Lady at the very end of the line. Then in the circle where the bones laid, I piled them unceremoniously inside them, ensuring that not a single fragment was outside the circle, turned the bag inside out and picked the other fragments out of the seam and placed them with the rest of the bones.

And then I checked the instructions, and saw that there was another ingredient missing.

“Wait... we can't do this yet... there's...” and the Devil opened a folded piece of paper with the missing ingredient in it.

A black feather.

Plucking the feather by the stem out and laying it atop the bones, I then referenced the contract for further instructions, and with the devil nearby, not interfering in the slightest, I lifted a hand and began casting.

This sort of magic was not the kind that I was familiar with... but under the correct circumstances even a mundane could work this sort of magic. It was only made stronger being that I could actually work magic, and made doubly so because I was a supernatural creature.

The blood lines on the ground turned black and then began to radiate blood up into the air, chilling the air so that the breath escaped me as frosted mist. The bones started to glow green then and starting with the skull, the bones began to lift and reassemble.

Skull then each vertebrae after the next, right down to the various pieces of the wide pelvic bones. Shoulder blades and clavicles, jaw bones and then rib bones, arm bones, thigh bones, and mentally I began to sing:

...The hip bone is connected to the thigh bone, the thigh bone is connected to the shin bone, the shin bone is connected to the ankle bone...

But then connections started to happen that I didn't recognize, especially when several arm-length bones and extra shoulder blades connected to the upper back, forming two flaring wing plates that fluttered and flapped briefly as the delicate womanly bone structure opened with arms projected downward at an angle to her sides, palms facing forward and ankles together. She floated and bobbed her back to me, while her bones were surrounded in waving green wisps of eldritch light. Her jaw opened like a scream, her bones clicking and rattling, and I was so fascinated with this that I forgot to continue till the devil clicked his cane once to get my attention, and I spasmed into action again and continued casting.

Then I noticed that the eldritch light was forming a glow in the exact formation of a person, a woman, with an event horizon of dark blue showing the edges of her form. Right after that, the statue came alive, mimicking the head motions of the bones for at least a moment or two, right before the statue cracked, broke, and then shattered. The pale white crackelature crumbled into what looked like gray ash as the insides of the statue, in which were piled dried... organs and guts, surged across the distance toward the Gray Lady, shoving themselves into her bones with wrapping intestines, stomach and esophagus, heart and lungs, liver and kidneys, reproductive organs and so on. Brain and a pair of pale eyes reformed with a short tongue, and a webbing of deep red and blue veins grew from the heart to enclose the organs in a webbing right before the gray ash rapidly begun to apply itself to her bones and guts, forming sinuous feminine muscle one layer after the next, forming breasts and finally flesh itself.

On her back, though, the wings became incased in a black fuzzy, fleshy sheathe, a tri jointed pair of flaps with their own shoulders, elbows and wrists then became loaded with feathers and pinions galore from the one black feather

that rapidly replicated itself to produce a pair of deep black raven wings that shone purple and blue in the strange lighting.

And then I came to the last line of the ritual, and blinked, wondering if it were a joke, but it was nonetheless written there, so I said it.

“Klaatu Verata Nikto!”

And with a violent snap that cracked the ground and broke the magic circles and lines, the spell ended, and a winged woman slowly lowered to the ground, landing daintily on her feet, her skin pale, her hair as black as ebony.

She was breathing, her breath coming deeply through her nose, and lifting a hand, she summoned the black velvet bag and tore it open near the middle before pulling it over her head and then turning subtly, revealing a lovely pale face, the reddest lips I’d ever seen, only her eyes remained covered by the hood made out of the bag of bones.

Apparently... her eyes were more important to cover than her nakedness was as her breasts wobbled and bounced with her every movement.

She turned to the devil... who bowed gentlemanly at the waist briefly, and then she turned fully to me, her naked breasts wobbling again with their reddened yet currently flat areola.

Her nude body was perfect, perfect unblemished skin free of hair below the scalp, from her arm pits to her shorn sex that was pert and formed a perfect cleft with hips that left a wide gap between her long and muscular thighs for that sex.

She spoke nothing, though I did see black tears seep from beneath the black shadows of her makeshift hood, and stepping to me, she embraced me tightly, and I heard her quiet noises of crying before she stepped back and nodded to me with a smile and squeezed my shoulders.

Then stepping away, she faded into mist, leaving a single feather that floated to the ground, dispersed into ash once it hit the ground before the bits of ash evaporated with light puffs of smoke.

“You know... I know a guy who disappears almost just like that...” I mentioned.

“Regardless... your service is done. Your reward is thus:” the bowler hat guy mentioned. “Your scroll resides with the Master of the House. He keeps it upon him... *at all times.*” He said and I turned to the devil to see him staring at me meaningfully. “He protects it from another. You must retrieve your scroll to escape. My previous instructions give you your direction on how to get out.”

“How the hell does that help me?” I blanched.

“It gives you a starting point, Susan.” He said, placing his arm through the loops of his briefcase and holding onto his cane with the same gloved hand he tipped his hat at me, again giving me a brief view of his red horns. “We may meet again. I suggest that you leave this chamber before the master investigates.”

And in a column of fire he disappeared and I sighed.

Heeding his warning, though, I beat feet out of there, leaving quickly and making it a good distance away before the castle rumbled as if in an earthquake.