

Xanthus looked down at Sara lying across her mattress. His breath caught at the sight of the Dagonian woman this close. She was beautiful, stunning. Black hair haloed around her head and across the pillow. Her shirt lay open, exposing flesh covered with reddened splotches and reeking of Ron's scent. Yet, somehow she slept peacefully—no, she was unconscious. Xanthus growled at that realization. She was innocent in this situation and it appeared her innocence remained intact. Her wrap and skirt still covered her—untouched. He sighed in relief.

Xanthus heard Ron scrambling through the kitchen in an attempt to make his escape. Less than a second later, Ron yelped as Xanthus seized him by the hair.

“You think you can commit this crime and go on your way?” Xanthus thought of the many ways he would love to hurt this foul creature, but he knew he'd have to answer for his actions. By being here, Sara herself had broken the law. If her secret had been discovered, he would have had nothing restraining him from killing this man, but her secret remained safe. Regretfully, that fact kept Ron safe from permanent arm.

Still, Xanthus could frighten him, give him a reason to fear coming near her again. That *would* be justified.

Fifteen minutes later, Ron was sobbing like an infant and cowering on the linoleum floor in a puddle of urine. Xanthus tired of the stench, more than ready to let the sniveling coward go. “Ron, I'm going to allow you to leave. But if I ever see you near Sara again, even if it's unintentional, you're a dead man. And it won't be quick, I'll make you suffer. Do you understand me?” Xanthus clutched Ron's shirt, twisting it so hard that it cut into his neck.

“I understand.” Ron sobbed. “You won’t see me again.”

Xanthus released him and Ron scrambled out the door.

Xanthus shook his head when he realized idiocy of his threat. It was pointless. He would be killing Sara in a moment. She would be dead and gone before the night was through.

Xanthus stepped into her bedroom. Light from the kitchen spilled onto her bed, draping across her sleeping form. Her chest rose with every breath. She slept unaware of the predator stalking her. Xanthus’s heart pounded and sweat broke out across his forehead as he looked down on her angelic face.

Now was the time. He had to do it.

Breaking her neck would be the best option. Her death would be quick, painless, and not a drop of blood would spill.

He moved to her side. The swells of her breasts rose and fell in her peaceful sleep. He looked her over and struggled to keep his mind off the fact that she was a helpless woman. Her face, her body, everything about her looked delicate, breakable. Out of all the criminals he’d killed in his lifetime, he’d killed very few females. Especially not lush, beautiful...

Hades, He couldn’t kill her. Not with her looking like this.

He moved closer and leaned forward. His fingers fumbled with her buttons. He just needed to close her shirt, and then he’d kill her.

He'd just fastened the last one, when her eyes fluttered and then flew open wide as she gasped. She frantically searched the room and then his face. Her tiny hands clasped around his forearms. "Help me! Please don't let him hurt me. He drugged me. He's going to..." Her words turned into a heart wrenching sob as she threw her arms around his chest. Xanthus jerked back, startled at her sudden embrace. He sat frozen for just a moment before his arms pulled her trembling body against his. Her quiet whimpers cut through to his heart. "Shh. It's okay," he found himself saying.

"He's going to hurt me," she quietly wailed.

"No, Sara. I won't let him hurt you. It's okay. You're safe." He held her tight, stroking her hair and mumbling words of comfort as she wept against his chest.

Sara's cries soon quieted as drug-laden sleep overtook her again. Still, Xanthus continued to hold her, continued to caress her. He shouldn't have let the filthy human go. He should have broken *his* neck after he stuffed his beating heart down it.

Xanthus lowered Sara's limp, slumbering body onto her bed and pulled a blanket over her. Raking his fingers through his hair, he stood. Tears sparkled on her cheeks. Without a thought, he brushed them away with his thumb.

Several minutes later, Xanthus returned to his motorcycle. "Well, that didn't exactly go as planned," he said. Now he'd never have the heart to kill her. Perhaps he never had.

He sighed in defeat.