

Lea Monde

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Rated: R for Restricted

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Chapter 16: Return from Limbo

And with a loud sound of sheering metal the pen broke in half.

"What...?" the Devil blinked, right before the golden contract floating in mid air was cut in half too, and then quartered, and then slashed so many times it turned into Confetti.

And then I heard the sound of a clock, maybe a watch, ticking, but the tick-tock-tick-tock was slowing down before one last tock and time stopped. The burning stairs halted at the base of the steps before the portal.

"What's going on here?! Who dares to interfere?!" the Devil shouted.

"I do." A simple voice said and the darkness consolidated into a shape, a shape that was marginally darker than the darkness that was around it, but in the middle of the darkness the cherry of a cigar glowed red.

The Devil rounded on the person and stopped dead – an interesting figure of speech given the moment – right before Death exhaled a long blow of cigar smoke in his face.

Death stepped into the light of the barrier and portal, the Devil backing away within the darkness out of terror of this apparition.

"Y-you... you aren't allowed to interfere! You have no power here Horseman! Be gone! This is my deal!" the Devil shouted, obviously panicking at the sight of Death.

"Oh? Really? I was called here." And he lifted a pocket book and opening it nodded as he blew smoke at it. "They were moments from death. Thusly... they're on the cusp of my domain. I dare say a breath longer and they would've plummeted before ever even getting the chance to sign your contract. Thus you get a powerful... powerful soul before they all die." Death lifted a finger and shook his head and the finger at the Devil while clucking an invisible tongue. "I'd say shame on you... but then I expect this sort of bullshit from a Devil." And Death replaced the pocket book and pulled another one out. "Now let's see here..." he made the motion to lick his thumb before leafing through the notebook, though his thumb disappeared into his hood before returning again, the cigar bobbing as he did before Death looked at the briefcase the Devil was carrying. "Beezil? That your name?"

The Devil stood rooted to the spot, he didn't act.

"Probably is. All you Devils make names for yourselves on variances of Beelzebub. Posers and wannabes if you ask me." And Death wrote something down before closing the notebook and depositing it into his robes again.

“What was that?!” the Devil demanded.

“Your name.” Death replied simply and I blinked in surprise. “I’ll be coming for it during Armageddon.”

The Devil began working his jaw gasping and pointing.

“Now... Susan.” Death said facing me. “Let’s make a deal.”

“A-a d-deal? Like the deal with the Devil?” I asked.

“Perish the thought... no! I’m not here to bargain for your soul... I’m not an asshole, I’m a dick. Dicks are for fucking and pissing on things, assholes just shit on everything. No, this is a deal with Death, and my deal is much simpler than that. Instead... I present to you a pact.” And he took a scroll from his robes and unfurled it before me.

Unlike the Devil’s golden one, this one was a bone-white paper contract.

“A pact with a Horseman?! I-Impossible!” The Devil stammered. “You have no such power!”

“Oh, you’re still here? Good.” And a scythe slid in from the darkness and slipped beneath the Devil’s throat while a very familiar personage slipped from the darkness beyond.

She was wearing a gray robe that left her sides open from hip to feet, and now a hood covered her head and the bandanna over her eyes, but nonetheless the beautiful visage of the Gray Lady was unmistakable from what shadows didn’t cover her face.

“Y-you can’t do this!” the Devil choked as Death removed another scroll for the Devil. “Heaven and Hell will hear of this! You’re a Horseman! This is... this... *glk*”

“This is within my power or else I wouldn’t be able to do it, Devil. Nevertheless, you shall not speak of it to a single soul. So I offer you... oh how did you put it... a bargain?” the Devil stared. “You will sign this binding pact with a Horseman, Devil, or else my lovely wife here will reave you right here and now.”

“Wife?” I blinked.

“Quite. She was caught in Raven Castle, bound where I couldn’t remove her... this Devil was pacted with me to free her.” He turned to the Devil and I heard a dark snarl from Death as the cigar in his mouth bobbed from his chewing on it. “I meant immediately, not centuries down the line you despicable creature. But I’m not mad... the pleasures of the flesh are always... tantalizing. And I did truly miss this ass.” And he slid in close to the Gray Lady and slid his hand over her naked bottom that was hidden only by her robes. Her silent red lips spread wide into a happy smile. “Now... sign the pact, or we take your head.”

“W-what kind of option is that?” the Devil complained.

Death took a deep draw from his cigar and blew it in his face again.

“Oh, I consider it very fair in light of you bargaining Susan here for her soul in exchange for the lives of her mate and daughters... all of whom would’ve died in the next moment and you would get a free soul of her magnitude. So

me giving you a more direct pact...” he breathed in deep from his cigar and blew it in the Devil’s face again. “...I consider just. And Justice... is what I ultimately reap.”

The Devil glanced between Death and the contract as Death gestured and a silvery feather pen appeared before him. Hesitating a moment longer, a moment that earned him a nick as Lady Death pulled upward on her scythe.

“Th-this place is in between worlds. It’s outside of your domain! How did you even know she was here lest...” the Devil’s eyes widened. “...Lest you were following her.”

I looked to Death as his cigar shifted from one side of his face to the other.

“Truly... if you want to argue that this is outside of my domain, then it’s likewise outside of yours too. Thus... no one holds sway here, either Heaven or Hell... so if you’d like to claim that then there are no rules about the Balance here... and I can just kill you without bothering with a pact. Is that what you want Devil?”

The Devil looked around for help, panting as the Gray Lady pulled slowly backward on his neck with her scythe blade till he reached out, took the pen and signed the pact before Death took the pact and it disappeared.

“Bye.” He said simply and Lady Death opened her arms and the Devil was released.

He rubbed his neck, and then going to his case and cane, retrieved them, and with a stern look at Death, he shunted off and disappeared into the darkness. Looking back to Death saw him standing close by the Gray Lady, palming her bottom still and rubbing it while she leaned on her Scythe, its blade clicking down into a long sheathe in the staff itself.

“Which brings us to you.” Death said and drew deep from his cigar so the cherry burned red.

“Were you following me?” I asked him politely.

“In a sense. I track every human and humanoid on Earth Realm, Susan. You had the unfortunate mishap of stumbling onto me. The problem with that is that once you see me... you can’t un-see me. You now have the dubious honor of seeing death approaching.”

My ears flattened and eyes widened. “What has been seen cannot be unseen!” I choked out.

“Quite.” And Death took the cigar from his mouth and held it in that hand of armored fingers that looked like skeletal finger bones. “I offer you another choice, Susan. The Devil spoke true, but he didn’t give you all the information. Yes this portal will only allow one other person through, but he didn’t make you aware of all things. Most especially on how to save all of you without having to sacrifice your soul in the process.”

“Nothing is for free. Do I have to give you my soul instead?” I asked and Mad gripped my arm while the girls gripped my leg fur.

“Like I mentioned... I’m not an asshole... just a dick.” He flicked his ashes off. “I have a task that you can do for me, Susan. To agree to do this task, which are like the trials of Hercules, I assure you, a task you will very well survive from, I will help you all get free of this place. As always... you are free to choose otherwise, but I’m certain you already know the consequences.” And he flicked his cigar one more time, a cigar that though it produced ashes, ashes that fell past the stairs and kept on falling, but nonetheless his cigar never seemed to burn down. After his little display he put it back in his mouth and the cherry burned red again.

“I can guess.” And I looked at the contract.

It was a simple contract. It stated:

I, the undersigned, in exchange for the safety of Alice and Jenny and Madoushi and myself do solemnly swear to serve in a single task for the Fourth Horseman of the Apocalypse.

It wasn't loaded with legal jargon like the Devil's contract was. Instead it was short, simple, to the point... and as wide open as an aircraft hangar. But... taking his silvery pen, I took a deep breath... and signed.

“It's done then.” Death mentioned and removed his cigar again, and then he approached, looked me in the face for a moment – though I still couldn't see his – and then he knelt and palmed the faces of Jenny and Alice together. “It... is so unfair to you.” He said quietly... to them and not to me. Why them?

“We know you.” The girls said together. “We... remember... you. And a box.”

“Shh... don't even try to remember that memory. It's best it's forgotten. But you let my brothers and I out. Though our duty requires us to bring pain unto the progeny of man, it is so... so unfair that you were cursed... just for being curious.”

“Can we go home now?” they asked.

“Your home is long destroyed, and the being that did this to you has been punished. I saw to it personally. Now don't be afraid. You're both going to go to sleep, you're going to sleep a dreamless sleep for a short while, and when you wake up you're going to forget everything. You're going to forget about Drake and the Castle; you're going to forget about everything before this point.”

“W-wait a damn minute!” Mad scoffed. “Forget?! What the hell...” but Death began to rise and the girls rose with him, being carried up as Death spread his six black wings, and Alice and Jenny closed their eyes as their bodies began to glow.

“Death! What are you... no! N-no-no-no!” I screamed and reached for the girls, but my hands fell right through their bodies, finding no purchase as they started to dissolve and their clothes fell off them till Death held two glowing balls of light in each hand. “You bastard! What did you do to them?!”

“If either of you truly knew who they were... you'd consider this a blessing to them.” Death said quietly, and pushed the lights together till they became one, more vibrant, more beautiful, a white ball with blue and red motes sparkling in it. The ball sang in a way that made me cry. “You agreed to my help, Susan, but I dictate how I help... and the only solution for them... her... is a loophole.”

“A-a loophole?” I choked crying tears.

“Yes... a loophole. Now brace yourself.”

And he opened his hand and the light swam, it rushed about me, dancing, giggling with an echoing sound of only a single girl at play, and then it swung downward, pressed right against my vulva and pushed. I gasped and lifted up onto my toes as it pressed inside me, my claws scrapping at the barrier behind me as I gurgled and my eyes rolled up into the back of my head, it was by far the largest thing to ever enter me that way. I felt it sliding up the canal of

woman flesh inside me before it burst into my womb and I gasped with relief as it finally did, my loins draining sexual juices as I panted, and there the ball danced like butterflies in my stomach before it settled in a place, and I gasped and panted holding my supremely muscled tummy with both hands, feeling Mad grip my hand while I panted from the experience.

“What did you do?!” Mad demanded for me as I felt faint, and with a groan I felt my juices leak more fluidly from my sex as a micro orgasm split me.

“A loophole.” Death replied and replaced his cigar in his mouth. “While a child is in a mother’s womb... mother and child are considered one.

“Her body... is considered a part of your body now Susan.”

“Don’t you mean their bodies?” Mad asked.

“No.” he answered simply, and I gasped, and stepping forward gripped I Death’s robe as I fell to my knees.

“N-no... we were going to be a family.” I sobbed.

“Susan... you still will be. What I just did is a blessing for her. You must understand that your current wants for her aren’t what’s best.”

“W-what do you mean?” Mad asked and I nodded vigorously.

“Pendragon will have more answers for you.” Death supplied. “This now brings me to the next part of our bargain. Madoushi.”

Madoushi jumped and then cringed. “If you’re going to do to me what you did to the girls...”

“Girl.” Death replied sternly. “And no. You have the ability to leave in a way not available to Susan or the child, Madoushi. Strange, though... that Fate would keep you here with fear so long, but you could’ve left this lie long, long ago. You were just too afraid to. And let that be a lesson to you...” and Death pointed at me. “...Fate cheats at cards.” He took a deep breath from the cigar and exhaled. “*Oh look at this... it’s just the card I needed.*’ Damned cheater.”

“Th-then... are you... s-suggesting that I leave... leave by the Dream Time?”

“Yes. But this time... I have a benefit for you. This time I have a guide to lead you out.” And he gestured to the Gray Lady and she held out her lovely porcelain hand. “Follow her... she will lead you out. Close your eyes the whole way if you wish.”

Mad looked to me and we embraced briefly, and turning to the Gray Lady, he took her hand and she pulled him along, his body becoming transparent as they walked away into the darkness together.

“Tell me what happened to Alice and Jenny!” I demanded once they’d disappeared.

“No.”

“Tell me about them now!” I demanded and pointed a finger at the ground in punctuation and Death whirled on me.

“I SAID NO!” his voice boomed and I screamed from the power of it as he pulled his cloak around him and yanked it out of my fingers. “No, Susan.” He said more softly. “That... is a matter of pride. If you want to know more, then you can ask your mentor Pendragon. Usually a fertilized egg gains it’s soul when the heart beats. With your growing child being nothing more than an empty vessel inside you, it’s the perfect place to place the girl’s soul within and give her a place to rest for now. When it comes time for Heaven to send your child a soul then it’ll be found that your child already has one... and all will be well.” I swallowed and nodded. “And so this brings us off to you.” And he lifted his hand and flicked the barrier and it broke like a stained glass window. “Take care of her, Susan. If there’s anyone else in the world who’d care for her other than the Horsemen... I’d be glad that it’s you.”

I stepped through the portal and found myself climbing out of the sunken portal in the basement of Lea Monde.

“Susan!” Fellania shouted and she and Remy reached out to help me out before the portal closed shut like an oculus and the spell circle that was there snapped like a complex fluorescent light blowing. “Madoushi! The girls! Where are they Sue?”

“They...” I paused and palmed my belly. “They’re taking a different route out.”

“Different route... Susan... what happened?” Remy asked and I felt my lower lip tremble and I palmed my belly with the other hand. “I-It’s ok. They’re coming... eventually.”

“Eventually...?” Remy began but then there was a crack and a rumble, and a ceiling stone fell and shattered between us. “...Never mind... this is not good.”

“What?! What now?!” Fell shouted as the rumbling grew in loudness. “Haven’t we dealt with enough, damn it?!”

“The Pyramid’s coming down on us. Everyone run!” Remy shouted.

We didn’t need another thought on that.

We ran together, dodging and weaving falling stones, the eldritch glow rapidly waning as spirits suddenly became aware of where they were instead of mindlessly following hundreds of thousands of year’s long instructions to reenact the moments of their death and then they evaporated around us. We sprinted up the stairs and down the long main hall, rushing out the double gates and out into the sewer even as Lea Monde collapsed in on itself, and all the rock and sewer pipes and stone above it cascaded downward to burry Lea Monde permanently into the Earth.

“It couldn’t support itself.” Remy mentioned quietly as I sat and slid downward, palming my belly again. “With its magic spent, the weight of the city above it crushed it.”

Fell noticed me and palmed my head for comfort.

“Great... we move from one hole to another hole. We’re in France again.”

“Yeah I know.” Remy sighed. “Terrible isn’t it? Come on then... let’s get the hell out of here.”

We exited the sewer systems out the way we came, walking through all those sewers naked even. Well... not Remy, he still had pants. With Fell and I so large, we couldn't very well be twelve and eighteen feet tall respectfully, so we had to shrink down a little at least. The whole walk I kept thinking about Mad, the girls... and kept palming my belly.

But no sooner had we taken more than a few steps from within than a sewer's exit did a cry of alarm sound near us and Remy and Fell brought up weapons to defend ourselves when a body fell against me, knocking me down, and with the sliding motion as we did fall, I soon found myself on my rump, legs wide, and a face pressed over my sex.

"Hello Susan." Came a familiar voice, and Mad looked up from my lap and I gasped and swung forward to embrace him.

But then he squinted and looked up, lifting a hand toward the bright sun.

"The... sun..." he breathed, looking up at its glorious light. "I thought... I'd never see its light again." He breathed and closed his eyes as I hugged him, and he faced the light dreamily and laughed and began to weep. "I'm home."

I am Remy.

We found a quiet secluded place... Susan and Madoushi a distance away in seclusion as Madoushi... explored... his affections for Sue.

I'd scrounged some berries and leaves and roots to share, content to sit in a shaft of light for the moment. But then my moment was interrupted as a shadow passed in front of the light, and looking up I saw Fellania... nude still, wide hips, powerful feminine body... thick boulders for breasts like only bears could produce. Her scent reeked of her still growing heat. She wasn't to the fertile hump now... as if I could impregnate her anyways.

"I didn't thank you." *She said and knelt, getting out of the light to sit beside me.* "When I got knocked out by that falling rock in the end of the castle and you hauled me up and dragged me to safety. I am appreciative. I know that this isn't much... but I truly... truly... want to give it to you."

"Give... what exactly, Fellania?" *I asked.*

"This." *And she moved forward, lips puckering, drawing close to kiss me... and despite how much I really, really wanted it, despite how much I'd love to taste those lips, I lifted a pair of fingers and pressed it against her mouth. She kissed it anyways and then blinked when she realized two vertical fingers weren't two horizontal lips.*

"What... what the hell was that?!" *she gasped and then rose angrily to her feet.* "You hit on me for days on end, and when I want to kiss you in thanks you turn me away?!" *I picked up a flat rock.* "You stupid, stupid French... Rat! I cannot..." *And I spat on the rock and looked at it as the stone hissed and sizzled like it'd been hit with a droplet of acid.* "...believe... I cared... for... you?"

I set it down and we both watched my spit eat a hole in the rock, creating an acrid brimstone smell.

"You saved me again." *She mentioned and sat roughly down again, apart from me now.* "Damn it! I'm so flustered from this... stupid... heat!" *I didn't disagree. It's not an insult... everyone gets flustered from time to time.* "Sorry I flew off the handle like that."

“Already forgiven.” *I told her, and she turned and watched me as my spit continued to hiss against the stone. “I do want to kiss you, Fellania... just... not right now. I used the rat’s special technique twice... it’ll be a bit before the diseases and poisons and acidity level of my saliva is at a level where I won’t kill you by kissing you.”*

“Oh.” *She was quiet and watched the rock turn into a circular shape. “What’s it called? That Technique?”*

“The Seven Deadly Venoms. I had six before coming here... but... I don’t know. Since ingesting an ancient Vampire’s flesh and blood... I should be dead now! But... I’m not. I survived the most potent of poisons to a Lycan... so... maybe it’s seven now... I don’t know.”

She paused again, and I tried not look at the wedge of her pelvis... where just slightly below her folded legs were her... no... stop it. She... is... a... FRIEND!

“Why are you so nice to me all of a sudden?” *she asked.*

“Because you’re my friend now... or... I’d like to consider you as one... if you’ll let me. I know you hate French, but seeing that I’m Creole and all I...”

And Fellania rose, shifted to straddle my lap with her powerfully muscular body, pressing her breasts beneath my chin before folding my head to her bosom and kissing me lightly on the head. Without thinking I embraced her about the back and palmed her tit... not to grope... it’s just that was how large her tit was when I tried to touch her chest. So long as I didn’t grope I was sure it wouldn’t be too bad. And it was a wonderful thing to have my head surrounded in strong arms and thick breasts.

For a time I was content to be there like that... this wasn’t a sexual thing, I didn’t even get a chub... well... maybe a little. But then there was a light crack of sound and we both moved to see a little creature sitting on a rock. He had large eyes and antenna and things similar to butterfly wing. He had twiggy little arms brought up and folded together at the chest as he looked at us both.

“Aww... he’s so cute.” *Fellania cooed.*

“Until now, I thought only mice and rats could do that trick of posing like that properly.”

His red body shimmered in the light while his prehensile tail curled greatly, behind him. A pair of spindly arms beneath the larger top pair were rubbing their little hands together briefly.

“Am I doing it like a rat, or rats doing it like us.” *He smirked suddenly with a wink. “Are you Fellania and Remy?” it asked us timidly and we looked at each other.*

“Yes?” *Fell answered.*

“Oh thank god!” *the little guy said and stood up and turned. “Traveling while having to pee so bad is a bitch and I’ve been looking for you guys for a damn hour. Excuse me but I really gotta pee.”*

And he rose and turned, we heard a unzipping sound and a loud squelch of some wet meat falling and hitting something, making even me blink, before a long stream arched upward and away at a distance of at least three yards.

“Ohh... ah... ohh-oh-oh... ahhh!” he managed rolling his head backward and gurgling with a strange cackling purr as the stream slowed and finished.

“Um...” Fell began and the stream began again.

“OH!” the little guy groaned. “Mine... mine, mine... that tree is mine.” And he peed on the tree. “And that rock is mine.” And he peed on the rock. “Mine. Mine... and... mine. And that’s mine. Oh, oh... oh... ahhh...” And the stream ended.

“Well... um... ok that was disgusting and...” Fell began but then the little guys farted and the stream started anew harder than ever.

“Oh man...” it grew harder and faster, arching further. “Oh man!” And the stream grew even harder, arching up a tree. “Oh MAN!” Harder still. “Oh... oh no! Oh Man!” The tree fell over and finally the stream lessened. “Oh... oh... ahhh...” and he piddled several times, twitching and gurgling every now and again either his wings, his tail or a leg.

“Ok now that that’s finished...” Fell dared after several long seconds of waiting and then the stream began anew and the little guy leaned forward, placing his hand on a spot before him like an invisible wall and leaning forward, grunting as he shook his meat apparently as the stream went all over the place before he produced some asparagus and ate it, and both Fell and I wrinkled our noses.

“I gotta tell you, lady... you are hot looking.” He said and turned over his shoulder to look at Fell with a smirk. “You are very, very hot looking.” and the stream slowly arched upward as he palmed a spot in front of him still. “I mean this was hard enough before coming here, but now that I’m looking at you now... oh jeeze.” And he ducked as I threw a rock at him.

“Get on with it!” I shouted at him.

“Damn dawg... you’ve just got no sense of humor.” And he turned about, Fell moving to hide her eyes but we both blinked at the sight of a sprinkler that started to click its way in one direction and sputter in the next before the little guy turned a spigot to shut the water off. “Name’s Bob by the way, now where are the other two... having sex?” he grinned and clapped both sets of hands together and rubbed them while wagging his eyebrows.

Fell got up. She was comfortable nude, apparently, because she didn’t even cover up when the little guy looked her from head to toe.

“I’m up here, bub.” She said and pointed at her face, leaning over with breasts dancing mesmerizingly beneath her.

“I know... but I’m having a conversation. Hello... how are you? Miss me?” he asked her breasts and she swatted him reflexively. “Ow... a joke! A joke! Can’t you take a joke? And my name’s not ‘bub,’ it’s Bob. Or Ba’ab if you can pronounce it that way. And relax... I have a mate already... I was just having some fun.”

“A mate?” Fellania asked, folding her arms beneath her breasts to press the pair between her biceps. “What’s her name so I can tell her you were staring at my breasts?”

“Pun’t’ang.” He replied smartly as he got up and brushed himself off with all four arms. “Yeah I know I know... I’ve heard them all. I’m stationed in poontang, I’m married to poontang... come on... one up me on that one. No? Then shaddap. Now again... where are the other two?”

“Other two? You know about Madoushi already?” *I asked.*

“That his name? Don’t know. I was just told to... hold on.” *He reached somewhere, goodness knows where since he had no real pockets and pulled out a pair of reading glasses that he put on his face and then unfolded a piece of paper as large as a road map.* “Pick... up... four... people. Two males... two females... one named Fellania Bloodclaw, one named... Remy LeBeau... one named Susan and one... other..... guy.” *He crumpled the paper and threw it over his shoulder. It burst into a fireball and scattered to ash before hitting the ground.* “So where are the other two? Having sex? Can I watch?”

“Lord, he’s worse than Pendragon.” *Fell blinked.*

“I am not!” *he grinned and slid his lower hands into two sets of flaps like pockets.* “And understand what I mean by that and leave it at that. Wink.”

“He’s a fairy dragon.” *I mentioned with disbelief, gesturing to Bob.*

“What? But he’s so small. Pen is small... but he’s.... small!” *Fell said squatting next to him and prodding him atop the head before he used his hands to slap her finger away.*

“Hey! Stoppit! I’m sensitive about my height!” *and then he sniffed.* “I know I’m a runt... but you don’t have to say it.”

“Ah...” *Fell began right before Bob started bawling.*

“Waaa-ah-ah-ah-ahhhhh. Y-you’re so mean! You make fun of midgets too Barbarella?! That’s just... mean!” *and he continued to cry, rubbing his eyes.*

“Oh... I’m sorry... I...” *Fell began and he stopped the waterworks instantly.*

“Fine! Now... ah there they are. *sniff* And covered in utter STANK! Quick someone open a window!”

“Why you little...” *Fell began but then stopped and turned to see Sue and Madoushi arrive.*

“Good... all here then? Perfect... time to go!” *and he snapped his fingers and we fell from a short distance onto a floor.*

“Badda-bing-badda-boom I’m done. They’re all yours boss.” The little fairy dragon said as he disappeared again with a crack of sound, leaving us within the confines of a sanctuary chamber.

It was dark out, with approaching sunset wherever we were, but judging on the architecture of the room I was certain I knew where we were now. The problem was that we were all dropped in a pile on each other.

“Remy...” *Fell’s voice chimed in.*

“Yeah?”

“Is that a pack of Mentos in your pocket?”

“No... but you’re not on me this time. That’s Madoushi.”

“Sorry... I landed in Sue’s bosom... and it smells nice.” Mad mentioned with a muffled intone.

“But now that we mention it, Fell... can you please remove your posterior off my head? I’m not one for face-sitting, yodeling in the valley sure, but not face sitting.”

We detached ourselves from each other, standing up in the darkened room, and no sooner did we arrive than maidens wearing opaque gowns arrived. One was waiting for me to stand to wrap me in a coverlet that wrapped me to cover my nakedness. Fell too. Remy and Mad got different coverlets as well, only cut for males.

There was oriental music playing in the background, and in the dimness of the incense filled room a pair of eyes, cat’s eyes, stared out at us. Those eyes were framed in a lovely body with artfully disarrayed purple kimono surrounding it with her womanly parts covered by a yellow bathing suit beneath the layered kimono.

She, a feline with long fur, covered her lips with one finger, and I blinked as I measured her insurmountable size! She was massive! Perhaps nearly as massive as I was. We watched as she plucked a grape and fed it to something nestled before her muscular arm but beneath the fattened breast pressed against his ropy body.

“Pendragon!” Fellania shouted and the music stopped immediately as Pen opened his eyes lazily.

“Shh... *please*... I have a headache.” He groaned and rose, holding his side.

“Got what was coming to you then, did you old one.” Remy said sternly with a smirk.

“Yes I did, but the fact of the matter is I lived through it... again.”

“Pen... lived through what?” I asked aloud.

“Another time... it’s not important... but, do you have the scroll Susan?”

I held out the golden scroll case, staring at him as he nodded.

“Pen... you owe us some answers.” Fell said sternly. “A lot of answers... Now.”

“So I do.” He sighed and began to get up, and the female behind him fussed and tried to keep him down but also tried to help him up and he quieted her gently, but as he turned I saw that his chest and ribs were bandaged to favor layers of gauze under one side of his body.

“They went for the other one this time I see.” Remy mentioned as he stared at the bandages.

“Yes they did. Only they assumed that a Dragon’s heart is so frail that your Seven Deadly Venoms could kill it like that. Oh it hurt... it truly did... but understand this, Remy LeBeau... I did this because I needed you... for them.” And he pointed from Remy to the rest of us, and lifting his hand his staff lifted from its holder and floated into his hand.

I noticed he was leaning on it heavily as the female that'd been tending to him closed her robes over the bathing suit before quickly moving to help him down the short steps so that he could approach me. And when he did, we stared at each other for a moment while I held the robes closed over my bosom before he reached up and slid a hand beneath the robes and spread his four little fingers against my tummy before sighing.

“Ah... she is safe. Bless you, Sue... you'll be a fine mother.”

“Wait... mother?” Mad blinked. “Pregnant?”

Pen hobbled away to leave me to this.

“I-I was looking for the right time to tell you.” I replied, biting my lower lip.

It was a tenuous moment. I felt like a teen telling her boyfriend of no longer than a week that I was pregnant, not knowing and even fearing his reaction. So when Mad stepped forward and embraced me, held me tight enough that milk squeezed from my tits, I gripped him tightly and held onto him.

“And Fellania... in touch with your ancestors now I see?” Pen said then and Mad and I turned to look at him as he fingered the lengthened staff. “Your human form has put on at least... what... fifty pounds?”

“Mind your own business!” Fell said sternly.

“Suit yourself.” He said in that tone that meant he knew a secret that he wasn't telling.

“And Remy... received a nice upgrade? All of you experienced the Blood Moon? All of you stronger, wiser...”

“Get on with it!” Fell snarled and the cat-woman behind Pen squeaked and shunned the loud noise.

“Fellania... please... patience. And also, my special guest has a very gentle heart. I will ask you, please... don't upset her. It's like doing a touchdown spike with a Faberge Egg. You just don't do it... and anyone who does should be beaten within an inch of their life.” The analogy got us all to blink. “But... let us adjourn to a different locale that can accommodate us all. I promise I will answer all of your questions in turn.”

I was being coddled... by a nice strong man. Well... true I was many times stronger than he was, but he had enough to make me feel warm and safe. He was palming my belly, massaging the hard twelve pack that I had there. Sadly a twelve pack was the most my human body could hold. We'd all been fitted with heavier clothes, additional layers of clothing that was made of silk and was very fine and warm. The only strip of clothing left was Remy's pants, and two sexy girls – one of them a rat – disrobed him as they added the other layers of clothing.

Once again that cat-woman was here, Pen sitting on her thick, thick lap as if it were a booster seat, he using her chest as a pillow while she snuggled him and massaged his head with her fingers and claws. She seemed so gentle... impossibly so given her size.

“My staff.” Fellania said immediately. “My first mother's staff. How did you know to give this to me?”

“Don't ask a magician how he does his tricks, Fellania, he'll never tell.” Pen smirked, purring a subtle cackling-purr that sounded like an idling moped engine. “I could explain exactly how, but you're not steeped deeply enough in

magics to understand it. Suffice it to say, I knew you needed it. I've known for a long time really, and just like Sue... as I'm sure you've perhaps discovered by now, you have a... shall we call it a divine bloodline too?"

"Divine?" Fell asked.

"I cannot reveal anything more than that, but words like '*destiny*' and '*fate*' would be used."

"I make my own destiny." She mentioned.

"Sure you do. Everyone does..." Pen replied with a subtle smile and merely blinked his large eyes up at Fell.

"Oh I hate you." She said and folded her arms and crossed her legs and pouted.

"Hate is a strong word, Fellania, but if you are interested, I have other... gifts... to give you later if you're interested."

Fell harrumphed.

"And me?" Remy mentioned.

"I knew they couldn't do their task without you. They are the major players, Remy. For all accounts and purposes you've just played your part in their story. I'm... not aware of you having any destiny greater than the one you now have."

"So... I was... just swept up in the maelstrom."

"Fe-maelstrom maybe." Pen smirked and Remy raised an eyebrow at him, Fell scowled and I rolled my eyes. "But regardless, you came out of it a hero! Well... I only assume that... baring that you're covered head to toe in scratches and all your weapons are gone."

"Those weapons were expensive, Master Pendragon."

"We have several bars of True Silver for your use, Master Remy."

"I... I'm no master..."

"You are now. Or am I wrong in that matter? A rat of the Seven Deadly Venoms automatically is given their own clan. And for one so young..."

"Quiet about that..." Remy said quickly and rubbed his arm nervously. His fingers flicked over a scar there.

"Ah... so you don't want it." Pen nodded. "I understand. Sen won't betray your secret... I'm sure."

"Sen?" Remy blinked and Pen gestured to the rat-girl with her supple fur and pink ears who lifted a hand and waved at him with a silk handkerchief.

"She fancies you." Pen smirked impishly... that same sort of smirk that denoted he was up to mischief.

Remy's lips moved repeatedly as his eyes widened. "And... if you're interested, Master Remy... I can reward you more... for further services."

Remy looked back sharply at Pen.

"You can't afford me."

"I'm a great wyrm dragon, Remy. I have more money than any first world nation on Earth." Pen said with a raised brow ridge and Remy gave an involuntary twitch. "Just saying... keeping you on a retainer would be well worth my while, I mean your while."

"The same thing goes for you Fellania." Pen said and then turned to me and folded two of his hands together and took a deep breath, almost waiting for this to settle in on her.

"Wait... what?" Fell blinked and I had to hide the smile from my face as that cat-woman fem behind Pen massaged his back.

"Sorry. What?"

"What was that you just asked?"

"What What?"

"What did you just say to me?"

"What? *What What?*"

Remy lifted his hands to start doing a *'raising-the-roof'* motion, but stopped when Fell glared at him. "Too soon?" he asked and Fell rolled her eyes and looked back at Pen.

"Say *'what'* one more time. I dare you... say *'what'*... one more time."

I swear the Shamisen player suddenly twiddled her fingers in the music that accompanied that character. That den-la-len-a-len-len-len-a-len sound.

"I would like to employ you. Or rather... support you. I am a very generous host, Fellania Bloodclaw, and I can supply you with comfort fitting of a... well let's just come out and say it: A Druidic Princess.

"A P-Princess? ME?!" Fell balked. "Look, I'm no Princess."

"Your Bloodline says otherwise." Pen retorted and waited as Fell gaped and gasped. "You are the direct line from your first mother in the regards of mother to first daughter... We'll speak of it later.

"Now Susan... You had more questions?"

"Just... two." I replied. "The first one is... you... *knew*... about Madoushi." He nodded. "You knew he'd come out with us. Y-you knew..." I paused. "When I asked you before... about the man I should marry... did you know about him when you gave me that answer about who I should marry earlier? When I came back from Wormwood?"

Pen stared at me, took a long breath and then closed his eyes and nodded.

“H-how... how could you...”

“I will tell you the same thing I did then. What if I had?” I fell silent. “Everything affects everything else. You look into the future and it changes... because you looked at it. Everything is a domino effect or a butterfly effect, Susan,” and his eyes swiveled to Fell and then Remy. The glance wasn’t lost on them. “It wasn’t fair, I agree, but it was done to produce the best results.”

“Then... tell me... why!” I almost raged, partially transforming right there, and the cat-fem supporting Pen squeaked.

He sighed. “Not yet. Something hasn’t occurred yet for me to tell you that answer but... he looked up for a moment and we all looked in that direction but saw nothing. “I can tell you later tonight. And your other question?”

“M-my baby.” I whimpered as I calmed down and returned to fully human. “W-why is it only one?” I was nearly in tears when Pen reached out and took both my hands resting on the table between us with two of his hands, his other two hands folded beneath him on the table as he leaned forward. “That, I promise you, is a private matter for you, and only you, Susan. I will tell you about that tonight. But that is a thing only, and I do stress *only* for your ears. Do you understand?” I bit my lower lip and nodded. “I promise answers to your questions... but they cannot happen now.”

“Why not?” Fell asked. “She deserves to know.”

“That’s a personal matter for her, Fellania.” Pen said and jerked his head at me. “Just like I have a personal matter for you later, and only for you. If you want your friend to know after the fact, that is your decision, but it is not for me to do so. It’d be like you opening your underwear drawer and finding me laying there with your panties on my head.”

“Wow... that was graphic.” Remy said.

“And we’ll leave it at that.” Pen mentioned. “Your journey has been long and hard, and you all deserve a significant amount of rest. Rooms have been prepared for all of you along with meals and other comforts you may wish. I however, need to rest for tonight.”

“One more thing.” Fellania mentioned and we sat down again. “What... happened to you? Remy knows, so I either hear it from you or I hear it from him as I shake him for not telling.”

Pen nodded.

“I *renegotiated* a contract with Remy’s leadership. I suffered the penalty for attempting to renegotiate a contract that’s supposed to be non-negotiable.”

“What did they do?” I asked, in awe of the moment now that I was hearing more about this mysterious Remy.

Pen thought and eyed Remy and he shook his head and held his hands up off the table briefly to say no to tell the tale instead of Pen, so Pen took up the mantle and continued.

“Historically speaking, on the list of the most virulent things this world has ever known, number one is Hind’s Blood. Second... is the Sven Deadly Venoms of a fully initiated wererat. This is of course followed by Naga Venom and then Dragon Venom... but regardless, the Rats are feared because a fully adult rat will have at least a level one in this venom. They’re doubly feared because each one is a trained thief and assassin, and triply feared that rats rarely appear in anything less than paired teams, and often as three or more.”

“If not thirty of them all at once apparently.” Fell mentioned and I managed a chuckle, remembering what Pen had told her about the rats before we left for Lea Monde.

“But,” Pen continued. “There is a standing clause about renegotiation with the rat-clans once they’ve taken a contract. You see... once the contract is taken, they won’t break it for any reason. Whoever does is executed very painfully and rather slowly. It’s an honor thing.”

“How did you renegotiate it?” I asked and Pen took a long deep inhale through his nose.

“The clause states that if you can survive being stabbed by one of their knives imbued with the Seven Deadly Venoms, then and only then will they renegotiate. It was meant as a joke, but it’s the only loop hole in their contracts I’ve ever been able to exploit.”

“They surmise if you’re strong enough to survive a stab then you’re too powerful to upset.” Remy mentioned quietly.

“Imagine their surprise when I did that the first time.” Pen beamed.

“Imagine their surprise when you did it a second time.” Remy mused.

“Quite. They thought they had me this time though.”

“They... *stabbed* you?!” I gasped. “Oh Pen...”

“Stabbed me yes... after licking their blade. A stiletto, right underneath the fourth rib, just deep enough to get it into my left heart where it can directly get into my entire blood stream. By the way, Remy... your grandfather is an ass.”

“Tell me about it.” Remy grumbled.

“Fine then. Any more questions? Good. Sue... I’ll arrive later tonight once the event has happened... and... please don’t be mad at me.”

And I sat there stunned as that fem that’d been coddling him picked him up, hugged him to her bosom like he were a stuffed animal and nuzzled his head, his feet and tail hanging below him. He looked happy being nestled that deeply into a bosom. She then walked off with him before guides came for each of us to show us to our rooms.

Remy got the lovely Sen as his guide.

Sen was a demure, silken rat... a combination that was so uncommon amongst our breed. She was feminine, lithe and graceful with the poise of a geisha. She walked a pace behind me and at my side, her hair done up in a

multitude of fancy sticks and combs and other finery that only enhanced her beauty. She reminded me of the nearly unheard of sect of the clans that took an alternative training direction than the rest of rat-kind.

Again... so rare.

Her lips had a band of lipstick on them right at the center of the lips instead of covering the whole of the lips... just a little bit to give the imitation of a small, pert mouth.

“This way, Master LeBeau.” She directed and gestured to her side as we reached a corridor, and together we climbed some stairs.

I felt like I was starting on another journey following this fem... and I kept looking at her... soft... pink tail and rounded behind.

She smelled nice... sweet... clean. Again, so uncharacteristic of our women.

Secretly... we rats say that there were two kinds of deadly venoms... the kinds we could spit up, and the kinds our women kept in their vaginas. Sex was a favorite way of killing their prey with the females of our race. Other were races perpetrated that legend too, especially after a powerful wolf warlord died horribly from poisons after forcing himself on one of our females. Oh we were immune to those venoms... but it'd nonetheless earned our fems the moniker of 'Filthy Whores.'

I gutted the last man who used that term to reference my mother.

We finally came to a room and she pleasantly moved forward and pushed the doors open before folding her long-fingered hands into the sleeves of her robe and the kimono under it as she bent over. And you're damn right I looked!

Her kimono was off her shoulders, wrapping her arms instead of covering her shoulders, and her ample bodice was hemmed in by a chest wrap that nonetheless still showed off cleavage and allowed her full and ripened mammaries to hang just enough of her chest to allow them to wobble as she leaned over..

I was looking so intently that I rammed myself right into the door jam and Sen covered her mouth with one hand and chuckled pleasantly.

“Careful Master LeBeau.” She giggled.

It sounded like a quick series of high-pitched squeaking when she laughed, but it added to her demure, and striding into the large room, I found that it'd already been prepared with a rat's-nest in one corner of the room.

“Remy.” I told her. “Enough of this 'master' bullshit. I'm no master. Not to you... not to anyone.”

“As you wish.” She curtsied and I strode in, looking at the warm furnishings, the dark lighting... it was comfortable. Someone who knew the mind of a rat decorated this place.

The doors closed to the room and I assumed that I was alone. Geisha are supposed to leave after seeing someone to their rooms. So I looked at the drink, it was a fine ale. Some of that later. But for now, I had a lot to contemplate... and I ached like hell. That last adventure had me using techniques that seriously, seriously pushed my abilities far, far ahead of their curve.

Moving to the bed I flopped down in its shaped bowl that was surrounded by twisted felt cloth. It gave enough of a simulation of an actual rat's nest, which was usually done by taking dirty clothes and heaping it around a mattress on the floor, that I relaxed immediately... till I felt my robes being undone.

I gasped and arose, groping for a knife but found myself not having one, but I relaxed from the panic of letting my guard down as I saw Sen there.

"I... thought you'd left." *I told her.*

"Nope!" *she giggled in that high-pitched way of hers.* "I've been assigned to be your attendant tonight."

"Attendant?" *I asked, wanting her to elaborate but she merely smiled and nodded as she got me down to the waist wrap.* "What exactly does an attendant... do?" *I asked her then, raising an eyebrow.*

"I've been trained in every matter that is needed." *She squeaked happily.*

"Every matter?" *I asked.* "And what if... I asked you I really needed to get my gun off?"

"Then I would gasp," *she mocked a stunned gasped.* "And tell you that that is a thing that Geisha just do not do!" *I smirked and laid my head back in the pillows, but then found her mouse-like hand sliding upward along my groin from nads toward tip, and I lifted my head immediately with eyes wide as I found myself erecting hard outside of my control.* "And then I would tell you that I'm only trained as Geisha." *She smirked, and stroked that lengthening shaft with one finger... with its long painted nail.*

"Grandmaster Pendragon selected me personally to serve you." *She told me. She knew just how to touch.* "I was trained for just this one specific night from the age of a young girl." *She mused.* "Of course... the more... adultish training didn't come till much more recently.

"Figures." *I mentioned, really... really enjoying a woman's hand upon my shaft as her finger tip and nail tip found the peak of my shaft and pressed in on it.*

I'd not yet petitioned to be able to breed yet. Only heroes and the strongest and most potent of us were allowed to breed with the females. The only sex I'd ever had was with humans... or with other Lycan not of my breed; the fact that she was a rat was so... so... hot!

"Why does that figure?" *she squeaked.*

"He wants me under his thumb. He tempts me with money... and riches and... and... oh that feels so nice... and women..."

"I can stop if you want me to."

"Now you're teasing me. No fair. Goo..." *and my pelvis lifted of its own accord.*

"Then... what if, and this is a hypothetical 'what-if' now, after tonight, if you want me to stay, I'll stay?" *and she leaned over, giving me another view of the rounded orbs of her breasts, only there seemed so much more of them now.*

Oh why were females such a vice? Why is it I lose my head over a nice couple of cans and a tight tail?

“I-I wouldn’t mind... not at all.” I replied, shaking my head from side to side as she smiled at me, and then kneeling backwards and fingering the wrap about my legs and loins off, I briefly stared at the Ole’ One Eye as it looked up at me as if to say: ‘What are you doing, stupid!’.

“Good, now get up. Come on.”

“But why?” I asked her as she took me by the hands and pulled me back, and I rose with the fish hook hooking her skirt. Down boy!

“Because you need a bath, and someone to tend to all those nasty cuts and bruises. And... oh!” she squeaked.

“W-what?!” I gasped and almost blew my load.

“Your tail is pink! And your nose and ears too and...” she looked down and smirked. “Well not that....” And she pointed at my junk.

“Not any more, anyways.” I grinned a toothy buck-toothed grin. She giggled.

“Come on then.”

I didn’t think it was possible to be bathed by another person without them actually entering the water with you, but she managed it without getting a scrap of her silk clothing wet, or discarding a single stitch. Everything was ceremonial, Japanese. It was said that the Rat Clans began in Japan. But now our people had established our home in a stolen city underneath the city that was underneath New York.

This must’ve been what it was like when it was the age of the Ninja Clans in Feudal Japan... possibly even older than that. Legends bespoke of demure females tending to their lords and the heroes of their clans. Sen was such a creature. I wouldn’t doubt it that Pendragon would somehow have all the scrolls necessary to train those lost arts that my mother herself had tried to recreate.

Nevertheless, after the bath she also massaged me, applying ointments and then oils and brushing my fur back. I loved the press of a woman’s breasts against my body and head... and never in my life have I ever remembered being so hard for so long... not even when I went through a Rut and passed through my Rite of Adulthood.

And then wrapped in a gentle robe, she led me to the bed again, laid me down, and this time as she opened my robe, and this time she tugged open a flap of her Kimono and straddled my lap, showing a satin pink pair of frilled undies.

“I told you I love pink... didn’t I?” she asked me and I closed my eyes and nodded, feeling the press of a female’s vulva, guarded by an ever so thin plain of satin cloth rubbing my groin slowly... back and forth in a perfect lap dance. I felt the cleft of her sex... and then heard the rustling of cloth, and opened my eyes to see her pulling open her robes.

The way a Kimono was designed, it could just be tugged open, the thing multiple overlapping folds of silk. She dropped those folds behind her, her tail wrapping with mine, that tail silken as well, hairless and shaved and moisturized to be soft as she slid it back and forth, constricted it, unconstructed it all while still giving me a lap dance. I dared to cup her backside to find it taut and firm in just the way I liked it, and looking up her body, I saw

the firm, athletic poise of a dancer's body, sculpted from a lifetime of accenting her femininity. But as I gripped her bottom I felt that her panties had no seat, just a thong... and I grew harder.

Thongs and high heels... a pair of leg socks... lace undies... she had them all. Everything that I liked on a woman but could never find in exactly the way I wanted her... and here... she was being given to me. Given to me? Is that really possible? Was she trained this way? Just for me? From such a young age? Why would Pendragon do that?

"Yes... touch me... touch me anywhere." She squeaked, her teats hard, standing on end with her luscious primary pair pressing over her long arms, covered only in a wrap of cloth that actually hung off her breasts to cover them instead of clench them together. Two more sets of nipples lined her upper belly as well, and they too were hard enough to stick out of her white fur.

I felt a throbbing sensation steel my loins and I clenched the muscles necessary to keep myself from climaxing. She rubbed my chest, tracing its chords, she found the hidden nipples along my belly and coaxed them to harden before she bent, licked one of the primary nipples on my chest and blew on it. I switched my hands, one sliding up her belly to find the mammary pads of her lower breasts, feeling the contours of an under boob while my other went to squeezing the head of my shaft shut.

"Ah... ha...goo..." I groaned and pushed my groin against her sex. I wanted to penetrate her, I wanted to sex her! Oh sweet angel, let me in...

"You make sounds like a cooing babe." She murred and rose, and I followed her before she reached down and took my hands... both of them, and I think I'd squeezed a little out on the one hand that I'd been gripping myself with till then, and as she slipped both hands beneath her shirt and pressed them against her breasts some of the sticky life fluids from my loins created a cementing effect with her fur.

Her fur was so soft, her breasts malleable yet firm, her nipples erect, hard, like little stones against my hands, and moving her hands behind her back, she untied the pink wrap about her chest and it rustled to my body.

"I have an admittance." She cooed for me. "I've never known a man before."

"Bullshit." I heard myself say as she removed the wrap from off my body.

"It's true. I've been trained." She cooed again and pressed her chest into my hands by arching herself giving my cock a rub with her panty covered sex before tugging on the side tie strings of that undergarment – slowly pulling on them –till she pulled the strings backward and the crotch of her panties slipped off her loins down between her legs.

Her sex was indeed moist, tight, firm, pert and beautiful, and... un-penetrated. She was a virgin.

"You're not fibbing." I mentioned and she leaned forward and kissed me.

"No... I'm not. Do you want this body? It's yours."

I thought, and then something occurred to me and my hands fell from her body. Such perfect tits, such a perfect sex, such a perfect body...

"Damn you Pen." I growled, and smacked myself in the forehead.

"What?" she said slowly.

“He’s using you to entice me. Well I’ll not be enticed by a powdery, fluttery...” *and I opened my eyes and screamed high-pitched and loud as she pulled two daggers from her hair and plunged them downward.*

For a moment... I thought I was dead... they were coming straight for my eyeballs. But they landed right next to me in the cushions to either side of my head. I looked from one to the other, and then back up to her.

“I am not... Powdery... or fluttery.” *She said and rose, arching, and one piece after the next, she removed daggers and sharpened combs; hidden blades all kept in her hair and laid one after the next against my chest. “Like I said... I am well-trained.”*

And then her hair was free and unbound... and she looked just like an angel.

“Ok...” *I looked down and then looked back up at her. “I’m sufficiently wooed then.”*

“Good,” *she laughed and began with a hand job, and then pulled it upward, pressing its head about her labia first. “Cause the next one was going to pierce your ear.” She laughed, and biting her lower lip pressed herself onto me.*

We – Pen and I – had just placed this most recent scroll of my first mother’s along with the others and sealed the chamber again.

Pen himself led me through the temple, and we were followed several paces by the mighty fem who’d been tending to him earlier while Pen carefully paced beside me while walking his tall staff for support.

“So... who is she?” I asked at last, glancing at the enigmatic Felix Lycan that was following us.

“Oh... yes! My apologies. Susan, this is Lilly Jade. Lilly, this is Susan.”

“Pleased to meet you, mew!” Lilly curtsied to me.

“Pleased to meet you...” I responded a bit wide-eyed and she beamed happily.

“Nee.” She said cutely and flicked her ears. She was like a little kitten!

“You’ve just made a friend for life.” Pen smirked and I blinked at him. “Of all those times in which you might ask yourself ‘*why am I doing this?*’ think about her along with the usual things that are in your life, like friends and family and so on.”

“Why her?” I asked with surprise.

“What is your impression of the world?” he asked me in return, and I looked down at him as he kept looking forward, favoring his side.

“Well... it’s hard.”

Pen nodded. “Humans have made the world the way it is now. When other races that came before them number in the millions, humanity and its subsidiary members like the Lycan all together number in the billions. They’re the

first species to accomplish such numbers, and that's after the genocide we Dragons very nearly did upon you, the slavery the Fae accomplished before they were cursed for placing themselves as gods and goddesses before you, the misleading guidance of the elves and the wars upon wars your people enact against each other. I've seen such... terrible atrocities, Susan... the likes of which will chill you to the bone." He looked back at Lilly and smiled warmly. "This... woman... is of a heart, mind and spirit to counterbalance thousands of such atrocities, Susan."

I turned back to see this Lilly Jade blush deeply in her yellow, gold and violet clothing as she chuckled bashfully at the compliment.

I considered that with her size and bearing that she was just very well may be my equal, possibly greater than I am in my Hybrid form. Her eyes shone with power, her body rippled with strength, her form exuded sexual power... even despite the incredibility of that sexual power was expertly covered and hidden by her voluminous clothing that was tight about the bust and arms but loose everywhere else. Regardless to how snugly and how firm it was placed around her, there wasn't even the *suggestion* of a naughty bit anywhere to be seen.

"She is a paradox, Susan. All that strength, all those abilities are a semblance as to the power of her heart, generosity, and loving affection. The stronger she becomes, the gentler she becomes. You would fight and protect and do, Susan, so that people like her don't have to."

I blinked. "But... you always said if you have the ability to do a thing, it is your duty to do said thing."

"Yes, but she's not able to do what you do, though." Pen replied to that straight-faced.

"I don't understand."

She is the way that she is due to an accident in an ultra high tech laboratory. She was studying genetic medicine in a laboratory, a completely theoretical procedure and serum, but due to a single miscalculation, billions of American dollars worth of funds was shunted into her body. It gave her abilities that garner close to that of a goddess. Physically she may be stronger than you, with powers and abilities that would be able to crush armies," Lilly made a sound and I turned, seeing her shrugging her shoulders and looking meek... rather nervous. "But she lacks that mentality. The same accident that made her this way feeds off of her body's other traits. Her adrenaline goes into supplying that body, and her thyroid gland has been seriously stunted and suppressed. The stronger she becomes the meeker she becomes from it. I'd wager that she hasn't a single harmful bone in her entire enigmatic body.

"Given the instinct of fight or flight, she will always flee lest she has no choice but to do otherwise. She's not a skilled warrior, she doesn't know how to hold a weapon, and would rather destroy the thing that to use it even against an enemy." Lilly nodded vigorously.

"Hate guns." She said pleasantly, having to duck underneath each cross beam we passed in this simple temple.

"Not because she's a coward, mind you," Pen continued. "But because she would hate to cause harm... even to an enemy. Everyone is deserving of comfort and forgiveness in her mind, and so her strengths have made her the world's ultimate caregiver, Susan.

"She cannot fight because she doesn't have the will to fight... but you can."

"Because I have the will to fight?" I asked and Pen nodded.

"Before Lilly's accident she might've considered, in an emergency, to pick up a weapon and use it. But now..."

“I can’t go into the training rooms anymore. I keep breaking Pen’s toys.” Lilly chimed in.

I had to admit... I felt happier in this woman’s presence.

She was that sort of likeable person that pulled all the aggravation out of a room. Admittedly, I’d been in rooms where someone’s very presence put dread or anger or aggression or, or, or... it was then that I realized how rare it was to find someone who actually added something so positive to the world.

“I understand Pen.” I replied and we stopped at a particular room, and turning, before I knew it, Lilly was embracing me. It made me want to cry it felt so good... like your mom and your sister and best friend and daughter all hugging you at once. It was addictive really.

“You have a baby in you, mew.” She said and pressed her fingers about my belly. “An... an... She’ll be just as strong as her mommy, nya!” And she made a happy sound, bits of her hair kept out of her eyes with nothing more than simple barrettes while the whole of her face was beaming.

I smiled back at her. “Thanks.”

“This is your room, Susan,” Pen said as Lilly turned and bent to pick him up, embracing him to her bosom which I saw he more than enjoyed. He got quite the stupid look on his face as she rubbed her cheek against his head repeatedly and purred. “I will return later tonight... but... I need some rest and relaxation first.

“Mm-hmm.” I pursed my lips while staring at him while Lilly walked off with him, and rolling my eyes I slid into the same rooms I’d been given twice over here all ready.

It’d already been transformed to accommodate two now, a male and a female instead of just me and my feminine habits.

I spied the bed, a nice, warm modern bed instead of that hard mid-evil one that Drake had supplied for me to use. Didn’t he know cats preferred soft things? I paused at its edge and removed the layers of robes in two pulls, the sash holding it all together coming undone as I smiled at the bed, palming my belly before I slid onto it and stretched out on the angel-soft fabric of the bedding blanket.

Lying back, and sighing, I closed my eyes briefly and let myself settle into the soft, downy fabrics, swallowing once and feeling my firm and heady breasts roll into the bowls of my biceps and ribcage.

And then I felt the hands on my knees, the gentle man-touch of a man who loved you, and I chuckled to myself as he moved those knees as I lifted my hands to either side of my head, tits rolling, immediately leaking their milk that they were still so full as those hands navigated my knees upward and then away from each other, opening the flower between my thighs..

“Ah me...” I sighed and opened my eyes to see Madoushi there... already with an exclamation point between his legs.

“This world is strange.” He told me, rubbing my muscled tummy first before focusing upon my vaginal mound, caressing the two labial muscles to get them to firm up and swell with arousal, the clit erecting as he used his finger tips to entice me and wriggle my clit with a fingertip before sliding that finger up and down just inside the labial

muscles. I creamed quickly. "So many castles that reach to the clouds. So many bright lights... one can hardly even see the stars anymore."

"Those are called skyscrapers, dear heart." I sighed.

"Aptly named," He smirked and as I arched he laid down before me.

"Much like the erection you have for me." I giggled "And we're in the city. It's hard to see the stars in the city... but there are still places where it's a wilderness and you can still see... stars..." I said that last and I cooed as he began to lick my pussy before kissing it and probing me with his tongue and fingers.

Just my luck... I get a guy who's spent centuries without knowing a woman, so all that psychological want and desire is being spent on me.

His tongue probed me expertly before he laid kisses upon my belly, especially upon my belly, rubbing his forehead against it, holding and palming it... because of the child I now carried. He nursed from both my tits to relieve the ache, and then finally kneeling between my legs instead of laying there; he lowered his erect prick, reddened and hot, and slid it inside me.

Lycan were lucky in the act of lovemaking... our hyper healing factor allowed us to regenerate damage to our bodies effortlessly. As a woman... most of the stretching and scaring that was caused through sex was repaired... not entirely, mind you, but most of it. It was like making love as a virgin again, and my canal was tight and firm and clenching.

Regardless... both males and females still developed muscle down there, so given time it only grew tighter, more perfect for each other. Sex only got better the more we did it. I didn't loosen, he didn't deflate... and since everything was regenerateable in our bodies, we climaxed almost endlessly, and I produced milk like a lactating cow.

Mad's enthusiasm only rose as he pounded me, he and I gripping hands as I wrapped my thick legs about his body, soon entering into a series of pained gasps and moans as we gyrated against each other harder and harder and...

...and then I heard the door to the room open. I blinked blearily, and not able to see as well in the dark as a human as I was as a hybrid, I saw a black shadow... right before that shadow transformed and a blood-curdling roar that rattled the windows, right before Madoushi was *yanked* off me and thrown away.

First of all... I have no idea what that sort of thing would do to a guy, but to a woman... that was rather painful, enough for me to grip my sex as my body clenched repeatedly to unload all that comingled love juices into my hands. And then there was violent crash and turning to look and see what the hell happened, I saw Madoushi falling slowly off a crushed set of shelves, with all their precious vases and jade things crushed beneath his body. When he looked up and the creature that'd done this to us reared and roared again, I gasped in utter surprise at who it was.

"Lee..." I breathed.

"You! You raping son of a bitch! I will rip your heart out through your ass!" Lee roared and leapt down onto all fours and charged as Mad was shaking his head to clear the daze.

"Lee No! Don't! Stop it!" I screamed and tried to rise to intervene, and for the moment I thought that I was about to lose my... my soulmate!

But then Mad lifted his head, and with an explosive eruption of sound like a discordant trumpet, Lee was snapped backward as Mad shifted instantly from human to hybrid. That... that stunned me as I was shifting myself to deal with Lee... especially since I'd never seen anyone instant change from one shape to the next.

Lee rolled and his claws scraped the floor loudly, woodchips and tiles being kicked up as he readied himself, Mad rising into the air as he grew opaque.

"I don't know who you are... but you're interrupting my mate and mine lovemaking... very... very rudely too. Now leave before I'm forced to thrash you."

"Mate?" Lee snarled and reared, flashing claws mad black from his violent life as a warder, being tall, massive, bulging pecs and trikes and biceps and... everything! He was several times Mad's weight. "You dare use that word when I'm her mate?!"

"Wha..." Mad gasped, and his hands lashed out and stopped Lee as the two of them grappled, a wave and wash of etheric power rising off Madoushi's form as he actually held Lee's massive form at bay!

And there was a brief tussle as the pair of them switched places, right before Madoushi twisted and literally threw Lee – *threw Lee!* – like a rag doll, slamming *him* against the other wall that Lee had slammed Madoushi against.

Lee bounced off it and leapt forward again, roaring a screeching cry as I trembled, hands over mouth, tense and not sure what I should do... till...

"**ENOUGH!**" the word was a halting power.

It snapped all three of our attentions toward a tiny little creature throwing the doors open, followed by a timid looking great fem of infinite meekness.

It marked the first time I saw Pendragon... angry.

I could only liken it unto the sorcerer coming to inspect his apprentice after his apprentice had been messing with his hat and spell book and had summoned an army of broomsticks that went awry in "The Sorcerer's Apprentice."

"Those... were fifteenth century vases." Pen pointed to the left wall Madoushi had landed against, staring at Lee before turning his head and pointing at the right wall where Lee had slammed against. "And that... was a silk painting older than Christ. And this..." he pointed at the floor. "...Is cedar from *Jerusalem!* And thanks to the bombing in that area during the recent Gulf War... Cedar of that nature is a little hard to come by.

"Now *somebody*... tell me what the meaning of this disturbance is!"

"He was fucking my mate!" Lee pointed at Madoushi as Mad still floated in the air. "No male shall lay hands upon my mate so long as I still live and breathe. I'm going to kill him for..."

And Lee lifted his arm and charged. I screamed. "Lee, stop it!" and Mad shifted again, calling upon powers I had no hope of understanding... and then...

CRACK!

How he moved was so quick and so impossible, only Pen could've done it. One moment he was at the door and the next he was hooking Lee's arm with his staff and gripping his tail till he flipped him in a full circle and spiked him head first onto the wood.

The mighty Lee was felled and I broke out into tears. "S-stop it..." I whimpered.

Pen stomped over to Lee, gripped him by the scruff of the neck, and dragged him along the floor briefly before rising up into the air with his six wings, and holding Lee like a mama cat would hold her kitten, only with his little hand, Pen placed his face directly in Lee's.

"Shut... up..." he mentioned dangerously soft, and let Lee fall to the floor.

Pen then turned and raised an eyebrow at Mad and Mad lowered to the floor and powered down.

"Good." Pen mentioned and planted his staff on the ground before perching atop the coil at its top. "Lilly dear... why don't you make some hot tea. I'll meet you upstairs soon." Pen beamed happily, and Lilly nodded vigorously and hurried away before Pen gestured and the doors to my room closed and he deflated some. "Susan... *Tell him.*" Pen said quietly and pinched the bridge of his armored nose.

"T-tell him what?" I stammered and Mad went to comfort me, but Pen lifted a hand and pointed at him, and he stayed where he was.

"Tell him... about your condition." Pen mentioned to me, and turned to look at me, his green eyes shining like glowing Jade across the dark room.

"Condition? What Condition?" Lee asked, suddenly attentive.

I felt my lower lip tremble and taking a deep breath I steeled myself and straightened my back. My first mother wouldn't want me shirking responsibility like this.

"I'm pregnant." I said at long last, and the silence that fell in the room could've suffocated a lesser person.

"B-but that's... that's wonderful! Susan! You're pregnant with our child and..."

His every word was like a stab in my heart, and with a sob I shouted at him. "Say the words!" I said as tears flew from my eyes. Lee stared at me. "I said say them damn it! Say the damn words! Or can't you?!" I was crying and again Madoushi tried to approach, but a snap of Pen's fingers stopped him and he stepped back to the wall where he was.

"Buffy I..."

"SAY IT!" I screamed now, this time I roared, sounding very much like a screeching yowl.

"I..." and his voice caught as I held myself and turned away from him.

"You can't even say it!" I accused him. "I let you into my home, into my heart... into my body... and you can't even say that you love me?! Damn you! Damn you Lee!" I sobbed and gripped my belly with both hands. "I hope this isn't your cub!"

“He entered you?” Mad’s voice said from across the room, and I gasped at him, and my tears of fury changed somehow... they felt colder. “Madoushi I...”

“No.” Mad said and lifted a hand. “No... I-it’s ok. I’d just... hoped,” he grinned but then his grin faded. “I’d hoped... that your child... would’ve been my child.”

“It’s not!” Lee shouted and got to his feet. “It’s my child, she’s my mate and...”

“Lee...” Pen’s voice was soft, but the warning in it was enough to quiet the great tiger. Pen sighed, sounding very tired. “...In all this... in all of these shoutings and warrings with a breed protected by the grand council, has it even once entered your mind to consider who Susan chooses?”

Pen’s voice was utterly clear, and they struck Lee like a brick upside the head. “So you and she had a relationship, so there’s the *possibility* that she carries your child, and so in your mind... immediately she’s yours and not hers anymore, and she gets no choice in the matter. You’ll take her by the arm and drag her away from her choices even? Destroy her choice, destroy her will? Well I’ll tell you what, Lee... I won’t even stop you trying. I’d *love* to see you try. Look at her!”

And Lee did, and he looked away, the act drawing a gasp from me.

“Exactly. In your mind, manhood is superior to womanhood. Men are strong and smart, women are weak and dumb, so that makes them property. It’s your job to provide for the family and her job to clean and keep house and make babies. Correction... make *sons*. So... pray tell, Lee... what do you think of the *daughter* that grows in her womb now?”

Lee cringed again.

“What?” I gasped, and now I was getting angry.

“But your ego is hurt. You’ve been watching her steadily grow stronger and stronger... stronger and stronger with greater combat prowess, greater agility, greater power, greater skill, greater *everything*... than you. So does that make her unworthy?”

I trembled, tears leaking from my eyes, and then I screamed at him. “Answer him!”

“I...” Lee began. “I... don’t know.”

Pen nodded, and I began to stride toward Lee.

“Susan. The baby.” Pen reminded me, and I stopped abruptly short of trying to strangle Lee, reminded of the little one inside me.

“I think a period of separation is necessary for you all to figure things out.” Pen said quietly, and then raised his voice a little. “Falcor...”

And the door slid open a second time, revealing the Falcon Tengu, Master Falcor.

“Lee... this is Master Falcor. I daresay that you won’t like him ripping your balls off and feeding them to you. He’s been a bit antsy here... has been craving battle for a long, long time. I suggest you don’t give him a reason to fight you. You won’t like the power of his Eagle Claw Technique on your nads.”

“But... But I’m the father! I should be here to... to protect the woman who...”

“It’s not sure as to whether or not you’re the father.” Pen said then. “Or Madoushi.” Pen’s tail wrapped about his staff and clenched to it. He seemed to be wobbling a little. “Sue... when I palmed your belly, looking for the child I’d only hoped that you’d rescued, I found that there was the power of two males in your womb.”

“But... it was days ago that Lee and I had sex.” I said. “H-he can’t possibly be the father. Madoushi must be! I heated with Madoushi!”

“The body is a marvelous thing, Susan. There was once a story of a woman, more than a year divorced from her husband who had cyber sex with her new lover online. Soon thereafter she found out that she was pregnant.”

“But what does that have to do with...” I began to ask, but Pen lifted a calming hand.

“She believed that she was impregnated by her new lover that she’d had cyber sex with. The truth of the matter is, is that before she divorced her husband, they’d had one final lay. It appears as if the seed of her husband found a fold within her cervix and went dormant there, till which time she experienced a particularly powerful sexual high, to which the seed became active again and found her ovulating. The two came together and voila! A child...”

“So granted that this sort of thing is possible over a year... six days isn’t really all that.”

“See it is possible!” Lee began but was silenced by a glance from Pen.

“Like I said, Lee... shut up. On the one hand, yes... it is possible, but unlikely. Seed lasts maybe three days at the most, and whatever you planted inside Susan would’ve largely been killed off by the highly acidic conditions found inside a woman’s vulva. Alternatively, a newer donor like Madoushi would have far, far, *far* more probability to be the father with literally millions to one odds.”

The balance in the room teetered. Lee deflated and Mad inflated.

“That said, Falcor, please escort Lee to a place where he won’t cause any trouble.” Falcor smirked.

“Come on then, kitty. Did you know that a falcon’s claws clench so tightly that they can crush bones with a single snapping motion before they realize they’ve done so?”

“Madoushi... Demon Sorcerer.” Pen said then and Mad rose and became more attentive. “Please leave me with Susan for the moment. If she wants you in her room afterward, then I will leave that to her.”

“W-will this take long?” Mad asked.

“Hopefully... no. But please leave. She needs more answers now.” Mad nodded and made for the door. “And please close the door.”

And Mad left, leaving silence.

“Pen... you knew that was going to happen!” I growled at him. “Just like everything... you know that that *‘incident’* was going to...” but as I was turning to him, he teetered backward and landed hard on the ground and actually bounced when he did. “Pen!” I cried and hurried to him as his large eyes fluttered.

“Crap.” He said and I picked him up. “That took longer than I thought it might.” And he coughed.

“Oh I’m sorry. You’re still injured and... stuff.” I said helping him up, and he allowed me to help him up, but then he walked, or rather hobbled, over to a brazier with several smooth stones resting over coals.

“Now you see why I had to wait until now to answer your questions, Susan?”

I stared at his back. “No!” I moaned. “What does this have to do about anything?! And if you knew that that was going to happen, why didn’t you stop Lee from getting inside!”

“Sometimes,” Pen said, lifting one stone at a time out of the brazier, looking for something. “The path you take to avoid a thing is the very path you take toward that thing.” Pen said, and finally took a stone, the thing hissing in his hand. “You... knew... the father was unknown.” Pen added as he slid over to the bed and sitting, removed the wrappings with two of his four hands, laid down and held the stone to a gaping open wound that shone green against his side. The stone and the wound hissed in what sounded painful. “Ahhh...” he said and I came to sit beside him, breasts flared over my mighty arms and ribs, the pair pressing together.

“Think for but a moment, Sue... What would Madoushi rather hear. The fact that the father was unknown from my lips... or yours?” I fell silent and rubbed an arm. “If I answered your questions with him and your friends present, then the privacy of this matter would’ve gone awry, feelings would be hurt and so on.

I sighed. “I...guess. But we still don’t know the father... but what about my other question? Why do I have only one baby and not two? And while I’m at it... why didn’t you tell me about Madoushi?!”

Pen was silent, and it seemed as if he were sleeping for a moment. I was about to disturb him when he finally spoke.

“My ability to see the future isn’t infallible, Susan. Like I mentioned when you came back, when you look into the future, the future changes... because you looked at it. I saw... a happy mother, with a little girl... and two males in the shadows behind you. Lee... and another, an impossible another, because the Thylacine – the Tasmanian Wolves – have disappeared so greatly, that even we dragons feel that they are all extinct. But nonetheless, his coat marked him as one.

“Whatever went on inside Lea Monde is entirely outside of my knowledge, Susan. There is something about that place that didn’t allow me to look into it. I saw only what came out of it. I sent Remy with you, because if I hadn’t... you or your friend Fellania wouldn’t have returned.” His wide eyes opened and he smiled at me. “Sometime... when there is a lull in the next nine months,” and his tail, with its triple little prehensile tendrils at its end, lifted and palmed my belly. “Will have to tell me precisely what’d happened in there. I love stories... and this one sounds like a lulu.”

“And... why do I only have one baby... not two?” I asked again tensely, and again he was silent, licking his lips, choosing his words.

“I have to tell you a story first, Susan.” He replied and I nodded. “There’ve been three major periods in human life across its three hundred thousand years of existence... give or take a few millennia. It is within these last one hundred thousand years that I speak of.

“After the Atlanteans left Earth in various ways, and after the original Egyptians – called the Gyp’Tians – left Earth as well, what were leftover were largely just the mundane creatures of the earth. For the longest time, humans were... *feared* by their older cousins.”

“Feared?” I blinked. “By who?”

“Humans weren’t the first on this world, Susan. There were the Dragons, followed by the Fae, followed by the Elves.”

“Dragons tried to... wipe you off the face of the Earth, and not once but twice already. The second attempt went very, very badly for us. It caused dissention among our own ranks and we in turn experienced civil war over the act. It unbalanced the power of our people each time we tired to... *contend*... with the Creator’s ‘*chosen people*’ apparently.”

“Chosen People? Us?” I blinked.

Pen nodded.

“With the first of each species, the Creator gave them commandments. To the Dragons, the Creator commanded us to ‘*Guard and Protect the World.*’ Such an honor, such an honor... to be the guardians of this Eden in the Creator’s very name. To the Fae they were commanded to ‘*Learn and guide the world.*’ Also, such an honor. The elves were commanded to ‘*Cultivate the World.*’ Still an honor.

“And then the humans came along... and they were commanded to...”

“Multiply and replenish the Earth.” I finished.

“The elder races looked upon this commandment and realized that we here to make preparations for your coming. The... Jealousy was so intense it was sickening. One could scrape it off the walls and serve it on toasted bread as jelly it was so thick. And... well... like I mentioned before, we dragons were so jealous that we tried to kill you all off. Called you vermin and insects worth of destruction.”

“‘*We dragons.*’ Did... *you*... feel jealous about us?” I asked.

Pen smirked. “Briefly. But I am a religious drake, Susan. I did what I was commanded to... even when the Dragon Council was going against the Creator’s word, I did what I was commanded to do. I was among those dragons that became exile in the first war to preserve humanity, but unlike the Panzers, I did so by choice. I was ancient even then, Susan, and that was the age in which your first mother lived. But that isn’t the cause of this story.

“The elves were close cousins to humans... they did – mostly – what they were commanded to do. One clan – the Black Clan – took a page from the dragon’s book and tried to kill you all off, but they were cursed by the Creator, cursed with the curse of skin so dark, no black human on Earth could claim such a dark coloring. The Black Clan has sought repentance ever since. They call themselves cursed the moment they are born, and spend their whole lives seeking repentance.

“But this story is rather about what the Fae did to you.”

“The Fae?” I blinked. “Like... um... Lord Oberon and Lady Tatiana?”

“The very same, but other names that you might recognize are Thor, Zeus, Odin, the Fates, Ra and others. The Fae were blessed when they were created. They were exceptionally long lived, as long lived as a dragon was, and they all had such incredible magical power. Their cities were made of gold and gems and other precious metals, of ivory and alabaster and so on.

“And the humans... oh... the humans created such marvelous works, such great works, such beautiful cities of water and sand and fire... Atlantis itself was a marvel that even the Fae were jealous of and certain dragons wept at seeing... before Atlantis fell that is.

“Nevertheless, Atlanteans were too wise to be fooled by the Fae, and so too were the Gyp’Tians, but the remnants of their leaving, left the Mundanes, those who were of a non-magical sort.

“Then, there were very few magical beings left among the humans... those who were left behind as the others left for the stars. Regardless, then, humankind lived in a utopian civilization that numbered in the hundreds of millions, they lived for centuries and had remarkable skills in creating things, with some still having the talents of incredible magical ability and so on. But... they were like children... their *‘adults’* having left for the heavens.

“So therein an opportunity was seen by the Fae.

“Jealous of having their own civilization rendered inferior by humanity not once, but twice over already, several of the Fae of the Olympian Pantheon, decided to...”

“Olympian Pantheon?” I asked quickly. “D-do you mean... gods?”

“And to a human, Fae are gods.” Pen answered. “And I’m certain you know them... the Fae are numbered for a reason. The Olympian Pantheon you’ll know as Zeus, Athena, Aries, and so on...”

“Heh... Aries. I am still surprised to this day that a Fae dared call himself that.”

“Why?” I blinked.

“Because of the Dragon of the same name.” Pen smirked. “Our Aries is a bit... temperamental. Sometimes he does phenomenal good... others he’s just a great big asshole.

“But getting back on track, because you know of them Susan, that marks precisely how sinful they all were. For you see... the Fae saw themselves as powers far, far greater than any human. To keep their civilization as the number one on Earth, the Fae set themselves up as gods before humankind and kept you innocent and stupid... fearful. And as the humans began to worship them, the Fae found themselves a patsy, a simple, innocent young woman... and they gave her a box.”

“A box... Pandora!” I blurted out, my earlier question forgotten in the face of hearing history like this. This kind of history was exciting because no human scholar knew it to be true. To them this was just a legend!

“Zion was the human’s most glorious city. Walls of gold, a thing that held the majority of their population, filled with hanging gardens and aqueducts, their homes made out of white marble... it was a holy city, with their holy men and women, a city of God. And one day, while Pandora was outside the city, several robed figures approached her. They were Fae.

“They handed Pandora the box, and they told her to keep it, guard and protect it, and no matter what, under no condition, was she to look inside the box.

“But since you’re familiar with Pandora, you’ll undoubtedly understand what eventually happened.”

“Her curiosity got the better of her, and she peeked inside the box.” I said automatically, wide-eyed.

Pen nodded. “And just by peaking, she released all the dark things that were in the box, the embodiments of sickness, disease and so on... but at the same time she released four primordial entities...

“War, Famine, Pestilence and Death.”

My eyes opened so wide I thought they’d pop out. “Death...” I whispered and covered my mouth with both hands.

“Thusly, the Fae laughed as a human opened the forbidden box, visiting upon all of mankind diseases and sicknesses and frailties and more. They were also visited by the scourges of the Four Horsemen, who, out of their own simple natures, brought man to war amongst themselves amidst their sicknesses and frailties. The Lord God Himself removed Zion from the Earth before too many of His children could be assailed by it, and later on he commanded Moses to build an Ark before he flooded the world to destroy those of his children who’d succumbed too deeply to the darkness.

“But for the simple crime of just being curious... Pandora was broken by the backlash of the release of all that dark power, and she was sundered.”

“Broken?” I asked tremulously, fearing his answer.

“Split in two.” Pen answered and my hands went to my navel. “That’s right, Susan... you carry the reformed Pandora in your womb.”

My hand went to my mouth and I chewed on my own fingertips, gripping my tummy flesh.

“Pandora lived for countless millennia as a pair of little girls. Her powers of utter chaos were wrought between the two of them being together. Only apart were they safe, but then again instinctively the pair continually came together again, and again, trying to be as close to each other as possible.

“Pompeii was the result of one such occurrence of the pair coming together in one place.

Wherever they went chaos and mayhem followed.

“I knew you’d exit Lea Monde pregnant, Susan, and I saw the child grow in snippets in the future, learned of her identity... and know that you are blessed for carrying her... not cursed.”

“I’m not? I have the Mother of Chaos in my tummy, how am I not cursed?!” I wept.

“Because... you showed kindness to two little girls, when the world would do no such thing.” Pen said, and his words put an air of finality upon the subject. “She – as the mismatched twins – were hounded, beaten, bruised,

battered and assailed, a cursed creature split in twain on the world that no one would tolerate, but the pair were also invulnerable, unable to be hurt or killed.

“You’re blessed because you’ve at long last brought them back together again, in one body. And the Fae’s cruelty is at long last being visited back upon them full circle. I’d consider this a final spit in their collective faces, personally. She’d been a symbol of their victory over us, and now even that is being repaired.

“God’s curse is coming full circle.”

“S-so... she’s not some sort of... evil creature in me?”

“Heavens no! She never was!” Pen gasped. “She was fooled, tricked... she was an innocent that was used. She was the conduit that raped the rest of mankind, and the Fae did it. She’s a victim, nothing more or less. Regardless... hers is an ancient soul that now has a dual-nature to it. A once unspectacular being now a primordial force in her own right... and now she inhabits your womb... a chance, at long last, for a normal life free of the memories that brought her to this point in the first place.

“Bless you for taking such a burden so willingly... just to protect two little girls that were lost in time.

“So in answer to your question, that’s why there’s only one child in your womb... and not two.”

In the pause, Pen flipped the rock on his wound and bit his lower lip and twitched briefly. “Ahh...” he groaned and settled again.

“What happened to the Fae?” I asked angrily.

Pen smirked. “God’s justice is just.” Pen smirked. “Exodus chapter twenty, versus three through six: *I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in the Earth beneath, or that is in the water under the Earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.*’

“The Lord God flooded the Earth, eliminating those sons and daughters of man who’d become wicked, saving only Moses, his wives, his sons and their wives, and two of every sort of animal. The Fae didn’t heed Him. He sent divine inspiration to the prophets of every race, especially to Man, and though the Elves and the Dragons eventually listened, the Fae did not, and the Lord God continued to try his hardest to rescue his corrupted children.

“The Unforgiveable Sin is leading people away from God, and the Fae as a people have done this great sin and did so by making themselves gods before Him.

“Nevertheless, God gave them more than enough warnings, and that excerpt from the human holy book – the King James Version of the Bible – was His final warning. The birth of Christ was the final nail on the coffin.

“The Fae have been summarily cursed, Susan. Their whole race, every last one of them. They’ve been cursed with immortality, to forever live with their mistake till they decide to give up their powers and become mortal and die away. What’s more is that no two Fae can mate with each other. They can mate with other species, true, but these new species cannot be considered Fae any longer, and thusly the Fae will dwindle and die.

“Already, the Fae known as Zeus, Hephaestus and Thor have met an end, along with Athena, Persephone and others.

“Even if they were to repent their curse still stands. Their Judgment for violating your species so is final. In time... even their histories will be lost and no one will remember them.”

I rubbed my tummy with both hands now. “Serves them right!” I growled. “Using a young woman like that...”

“What’s more,” Pen groaned and got to his feet unsteadily, striding to the brazier and replacing the rock. “Is that she gets several honors.”

“Like what?” I blinked at him and he turned and smirked at me, and with a gesture his staff rose and slid into his waiting hand.

“You’ll see.”

“Oh I hate you.” I groaned.

“Don’t worry, it’ll all turn out in the end.”

“How?!” I groaned again as he turned to make for the door.

He paused and turned to smirk at me again. “I don’t know... it’s a mystery.”

And he opened the door, nodded beyond and left, letting Mad into the room as he closed the door closed behind him, staring at me. I could hear Pen’s staff knock against the nearby stairs as he climbed them.

“A-are you all right?” he asked once the knocking had left and the following uncomfortable silence had hung in the air long enough.

“I should ask you the same.” I admitted. “I-I’m sorry... I should’ve told you about Lee.”

“I’m sure you would’ve, eventually.” He mentioned and fell silent for a moment. “D-do... do you want me to leave?”

“Mad... I don’t want to be alone right now.” I replied and he immediately uncoiled and strode to me, sitting beside me and pulling me to him.

“I want you to know, even if I’m not your baby’s sire, I will still be a father to it. I do love you, dear heart... and whatever you need, I’ll be there.”

I smirked softly. “Believe me Mad... you’ve already done far more than Lee ever did.”