

CHAPTER ONE

He slowly rubbed his hands together as he watched her walk into the light. An archaic ring stood out as a dark stain against his hand in the darkness. The reflecting fog eddying around her well-formed body was artwork in motion. He pressed his hands to his lips as if praying and exhaled slowly. He enjoyed her performance like a fine wine. A smile moved slowly across his face like rain across parched land. His eyes focused intently on the curves of her body and his thoughts focused on the pleasure she would bring him tonight. From his vantage point on the cross member of the bridge twenty feet above the pavement, he could sense that all the pieces of his game had fallen into place.

As if on cue, the rear door of the Cadillac below opened and stood in silent invitation. The woman stepped expectantly toward the beckoning door. She wrapped her arms around herself as the chill in the air made itself known. She shivered slightly with excitement as well as the cold. This was better than she could have hoped. The mystery of it all began to thrill her. Alone, on a deserted bridge, in the middle of nowhere, just like in all those old movies.

The night air seemed to be getting colder as she looked into the backseat. Surprisingly, there was no one there. Instead, spread out across the seat lay a

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beautiful full length fur coat. The cold continued to intensify as she stroked her hand slowly across the fur. It felt so good, cool, and soft to the touch as only a very expensive fur could feel. She carefully pulled the coat from the car and with one last stroke slipped into it. A big hug across the arms and a little swirl finished the inspection.

“Galen?” She asked over the sound of the lapping water. “Galen, where are you?” Only fog moved across the lights from the vehicles. “Galen, this is fantastic. Where are you? I have something for you.” The last few words dropped off into a husky whisper.

Another minute of the slowly moving fog and silence passed as her mood changed from adoration to concern. There was no one to be seen as she looked around. A quick glance through the car door revealed only an empty backseat.

He watched as she discovered the coat. He could feel the fur under her fingers as she stroked it. He felt its cool embrace as she slipped into it. His eyes closed in pleasure as he tasted the change of her mood. He felt the quickening of her pulse as his own pulse rose to match. The sensations had grown almost more than he could bear as he whispered “Now,” into the night air.

She jumped when she saw a movement in the Cadillac. Someone rose up from the floorboard of the front seat. Her heart pounded with both fear and relief as she attempted to recover her composure. This was supposed to be her fantasy and she should be in control. The anticipation, mixed with the new

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element of suspense, had her breath coming hard. Each breath proved to be an event magnificently demonstrated by her full breasts rising and falling. The nipples already peaked by the chill and much more. They clearly attempted to press through the thin cloth confining them.

The passenger side door opened. A light breeze touched her face as if to announce the arrival. The figure slowly began to stand and straighten to its full height. The fog diffused light turned this simple act into a surrealistic ballet of shadow and movement.

She gasped and inhaled deeply. She had unconsciously been holding her breath for the last few moments. This was the most incredible thing that had ever happened to her. The expression on her face bore witness to her feelings. She slowly took a step toward this enigmatic figure before her. As her foot touched down she became enveloped in cold. Not the cold of the night, but a cold that seemed to grip her very flesh and blood. Something had gone very wrong. The sound of a deep inhale reached her. She felt her knees begin to weaken. Her feet defied the impulse to run. Her breath caught as the figure raised its hands.

“My God, what’s wrong with me? What’s happening?” She cried as she fought back against the rising panic. “What are you doing to me?”

He leaned dangerously forward on the cross beam above the figures bathed in fog below. His eyes betrayed the predatory nature of the seduction he had orchestrated. The smell of sex, surprise, and

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now fear emanating from the woman intoxicated him. He savored each and every moment of the bizarre scene. Every nerve sang out under the strain. Every muscle tightened and twisted like steel springs pushed to the bursting point. "Not yet," he told himself with grim determination. "The best is yet to come."

As if some invisible string had been pulled from above, the figure stepped from behind the car door and into the ghostly light. Her primal scream tore into the night. She became filled with the knowledge that the relationship to be explored here tonight was not one of man and woman, but one of predator and prey. The cold intensified as she looked into those cat-like eyes. The returned stare told her there was no one to plead with, no one to listen to her beg for life, so she screamed again.

"Now to finish this!" The cry of triumph sang out from the darkness above the cars. He leapt to his feet and looked to the end of the bridge where she had entered from the road. At the second scream, a set of headlights appeared. He smiled tightly. As if speaking an arcane incantation, he beckoned, "Come on now, it's your turn. Come now, you have your part to play." Smugness washed his face as he heard the awaited car approach.

Steve hadn't had a good week. First, his girlfriend broke up with him. She wouldn't tell him what was wrong, but he knew it was that new guy he'd seen her with. That morning he got this note saying she was sorry and had been wrong. He went out to see her and the crazy bitch threw some kind

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of tantrum. She screamed at him. She even called him a jealous pig and a liar. Well, nobody was going to call him a pig and a liar and get away with it. He decided to follow her out that evening and when he could get his hands on this new boyfriend he was going to give him a good old-fashioned ass whipping. That'd show her how he really felt.

Now, Steve knew she had lost her mind. She had driven all the way out of town in the fog and now she had parked in the middle of a bridge, in the middle of the night. He reached over and picked up the last beer out of a twelve pack. He popped the top and raised the can to his lips. He nearly choked when the scream hit him like a shock wave.

“What the hell?” He blurted out as he looked out across the bridge. It didn't do much good in the fog. The second scream hit as the engine of the 76' Camaro roared to life. The clutch, the gas, then the tires sent up a shower of gravel as he hit the lights. Steve could see her backing away from someone. The guy stood in the middle of the road and walked slowly toward her. The figure turned and stared into his headlights. Steve felt mesmerized for a moment. His eyes locked with those strange orbs reflecting back red like some kind of nocturnal animal. Fear finally broke the spell and Steve slammed on the brakes. The moist pavement wouldn't allow the tires to grip. The momentum caused the Camaro to veer toward the parked Cadillac. At the last moment, Steve braced for the impact. His knuckles went white on the steering wheel as he pressed the brake to the floor in desperation.

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Steve's head bounced off the top of the steering wheel as bones snapped and metal twisted at the front of the car. The engine stalled. He didn't care as he leaned back and moaned. He rubbed his forehead and moaned again. The car door opened and Steve got out painfully. He leaned against the side of the Camaro and shook his head from side to side. He looked to the front of the car as the panic began to set in.

"Oh no, God no! I didn't want to kill the guy. No, no, no." Steve's voice trailed off. He looked past the hood at the ground. It was worse than he could have imagined. The guy appeared to have exploded. As Steve got closer, the odor hit him. He recoiled at the stench. With his shirt bunched up in front of him, held over his mouth, Steve took another look. Nothing made sense. This guy should be bleeding all over the place, not just kind of oozing. The stench became overpowering, like rotten meat in advanced decay. The mottled and pallid skin had literally burst apart. It looked more like he ran over a month old corpse than a man who was just standing in the middle of the road. Steve stepped back remembering he was here because of her.

"Jean, what the hell is going on here?" He asked angrily. There was no answer. "Jean, dammit! I'm talking to you."

She just stood there at the side of the bridge next to the ironwork staring up into the fog. Steve walked over and grabbed her by the shoulders and shook her until she looked at him.

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Everything had been going perfectly. Nothing was supposed to go wrong. She should not be able to move. The revenant must have been losing its powers. After all, it had been with him for almost six months now and they really didn't last much longer than that. Now, he would have to find and train another one. With all the remorse of losing a not so favorite pet, he retrained his focus on her again. She would stay. His powers had not weakened. He inhaled again deeply. That fool below was going to pay for this unexpected change in tonight's orchestration. Slowly, gracefully, he stretched his arms out and flexed like a great cat. He had enough of foreplay. It was time to finish this. It was time to feed.

"Hello."

Steve spun at the cultured word that dropped out of the swirling mist. He didn't hear the stranger drop from the beam above to the gleaming pavement. Steve looked him over, quickly sizing him up. About average, Steve was going to enjoy a fight tonight.

He never saw the slap coming. It ripped across the side of his face, spinning him almost backwards. Steve tasted blood in his mouth. First came a wave of fear, then the cold hit as he looked back at his attacker. Steve could see some kind of steam rising off his own body and floating over to him. His knees began to feel weak.

Steve cried out "NO!" in defiance and launched himself at the approaching figure. He lashed out with a massive right hook that flew by its target

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harmlessly. The same results happened with the left hook. Two more punches agonizingly missed by fractions of an inch. Steve tired rapidly as the cold wrapped around him, condensation frosting his hair. One last desperate lunge and he managed to get his hand on that bastard's shirt. All he felt was a light tap at his wrist and a slap above his eye. The impacts wouldn't have harmed a small child, yet the world spun around him once and fell in on him with that one word mocking him.

The man crumpled in front of him. The stranger could now see the object of his desire. Humans could be so simple to handle. Touch them just right and they collapse like rag dolls thrown from their stands. He casually stepped over the shallowly breathing body.

"You will stay right here until I am ready for you, won't you? Of course you will."

Steve couldn't answer as the stranger stepped over him and then away.

"Thank you my dear for a magnificent evening. I have had a wonderful time," the stranger said casually. "Tonight has been more than I could have ever hoped and just look at you, you look ravishing."

He gingerly took her hands in his and caressed them gently. He slowly massaged his way to her wrists. His fingers worked in ever increasing circles. The muscles of her forearms didn't attempt any form of resistance to his advance. The biceps gave in just as easily. Her flesh submitted instantly to the questing fingers. She sighed deeply when the

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fingers and the accompanying sensations reached her shoulders. She would have collapsed had her legs obeyed her as he traced the lines of her silk blouse under the coat. With obvious delight, he slid the blouse and coat off her shoulders, freeing her breasts to the night air and pinning her arms to her sides. A husky moan escaped her as her nipples brushed across his cotton shirt.

She had seen everything. She had heard everything. She simply couldn't cry out. She couldn't run. All she could do was watch Galen leave Steve on the ground like a broken doll and come to her. Her skin thrilled to Galen's touch. Strangely, she couldn't feel any warmth from him. Certainly, anyone at this point should feel a little warm. She could no longer feel the cold as he held her shoulders. Her body completely betrayed her when he caressed her breasts. They wanted more.

Galen lightly kissed her on the neck. The sensation ran through her like liquid lightning. He kissed her again on the neck, this time more insistently. Even though she would have melted to the ground, if that had been allowed, she could feel no warmth in the kiss. He lifted his head slightly. If she could have seen his face she would have seen the ivory teeth glinting in the light. Galen inhaled deeply as if trying to take in all the air about them. He thrilled to the sensation of her warmth. He almost wished that this could continue a bit longer, but he had gone too far to stop now. He had to have what he needed and he had to have it now.

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She felt the pressure, then the penetration of her skin. Surprised at how little pain she felt, she focused on the flood of heat. The rush of heat left her body and flooded into his as every inch of her being screamed out in bizarre sensations. The pressure at her neck was sensual and irresistible. She moaned loudly and pressed her body up against his. Her breasts cried out for contact with his chest. She began to lose consciousness. She couldn't feel her legs any more. Her arms hung limply at her side. It was as if she were deflating and drifting away at the same time. All she could remember was that she planned to give him something, but she couldn't remember what it was.