

Lux et Tenebrae: Three Siblings

Ch.1 The Three

It's a warm summer evening around 11P.M. in the middle of July. The sound of the warm breeze whistling through the trees is all that can be heard on this pleasant, mid-summer night. Suddenly, the silent serenity of the evening is violently ripped away by the sound of screams and breaking glass echoing throughout the night. A tall, scaly, putrid green-colored monster has just burst out of a nearby home with warm blood dripping from its deformed claws, marking the death of some innocent victim in the vicinity. Unfortunately, this is a common occurrence in the city of Neo Spes, a city divided into two distinct districts. The first of these districts is one with a modern, big city feel emitted from the tall majestic skyscrapers, fancy cars, and upscale art situated in what is called uptown. There are classic gothic buildings and old school transportation methods, like horse drawn carriages (though there are cars and buses) along with the more rural areas that populate what is known as downtown, giving it an old-timey feel. Although it is not obvious just by looking at the city as a whole, attacks like this take place in both districts because the world is inhabited by monsters and demons who do as they please with humans as their main victims. The world is unaware of this and sees these events as animal attacks, leaving most of the population thinking there are just a bunch of rabid animals on the loose, completely clueless they are being hunted by supernatural forces. This beast is a nocturnal creature who hunts people in their homes when they are sleeping and defenseless, tearing into their victims with their mangled claws and fangs, creating chaos in the night. Just as this monster breaks into a second house and is about to tear into another family, a man quickly approaches the beast from behind, small sword in hand, and stabs it in the back. The beast lets out a blood chilling scream as it breathes its last breath. The mother and father are frozen in fear as they gaze upon the corpse of this grotesque being, only able to look at the man who saved them and nod in thanks for his help. The daughter, however, can't take her eyes off the man, his short, light brown hair, light green eyes, and youthful face standing out the most to her. He takes notice of the woman staring at him and speaks to her.

“Are you all right? It didn't hurt you did it?”

“Yes I'm fine, thanks to you. What the hell was that thing?” she replies.

“You wouldn't believe me if I told you.”

As he turns to walk away, the sound of glass breaking can be heard as two more of those beasts burst in through the windows, take a look at their companion's corpse on the floor, and turn their attention to the man with its black blood on his clothes and a weapon in hand, realizing that he must be responsible for their pack mate's death. At this point the parents have fainted and the daughter has gone over to try and protect them. Outnumbered, the man readies his blade, walks over to the endangered family, and tells the daughter to stay behind him, expecting a long and

bloody fight. As one of the beasts gets ready to attack, a lightning fast projectile of some sort flies through the window and kills the beast immediately on impact.

The man lowers his blade and smiles while the daughter screams out “What are you doing? There’s still one left!” Just as she said that the front door flies open and a young woman with long, black hair and the same green eyes runs in behind the last monster and quickly snaps its neck. A few seconds later, another young man with a buzz cut, and yet again, the same green eyes walks in with a smirk on his face.

“Took you two long enough to get here,” the first man remarks.

“Well, no one told you to go running off on your own,” replied the other two each with a small smile on their face.

The frazzled daughter, with her dark brown hair covering part of her face, is now looking at all three strangers together, her mind racing with so many questions she just can’t help herself.

“Okay, just who the hell are the three of you, and what the hell is going on?” she screams, catching the attention of all three strangers standing in her living room. Now, with all three of them staring back at her, she slowly shifts her light brown eyes to the dead monsters on the floor, shifts back to look at them, and becomes *very* quiet. After about a minute of silence the second man begins to explain things in an excited voice.

“That’s a very good question! You see...”

“No, let me explain. Your explanations are always, um, problematic,” the first man interrupts.

”Fine! I didn’t want to explain anyway,” the second man complains as he walks away with his arms crossed. The first man then begins to explain things.

“Let me start with introductions. I’m Ian, the one pouting in the corner over there is my baby brother, Nick, and this is my baby sister, Dana.”

“We are not babies!” they replied, making Ian smile.

Their banter lightened the mood enough to make the daughter smile and she offered her name as well.

“I’m Jessica Turner,” she replied.

“It’s a pleasure to meet you Jessica,” Ian says in return.

Now that the introductions were out of the way it was time to explain what was going on. Ian began by pointing to one of the dead creatures on the ground.

“That thing is one of the Damned. That type is called a Draconem. It hunts families. Draconem are the lowest form of the Damned. They usually hunt in packs of three and are particularly interested in hunting families because they despise anything that appears to have a stronger bond than them. Brings up feelings of intense jealousy.”

“That type? You mean there are more?” Jessica asks.

“Yes, many more but there just isn’t enough time in the day to explain them all,” Ian answers.

“How come more people don’t know about these things?”

“The only people who can see the true form of the Damned are those that have survived an attack from them, and very few people survive. Anyone else that sees them thinks they are just

some kind of animal. Some of these monsters can even disguise themselves as humans.”

“An ugly animal but not usually an ugly human though!” Nick adds.

Dana then turns to address Jessica. “You survived, so you will be able to see them now. You’re going to have to prepare yourself for that truth and your parents as well.”

The realization hits her hard so she just closes her eyes and begins to cry as tears roll down her cheeks.

In the gentlest voice he can Ian tells her, “I’m sorry, but this is your life now.”

Jessica opens her eyes and looks at the three of them again. “Just who or what are you people?”

Nick decides to jump in and happily say, “We really have no idea what we are, besides the fact that we are obviously not entirely human. But we do know who we are,” Nick continues on with a big grin on his face pointing toward Ian. “He has his short sword and spiritual skills, but he is really just a bleeding heart who can’t help but care about people,” Now, he turned toward Dana. “She’s always been a tough customer, letting her fists and feet do the talking, and there’s no fight she would back down from. The truth is, deep down, she’s a big softy.”

Dana, annoyed by this comment walks over to Nick and punches him in the shoulder. “Shut up Nick!” accompanying the blow.

“Ow! That hurt! Let’s change that to *really* deep down,” Nick responds. The exchange makes Jessica laugh a little. Then, Nick continues. “And finally, there’s me. I’ve got my projectiles, and to be honest I’ve always been a bit of a loud mouth with too much energy for my own good, but there is no one out there more reliable or better at watching your back than me. Now, we conclude the introductions and explanations.”

Jessica takes a moment to process everything she just heard and then begins to speak. “So there are these things called the Damned who hurt people, and my parents and I are now forever burdened with the curse of being able to see these things that you three fight because we survived. Now, when it comes to you three, based on your abilities, I guess that makes Ian the protector, Nick the sharpshooter, and Dana the fighter. Did I get all this just about right?”

“Yes,” confirms Ian.

“Just about,” Dana adds.

“Though this is the first time anyone has given us nick names,” Nick boasts.

Jessica turns to look at her mom and dad unconscious on the floor. “What should I tell them?” she asks.

“That’s up to you,” Ian answers. Ian has always been the type of person that likes to think things through and plan things out before taking action, making him the most level-headed of the three, while Nick has always been the loudest and brashiest of the group, always saying whatever comes to mind no matter the consequences. Dana is sort of in between because she likes to have a plan when doing important things, but she also has an impulsive side that tends to come out when she is challenged in battle. These personality traits make Ian the best at explaining and getting things done, while Nick is best at telling you like it is. Although shy at first, Dana can

prove a good balance between her brothers' extreme personalities. Jessica is starting to realize this as she takes in all of what they have explained to her this evening.

After this last exchange between Jessica and the three siblings they turn to leave the house, which is left with multiple broken windows and a busted front door, but not before Nick cautions, "Remember to run like hell if you see any more of the Damned!" and with that the three make their exit. Jessica watches them leave though her attention is mostly focused on Ian. Watching him made her heart beat a little faster. His beautiful eyes and strong frame still etched in her mind. It was clear she was starting to feel something for him. This stranger that saved her life occupied her current thoughts. Just then, a piece of glass from one of the broken windows falls to the ground with a loud crash quickly snapping Jessica back to reality as she looks at the remnants of what used to be her living room window. She then turns to look at her parents, then around the house, with a most appropriate, non-monster related, question coming to mind. *How are we going to fix all this damage to the house?* Now that the siblings have left the young woman's home and are outside (not even mentioning a thing about the state of the poor girl's home, at least not at the moment) they begin talking to each other about what just happened as they walk down the street. Dana starts off the conversation.

"Poor girl doesn't look any older than me. This is a lot to deal with for someone not like us."

"Yes, I know," Ian adds, and then turns toward Nick. "Must you always be so blunt?" he questions.

"I'm sorry it's just who I am. Sugarcoating it for the girl wasn't going to help any," He replies.

"And look at the state of the poor girl's house now. I think being blunt was the best option in this case," Dana adds, turning around to look at Jessica's house, windows broken and the front door off its hinges.

"Did we do all that?" Ian asks.

"Hey we only broke one window and a door. The rest was the Draconem," Dana responds.

"And we only did that to save the girl and her parents' lives," Nick adds, his voice rising slightly.

Ian sighs, a slight smile forming on his face before he puts his arms around his siblings' shoulders. "Come on let's go home," he says.

Ian's siblings nod back to him and they begin to head home. In the distance behind them they are unaware of the two men watching them leave. One is a small beady eyed man, hair falling out, wearing a beat up old suit. The other is a tall, striking man with jet black hair and piercing crimson eyes, dressed in a pristine black suit. The small man is obviously following the orders of the tall man standing next to him whose posture is strong and immaculate.

"I have the information you asked for sir," The small man proclaimed.

"Good, let me see it," the tall man demanded.

The subordinate then handed over an envelope labeled "The Christen Siblings" (pronounced Chris-Ten) with pictures and notes on the three siblings and the tall man began to

state their information aloud. “Ian Christen, 25 years old. Summons short sword and skilled in the spiritual arts. Nickolas Christen, 22 years old. Skilled with created projectiles of all kinds and throwing daggers. Dana Christen, 21 years old. Skilled in hand to hand combat.” The tall man then looks at the pictures and smiles a sinister smile. “I finally found the three of you,” he whispers to himself as they both fade back into the night.