

Short Excerpt

Calam awoke with a headache and a confused void where her mind used to be. Propping herself up on her elbows, she squinted in the morning light as she eyeballed her surroundings. After a full minute and several pan-scans of the room Calam hunched her shoulders. She had no clue where she was. Geez, was it possible to be hung-over without actually getting drunk the night before? The question was second only to her wild curiosity as to whose bed she occupied. Good Lawd, had she been roofied or what? A quick glance to her chest. Nope. She still had her clothes on...or someone's clothes, anyway. Something furry moved against her leg, and she jerked away and nearly screamed...until she heard an annoyed meow. Sasha stretched in a deep yawn at the foot of the bed.

Sasha...Luce's pervy pet. Her mind cranked back up like a long-dead stalled car. She was in Luce's apartment, in his palatial king-sized bed, wearing his spice-scented t-shirt that dangled down around her knees when she eventually stumbled from the bed onto her feet. Luce, ever the gentleman, slept on the convertible couch in the front room. Had Calamity been in the exact same position but under different circumstances, she'd be ecstatic. But, her impending arrest cast a wee pall over her euphoria. Still, she preened with wicked satisfaction at having spent the night in his bedroom...Satan's Lair, she dubbed, as an impish smile twitched at her lips. Hmm, might as well have a quick lookie-loo. The chance may not arise again, she reasoned.

Luce's private domain dripped with personality as compared to the more Spartan décor of the rest of his apartment. Several framed family snapshots littered the nightstand along with a cordless telephone and touch sensitive lamp, which shockingly emitted a warm crimson glow when she brushed it with her fingertips. Two impressionistic prints adorned the walls. Each depicted vague

anthropomorphic forms cavorting about against a pastel-blended background. They reminded her of something naughty she once glimpsed when she'd accidentally flipped to the Spice Channel on her pay-per-view.

The corner off the edge of the bed housed a dark mahogany desk topped with a matching bookshelf that ran up the wall. The books she discovered beneath one of the pillows and under the edge of the bed outed Luce as a late-night reader. Hmm, *The Count of Monte Cristo*. He likes the classics. Her eyes bucked as she skimmed across *Master: An Erotic Novel of the Count of Monte Cristo* riding shotgun next to Dumas' version. Likewise, she spied *Phantom of the Opera* paired with its erotic twin. Skimming further...*Pride, Prejudice and Zombies*? The titles were endless. Fascinated, she pulled *Robin Hood: Unmasked After Dark* from the shelf and flipped through the pages. Good night! Is *this* what he reads?! Classic literature corrupted as modern erotica and horror tales? The thought curled her toes. So, Lucifer wasn't quite the choir boy he pretended. There might be hope for them yet, she mused.