

DOLLHEAD CORPORATION

LT Hill

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First Edition

This book is dedicated to family and friends who have supported me in all my endeavors.

There is more to this world than we acknowledge. We all have the gift to see beyond our vision. Yet, it is only those who are willing to acknowledge the unseen and trust themselves completely who are successful in the ultimate confirmation.

1.

not demon nor angel

“There has been a decrease in deaths this century, my Lord. I believe we need to double our efforts to bring in more souls. Presently, we do not have the numbers to even attempt a skirmish with our brethren, let alone a final war.”

Ithe raised his head, slowly flipping the white braid hanging across his chest behind him. “Ah!” his large muscular body stretched across the jagged chair. “Do you think I cannot feel that? Do you believe I am unaware of the decreasing numbers? I, who hungers every day for retribution, for revenge?” He removed the brass crown from his confined locks. “The weight of this is now even more noticeable in my hand, young soldier. It is better to never place it back upon my head, than to wear a symbol of what has been lost.” The sound of the metal rang out across the room as it hit the stone floor.

“Sire, I did not mean to say you were unaware. I...”

“I, young one, am tired and bored with judging souls I cannot devour. This punishment for my indiscretion of feeling a human emotion, pride, they call it, is not fitting. For what they call pride, I name as self-worth. We could have continued to rule both planes forever.”

The soldier bowed his head, “I know of your true strength, my Lord. Our brethren were wrong to stop you from teaching us how to control our gifts and use them to the fullest extent.”

Ithe stared at his kin who looked so similar to his son, Jix. But, then, they all looked similar in their human form. None knew how to differentiate their features except the most powerful ones. “If my son had not been captured, I would have ruled both our birthplace and this world,” He repeated, “Instead, I sit outside watching, waiting on human decay, straps.” He made a motion as if to stand, but thought differently. “I could have defeated them all. Alas, no one can change the past. As powerful as I am, even I cannot go against my blood oath not to harm any other living soul. So, now I sit and wait on the death of man.”

“But because of your surrender, your son is free and alive and the humans are advancing, my Lord. Maybe too much. Our brethren will not want to protect them for too much longer.”

“Yes, they are moving into a new era. Our strategy of olden times where we whispered thoughts in their ears and sent them dreams at night to maneuver them to our will is weakening. They study the human psyche and interpret everything that occurs. As they progress, we starve.”

The soldier looked at the court gatherers standing in the shadows, though they looked indifferent, he could tell a few were listening intently. All had experienced the feeling of hunger at some time in their perpetual life. “We have begun to ration. No one feeds off the human souls to completion. We allow them to rest in an attempt to rebuild their strength.”

“And has that worked?”

From Ithe’s expression, the soldier knew the truth was already known, “It has not. There is still a hunger for more.”

“Yes, the level of strength they have at death is what is left. They are not like us. They were not born of air and fire, but of earth and water. They will decay. The flesh will rot upon their bones. Humans are weak and our worse creation.”

The soldier looked uncomfortable, “Sire, it is rumored that you were the one to initiate their increase in birth numbers.”

Ithe laughed, “Yes, I did. I mated with as many of them as possible. I needed soldiers from earth as much as I did from fire. Who better than my own children to infiltrate the world of humans? It was a success, briefly. For thousands of years, there was pure chaos in both worlds. We were winning, remember?”

The soldier nodded. “I remember, sire. Our brethren had been scattered across the times, not knowing who was friend or foe in the human world.”

“Yes, it was a wonderful time. My children and soldiers fed upon the creators and human alike, turned them against their makers and our enemies, brought humans to us to feast upon until we grew ill from gluttony.”

The soldier smiled in remembrance, his pale white face became partially translucent, "But then, our brethren began to lure our prey away, making us weak. We relied on their souls to feed us eternally. Now, most of them pass through this world without a glance in our direction."

"I, Ithe, can't even reach out to grab them for a small taste due to the purity placed upon them by our brethren. They have limited my authority by taking away my true source to increase power. My only consolation is the fact that any of those living on Earth is mine to claim and to do with as I please as long as they die bearing my collar and not that of my brethren."

"And, we thank you for showing us the way to claim human flesh again."

"Yes, yes," he replied dismissively, "As time continues, and our food source decreases, the pact I made to save my son seems less fair." Not one of his subjects showed their shock at his words as he continued speaking, "I now require something different, something to amuse me without shifting power to my brethren on the other side or forcing them to curtail my actions once more. The blood agreement I made is eternal and can never be broken, but there are always ways to do as one pleases without violating any terms. I just need the perfect combination of soul and flesh."

"Is this why you still cross into the world of humans to help create such a being?"

"You know a lot for a simple soldier."

"I am second to your son, Jix."

"Jix speaks too freely."

"Yes, but I am utterly loyal to him. He has mentioned that most of the human vessels could not contain even half your knowledge and power without going insane and our brethren quickly discovering and eliminating his siblings as abominations before any of them could decimate the human population."

"Jix, tells you too much. Careful that it does not place you in a precarious position. But, yes, those of mixed heritage could not control their hunger or their mind. It is a deadly combination for the humans. I didn't care about the insanity. It made things more interesting to me and easier to influence the humans when they were in a state of fear and confusion. It was the manner in which they fed that bothered me. It was without mercy and uncontrollable. They left nothing, flesh was as good as spirit. Disgusting habits."

"And now, there is a death pact, is there not?"

"Yes, we are not to mate with humans due to the harmful effects upon their physical and mental bodies. If one of our bloodline acts in blatant contradiction of this pact, then the other may destroy that creation in whatever manner desired."

"Yet, you still believe that if you can find a way to shift power back to yourself and your son, we would no longer have to take the dregs, the dross of humankind?"

"Only the lowest of that species reaches out to us. We need finer substance to sustain us longer and increase our strength. It is my birthright to claim any and all I desire. Therefore, it is my people's right to do the same." He could almost feel his grasp ripping open multiple worlds, including the one of his brethren, to touch and lay stake on any who looked his way. His amber eyes shimmered in contrast with his albino skin as he surveyed his pittance of a world. "This is a barren waste of darkness with flashes of light jutting out from the crevices in the jagged hills. I was born for more. They took that from me. What more can I do but look for the human that is rumored to be born, the true destroyer, born of spirit and flesh."

"But, if they have stopped the intermingling, how can that person be born?"

"Who says that it has stopped completely?"

"Sire?"

"There are still those of our brethren who stand in opposition of the agreement. I sense them, their desire for flesh, to feed, to feel as a human. They will not stop no matter what is decided. It is a pure addiction for them. It will not be controlled."

"On our side?"

"On both sides." Ithe smiled. He knew the prophecy would occur. There would be a human born of flesh and spirit who would bring all life to its knees and he would be the one being controlling that human from the shadows.

"How long must we wait on this human to be born?"

"According to my senses, my son should arrive soon with news of this birth. Why do you think I called everyone here today? This will be a monumental occasion."

As Ithe spoke, his dark world became lit with blinding white light. "It appears that a new soul is in service to us, my Lord."

Ithe turned his eyes in the direction of a group of souls milling around what appeared to be a door. "Ah, the souls, dumb souls. Most of them rarely realize they are no longer alive and none of them have yet to understand the dire nature of their circumstances. Some still have the mistaken belief that they could ascend, could leave this place. How wrong they are. Once the collared sleep in my world they are mine forever." He watched as another appeared from beyond the door, walking into the darkness of Ithe's domain.

"Look at the other souls try to move into the light. How instinctive it is for them." Ithe stared at the soldier's perfect face. "I could create the gateway between multiple worlds if they had allowed me to rule. Instead, I have to watch with limitations."

"There is no going against the agreement with our brethren, my Lord. We have all tried to maneuver around the terms, but none of us has succeeded."

"We need flesh, just as before when we mated with the humans to bring forth our army, we need to use the flesh to circumvent the agreement."

"What will that do for us? We are forbidden to mate with them ever again." The soldier wondered why Ithe kept repeating the same arguments. For centuries, he replayed the battles and agreement to anyone listening. There had to be more than Ithe admitted.

"You are correct," Ithe read the soldier's mind, "They did not destroy all our seedlings. They only found the ones who were aware of their birth and fought beside us. There were others on both sides. Our brethren are not infallible to desire. They, too, had mated with the humans. They killed ours. We killed theirs. But, there are some half humans still alive, blood diluted and born of flesh. We just have to awaken them, turn them to our cause."

"They can no longer see us. How can we communicate without violating our agreement? We cannot send these souls back as our messengers. They are incapable of remembering and even if they did, they would only remember their previous life."

Ithe leaned forward, "Newborn flesh, we need the one spoken of on both sides to be born."

The soldier felt the rumblings in the room. "We cannot go against our brethren. We all had become addicted to the flesh. Whether it is in the arms of a woman or man. As long as we took on the body of a human, it all was the ultimate pleasure to us. Is it wise to risk what's left of our people just to seek out what is forbidden?"

"No, young one. It is not wise, just as it is not wise for you to question my thoughts and desires. Should I strike you down now or wait until my son arrives and have him do it?"

The soldier threw himself at Ithe's feet, "No, please, my Lord. I am chief strategist for your army. You gave me permission to discuss these things with you. True, I am not of worthy rank, but what I say, I say in your name and for your benefit."

Ithe kicked him away. The soldier's body flew across the room, landing near the door. He continued talking as if the soldier had not spoken. "I would not ask any of you to break the agreement. None of you are strong enough to take on flesh, only feed from the souls. Who could be my container? No one on Earth is strong enough to be my conduit. The fortitude of humans is so very weak, so limited."

The soldier stood up, fearful, but determined, as you said, some of our brethren still visit the humans. They are not all aligned to their cause."

"Save your life, soldier, continue."

"Jix did not want this divulged so soon, but there are not many, maybe a few hundred, who still sneak down to Earth and visit the humans for mating. They wear the flesh of man and woman to disguise themselves from their fellow brethren. We only noticed them because the eyes could not be hidden from us."

"What of the eyes?"

"They shine brilliantly with light. The humans cannot see it, but as you know we do."

"So you feigned ignorance before?"

"No, I simply did not want to overstep my boundaries with your son. He threatens my life on a whim. You are more thoughtful in your threats."

Ithe laughed, stretching out his arms as if to embrace someone or something. "What births have taken place?"

"Thousands, for they are generational now."

"And we languish in the dark?" lthe dropped his arms, standing up. His immense form forbidding.

"Yes, but the children who are born are not like ours were. Some have a bit of foresight, can hear conversations in our world, and maybe even communicate with those humans no longer in the flesh. But these are paltry gifts compared to what we desire to see."

"Yes, but these can be used to help us. We should kill them by right, but let's not. If they can hear our conversations, then they we can communicate with them without flesh. They are not completely human, so we violate no terms of our agreement." lthe stood in front of the soldier. "You live." And with these words, the soldier immediately left the room. Too scared to risk saying anything else that might place his life in jeopardy.

lthe watched the souls still clumped together not realizing that the door they saw was only a projected image from the mind of the newest soul, still thinking of life on Earth. He reached out and grabbed the nearest one, swallowing it whole. He felt the waves of pleasure race throughout his body as the soul dissolved inside him. With each memory, the pleasure increased tenfold. He could see the birth and life of the human. He experienced the pain, the love, the happiness, even the human's fear at the time of death. lthe leaned back on his throne relishing the experience, not caring that the others raced to do the same without his permission. All of them devouring as many souls as they could find within the stoned walls until none remained.

In his reverie, lthe heard a small voice calling out to him. Immediately, he was drawn into a dark and filthy room on Earth. There, he saw a female human round with child. The woman was passed out and would die soon. He could smell the death upon her. But, the being inside her, the female baby could live. "lthe, lthe..." It kept calling his name, over and over again. She was one of his, a throwback that had survived the generations. Yet, he could not respond. He could only watch as the child attempted to expel itself from its dying mother.

"Father, I have great news!" lthe's form shot back in his dark world. He opened his eyes to see his son kissing his feet in reverence. Was seeing the woman and the baby a vision? A dream caused by the ingestion of the soul? Never had lthe been summoned to Earth like that. Perhaps it was his brethren torturing him, reminding him of what he had lost.

Jix stood up, his eyes, so like his father's, burned with excitement. "She has been born. It will come to fruition as we have foreseen. We are saved from an eternity in this dark world." lthe's son never waited on his permission to speak. If he were not the only heir to their wasted kingdom, he would have ripped out Jix's tongue centuries ago to teach him to control it.

"And what is her name, this savior of ours?" lthe thought of his conversations with the soldier and his vision.

"She has been named Loretta, Loretta Wizelhouse." Jix searched his father's face for some hint of approval. His own thick, raven colored hair streamed loosely down his back. Unlike his father, he embraced the unknown and loved mingling with the humans, even if they could not see him. The chaos of their world attracted him strongly, he found himself sneaking off to walk among them for centuries.

"How do you know of this?"

"I saw him, our brethren, mating with the human female. At first, I thought to interrupt and punish them both as the agreement required. Then, I thought, if he was going against his brethren, then he was more on our side than theirs. After all, there must have been some sympathizers to our cause. Besides, I was intrigued with the human female."

"You are always intrigued with the human females."

"Yes, but this one was different. She had something special, bewitching about her. It was as if she knew the man she was with was not human. In all our dealings with the humans, none understood what we truly are. This woman knew completely, I could see it, and yet, she still copulated with our brethren."

"In my time, the humans knew of us."

"As gods or demons, not as we truly are. She knew and loved him, pure love, my father. She could see the flashes of white light from his eyes and the silver white light emanating from his naked body just as I saw it."

"Jix, how can you be sure?"

"I saw through her eyes, her mind."

"Your gifts always amaze me."

"I received them from you."

"What of the child's gifts?"

"Not all is possible for me to see at the moment, but she is powerful and hungers."

"So we should kill her now? She may go mad as the others and then it will be difficult to eliminate her. She may not be the one prophesied."

"She is the one, I know it and I can control her," Jix remarked.

"If she is the one, you may control her for a time, son, eventually, living in both worlds make them insane. Those with true gifts could never contain the power and decimated legions of our kind and humans."

"That was their purpose."

"Yes, but some no longer cared which legion they annihilated. Why do you choose to forget?"

"I do not. But, those who are weak should not survive no matter who leads them."

"Loyalty, son."

"Strength, father." lthe fell silent, making Jix nervous. "I can control her, father, trust me."

"I doubt that, my son. Now, tell me the truth. What did you do to eliminate our brethren?"

Jix laughed, his father knew him too well. "What did you do to get rid of our brethren? If he was happy with the human woman and she knew him, he would not leave on his own. Tell the truth, now."

"I saw her future, that of the child. So, I alerted the others to the situation."

"You called upon our enemies?"

"I did."

"And yet, you stand before me unscathed."

"There are those who are loyal to the agreement, no matter the side."

"The father, our brethren and enemy, what happened to him?"

"He was taken by an entire battalion, completely surrounded before he realized what had occurred. There was no reason for me to hide from him then, he was rendered powerless to stop me. I was about to take the woman, but he mumbled the ancient words and she disappeared from all of us. It took me months to find her again. If I had not known what she looked like, I would never have picked her out of the millions of humans festering on Earth."

"So you truly believe the child is the one we have waited on?"

"I do. By right, I claim this human female and her child as mine."

"Do you now?"

Jix dared not move closer for fear of his father striking him. "I watched and waited quietly in the shadows, never making a sound to rouse the suspicion of either our brethren or the woman who could see us. I took the risk of being thrown into oblivion. I want to have this child as my own to guide and teach our ways."

"You who hates the humans now wants to have a human family?"

"The child is not human, far from it. The mother is gifted, so not human completely."

"But, the others will be looking for her until she leaves the flesh."

"Then we should help them find her quickly. I will open a door for them after I take the child."

"How could you open a door? That was taken from us."

"I spoke to the child in the womb while the mother was sleeping. She will open the door for me."

"A child yet to be born has that much power?"

"Yes, she knows me as her true friend. She will do whatever I ask of her."

"The others will be looking for this child, this abomination. Why did they not kill her when they first realized she existed?" lthe was suspicious. "They would have known what occurred prior to arriving, just as you did."

"I do not know. They seemed more worried about capturing him than the human, which is why he had time to hide them both."

"Based on what you have said, he must be one of the old ones who stood aside and watched us war while they did as they pleased with human and nonhuman alike. Son, I thought to dismember you upon your pronouncement to take what I have searched for, but if this female is what I think she is, you may have her as your own under the condition that you serve me and only me. We shall both raise this child as our own."

Jix smiled, "She has been born in flesh, ignorant and seeking. From the moment I saw her, I knew she would be able to control her gifts and keep our brethren at bay. All she need is protection until she comes of age." He took a step towards his father. "Loretta will be strong and stable, unlike the rest."

lthe took a deep breath, "Not an impressive name. Are you sure she will not be like the past offspring?"

"I am."

"The last time..."

"Father, I have seen it. She saw me, smiled at my presence and reached out to me with her tiny human hands. The mother knows nothing anymore. She sees nothing."

"It was a present to make her forget him. She is no longer a threat to anyone."

"But, her child is a threat to us all if we do not place our collar on her."

lthe knew that Jix's gift could not be contradicted. If he saw her and she him, then she was the one. This is what lthe had waited on. This will eliminate his boredom and possibly grant him the ultimate power he desired. "You will watch over her. She will not be an easy one. Those born like her never are. Remember what happened with the other offspring. I will allow this one to live. But, if she becomes uncontrollable..."

Jix stood firm, "I shall control her."

One corner of lthe's mouth moved upward as if he wanted to smile. So, finally, the one they had been looking for was born. "The pact with our brethren will stand. We will not break it and they will not interfere with our doings. I will have my flesh. If this is truly who we believe her to be, she will come to us willingly, bringing many with her. We will not have to do anything but wait on her to figure it all out."

"Father, I know she is not the same as the rest. She spoke to me in *our* language, yet she cannot speak words, only makes sounds from her tiny mouth. Her mother still wipes her flesh clean. She is more. I just do not know all the gifts she brings to us yet."

"You see all things and you cannot see this?"

"She will not allow me to see all." Jix stiffened at having to admit that a small human baby blocked his powers.

lthe inhaled deeply, "Not possible, even our brethren cannot do that."

"I know, but she has done it without a hint of awareness."

"This worries me. Maybe her father is still protecting her. I will still allow you to be her guardian, her mentor." lthe relaxed, thinking of what awaited him. "Be careful, son. She can go either way. If she is not in tune with your nature, our nature..."

"I know. She can destroy me completely." Jix responded flippantly.

"Don't be so casual. She can be dangerous to all of us or a benefit to all of us."

"She will be a benefit, my Grace." Jix bowed respectfully, hoping that his father did not notice the doubt in his voice.

lthe stared at the form of his son. The features were too prominent, too bright. He favored his mother, who had been killed by a crazed offspring of their brethren. "You will have to appear more human."

"She has already seen me, father. Why pretend?"

"She will be comfortable with one who looks as she."

Jix immediately summoned a soul, swallowing it in one gulp. He pushed the memories aside and took on the appearance of a human man. A pale skinned, green eyed man with jet black hair looked back at lthe. "Acceptable?"

lthe nodded. "You are still too tall for a true human, but will impress her with that form."

"I will go to her side immediately. I will watch over her and train her as you did me."

His father shook his large head, amber eyes focused on his son. "You cannot influence her directly."

Jix smiled, "I know. I will be subtle."

"Go and be careful. You are my only chosen son."

He laughed at his father's words, "I will make you proud, chosen or not"

2. lessons in the cradle

Jix sat by Loretta's crib, speaking to her in the language of his people. "We cannot touch you humans in this world anymore. We are nothing more than shadows, the reason why hairs stand up on your arms. My father believes that those of you who are mixed with us can be utilized to assist our cause. We want our kingdom back, our true kingdom of pure light, not the darkness to which we have been banished. We want to partake of the flesh as we did in the beginning of the birth of your species. Do you know your mother's people were placed here and created as food and entertainment for us?"

Loretta shook her small head in denial, not truly being able to form words and not wanting to waste strength trying to communicate with the creature she knew as Jix.

"Yes, it is true. Your father's people would never admit it. In the flesh, humans give us baser senses that allow us to smell, touch, taste, and feel in the simplest manner. In death, humans allow us intense pleasure upon waves of pleasure as we devour what is left of their essence inside us."

"No," He heard the tiny voice in his head.

"Ah, now you want to speak. You are still physically weak. It is the human part of you. It cannot keep up with the gifts your father bestowed upon you. Your mother had gifts before your father took them away. She was not as strong as you, but her power was steady. As you grow, I shall teach you control and how to increase your strength in such a weak form."

"I am not weak and we are not food!" The sound rang out in Jix mind so loudly. He had to take steps away from the crib.

"Do not scream in my mind or else I shall do the same to you. Look into my memories as I have taught you. See if I lie for yourself." A thin white cord flew out of the small body into Jix's arm. "Yes, watch and nourish your fragile frame."

Loretta saw the truth. Humans being created and devoured by beings like Jix, beings that appeared to be full of light, yet insatiable in their desire to increase humanity in order to feed. She saw the intermingling, the wars, the death of her kind, both her kind. It tore at her tiny baby heart so much she began to cry.

"Loretta, dear, what's wrong?" Her mother rushed in the room, not sensing Jix or seeing the white cord that connected the two. "Come to mama, little one. I will protect you." As soon as her mother's hands touched her body, the white cord disconnected and Loretta felt safe again.

Jix took a deep breath. The human part of the child was still too strong. He could see the light begin to shine upon her dark skin, yet it was not enough. "Once your eyes completely turn, you too, shall know the true worth of the flesh, it's not just for pleasure and you will understand why your father's people must be banished. You will come to us, Loretta," he whispered. He watched as her mother sang her to sleep, rocking her back and forth in her arms. It was too human for him. Yet, he never left Loretta's side.

3. to bind and feed

The years went by quickly and still his brethren did not come to claim Loretta. Whatever words were uttered by her father that day kept her safe. As her mother taught her human things in the day, Jix taught her otherworldly things at night. It mattered not if she was awake or dreaming, he was there instructing her on her gifts, discovering with her the power she could yield. Her mind appeared normal. There were no thoughts of mass murder, no abnormal desires, no unusual feeding habits. To anyone who looked upon her, she was completely human in all respects. Yet, there were these little nodes of light that seemed to emanate from her body from time to time.

"It is odd to look upon your face and see minuscule circular lights shining upon your dark skin. That is not humanlike. You must control it."

Loretta, now a teenager, laughed at his request, "No one else sees it except you, silly."

"Your mother is beginning to notice. She has not said anything, but I sense her growing uneasy around you."

"She doesn't remember anything."

"Time has passed. She has gifts. Maybe she remembers enough to make her worried."

"No," she shook her head, "she doesn't." Jix stared as Loretta walked next to her mother. A tiny cord broke free from a sliver of light on her arm and implanted itself within her mother's back. The woman felt nothing and appeared to be in a dreamlike state. Yet, she continued moving about as if all was well. Jix reached out to remove the cord from the woman's back, but his hand could not make contact. He heard Loretta laughing at him.

"What are you doing?" He asked in their language.

She smiled at him, speaking mind to mind. "I told you she doesn't remember anything. She can't even hear or see us unless I allow her to do so." The look of innocence on her pretty young face belied the next words that came from her mouth. "Besides, I'm hungry."

Something inside Jix caused him to reel in horror. Could he have been wrong about this child? Was she worse than any others that had come before her? "How long have you been feeding off your mother?"

"Always, that's what she is for, remember?"

"Yes, in the beginning. But, this human is your mother of mixed blood like you. We do not feed off our own kind."

"She fed me as a baby with her body. Why can I not feed off her as a teenager? I need to eat both ways."

"You are of flesh. Eat like a human, not like an abomination!"

The strong words startled her, forcing the removal of the cord. She walked out of the room before her mother realized she had been there. "You are a hypocrite."

Jix followed her, realizing then that she had to be killed immediately. She mustn't be allowed to live another day. His father was correct.

"You won't kill me," her voice stated, "you can't. You have seen my future and it does not end in death."

"I have, but I will. The future can be altered. You should know that."

"You can't. None of you can. My father made sure of that. I am his greatest accomplishment. Have you never wondered why my true kin has never found me or my mom?"

"Your father protects you."

"No, I protect us."

Jix inhaled, he needed to strike quickly. "You are an abomination to both worlds." He maneuvered farther away from her. He would have to obliterate the entire house, if not neighborhood in order to destroy her completely.

"Why must you call me that? I am not hurting her. She fed me as a baby from her breast. She feeds me now from her soul. I do not take anything away from her that she is not freely giving. She wants to sustain me, to protect me. I am allowing her to do so."

"You must not continue. Your father committed a grave sin in giving you these gifts. He would not want you to feast upon your mother. He loved her as a human loves."

"And he used her to create me. He knew you were there watching. He allowed her to see you as he allowed her to see him. You are correct in that she has gifts because she is of mixed blood. That is why she was able to mate with him, to give birth to me. The only thing she wanted in return was to forget who and what she was. He gave her that and so much more. Now, I give her strength as she gives me strength. Besides, you care not for humans. Stop pretending. I know your true desires."

"I did not teach you these things."

"You speak of love, yet you did not teach me that. You were correct to tell me that I would know the true worth of the flesh. I understand the possibilities that both worlds bring to existence."

Jix moved farther away, shedding the appearance of the soul he had been wearing. His hands became sharp claws as he reached out to bring destruction upon the area. He lifted his arms – nothing.

"I told you that you couldn't. We are bound. Look there." Her slender finger pointed to his waist. Jix looked down to his right, there was a small silver white cord attached to him. He clawed at it fervently. Just as with the woman, his hand went right through it. "What have you done to me!?"

"You are mine, just like my mother. The only difference is that I will never remove your cord." She walked towards him, "I told you, I wasn't harming her. I do love my mother and I would never take what I cannot give back. You feed me way more than she does in half the time." She touched his claws, "See, I can touch you now. We are the same."

He drew back as if to strike her down, but found he was unable to complete the movement. "What have you done to me?" He asked again.

"I am still hungry. Feed me." She hugged him tight, wrapping both arms around his waist. She could feel the heat emanating from his body, finally, she could move in both worlds. "Jix?"

He stared down at the pretty young girl in front of him. She looked up at him, her eyes no longer a dark brown, but a blinding silver light. He couldn't resist her any longer. "Yes? What would you like me to do, Lor?"

She smiled, knowing he was now completely hers, loyal only to her. "Get me more food without harming anyone. I must eat in both worlds, just as my father, but I don't want to kill humans and my kin to do so. Help me think of a better way. I don't want to hurt anyone, but I have to live."

A part of Jix recoiled at her words. This was why her father was hiding in the flesh, why he had the ability to do so, he was more than one of the old ones. He was a creator. This was why a battalion was sent to retrieve him. He could have destroyed them all, but chose not to do so in order to protect his own creation, this child with still unknown gifts who fed off souls in both worlds. "You will destroy us all," he whispered.

"Not if you help me. I just want to live and be happy like other humans."

"You will never be like other humans because you are not human. You are born of a creator with a creator's power and now we know, you have their thirst."

"I can be human if you help me."

"You will never be, my dear Lor. But, it appears I no longer have a choice in the matter. You have bound us both. Therefore, I must help you." He couldn't stop his arms from encircling her small frame. He liked the feel of her against his body. The sensation was new and made his heart beat faster in his chest. He was beginning to understand why his brethren indulged in the mating with humans.

Loretta smiled knowingly, "I changed my mind. I will remove it when you truly understand me. Only then will your desire to kill me disappear and we will be truly united. Until then, we shall not part."

"My father warned me about you."

"I shall make you happy here on Earth with me as we figure out how not to destroy both worlds."

"You are of flesh, Loretta. You will die one day and then there will be no cord or power. You will be as we are and worse, thrown into oblivion as an abomination of life."

"If that is so, then I guess I must never die."

“Human flesh rots, my Lor.”

“As you have told me many times, I am not human. This flesh will remain forever the same.”

“Impossible.”

“No, just not created.” She paced her head upon his chest, intermingling her fingers within the blue-black strands of his long hair. “You are beautiful, Jix. Why do you wear such a homely human form?”

“Do not play with me, Lor.” He pushed her away.

“How many forms can you take on? It must be such fun to manipulate your appearance. But, I like you in your natural form, the light shining from you makes me feel safe.” Without thinking, Jix reverted to his original body. “You are a giant hiding amongst the pygmies. Your light is blinding. I chose well when you appeared to me. I don’t know if I ever want you to leave me, Jix.” She hugged him tighter.

“I shall not feed you forever, little creator. You shall die in that flesh.”

“We shall see. After all, how many of my kind have been able to open the doors?”

“None,” he responded.

“So, this is your first time touching flesh? Wonderful, isn’t it?”

“Yes,” he murmured.

“It is my turn to teach you, Jix. We will be teacher and pupil in both worlds.”

4.

a test of wills

“Jix, I might be able to pull you here in our world,” she spoke to him in the language of their people.

“You speak well,” he answered, raising his hand to hers, relishing the touch of her skin. It had been ten years since he was bound to her. With each day, he cared for her more and more. He knew it was no longer the cord causing him to have feelings towards her.

“You taught me well.” She stared at their hands, her small, dark skinned hand held out in the air lingering in front of his pale one, more than twice the size. “I think if I concentrate hard enough, you will come through.”

“No, not yet, but soon. You need to leave this place.” He grasped her hand, “Come to my world, Lor. I will make you my princess.”

She shook her head, still staring at their hands, trying to mentally pull him into her world. “I have to stay here. This is where I am supposed to be, nowhere else. I can hear my brethren singing. They don’t know I exist. If I leave for your world, I will be discovered and eventually they will find a way to eliminate me. I cannot allow that to happen. I must remain here always. Do you hear them, too?”

“No, I cannot. Those sounds are only for you.” He looked dejected.

“I can’t stop them or block them out. It is an eternal sound in my mind, nowadays. As soon as I turned twenty-five, they just started. It’s so annoying.”

“Listen to them. They may tell you something important.”

“They tell me to stay here, not to go with you.”

“Then maybe you should block them out,” he joked.

She laughed, allowing her hand to drop to her side. “I’m not strong enough, yet.”

“If you came with me, we could change all worlds. My father would protect you.”

“Your father could barely protect himself once the creators like my father began to fight against him. Don’t you know by now that there are others hiding, waiting to see what will become of this world?”

“Who cares about them or the humans?”

“I care, my father cared in his own way. I cannot let any harm come to the humans. I said that my father’s people did not know of my existence that was not entirely true. Some know and are silently waiting to see what I become. If I make the wrong move, they will come for me. I have to protect the humans as much as possible. I cannot harm them.”

“Harm comes to all eventually and your father fed upon them as you do. That is the way of things. Come to our world and free us, then my father will show his true strength.”

"What would become of my mother?"

"We can make her forget you."

"No, I love her. I will stay."

"As much as I love you?"

"Jix, I see your true form and your true heart. I have always seen it. We are bound. Therefore, I know you are not capable of love, desire - yes, love - never."

He was not insulted by her words, not hurt either. She was correct. "Does that matter to one such as you?"

"No, not really. But, we both know I am not for you. We cannot be together in that way, ever. I will bear no monsters in this world or the other." She fluffed out her curly black hair.

Jix touched the red scarf twisted around her neck. "Who decides which beings are monsters and which are not?"

"In the past, you did. You announced me to be an abomination. At this moment in time, I do. Besides, I would have to die and as I said before, I do not want to do that, nor will I. I will not pass from this flesh into oblivion, for that is what awaits me. I will not go to your world, I will be tossed into the nothingness, the dark abyss with my father."

The words hung in the air between them. Jix, who had never been human, didn't understand why she fought him so hard. Why after so many years, she still would not relent. It was the cord that protected her from him, made her too strong for him to completely manipulate her.

He caressed her face, the warmth of her skin causing his heart to beat faster. He kissed her lips gently. "This flesh is not the real you. You would not be like the other humans who cannot see what they are or where they are in my world. You will be mine and therefore, like me. I will take you as my mate and partner. No one shall stand between us. You will not be in the abyss. You will be with me. You will be like me."

"Why should I be like you when you are already like me?" She maneuvered them both in front of her mirror. She was correct again. Jix had gotten so used to appearing human, he no longer thought twice about taking a soul to maintain his form. "When you first came to me, you had a gentle face, dark hair and soft eyes. Now, you appear with a determined face, jet-black hair, and cold green eyes. You are a beautiful human that only I can see. Why choose one who looks like that if not to seduce me into following you?"

He stood behind her, hugging her close. His hands stopped just beneath her breasts. "I never wanted humans, female or male. Yet, you are not truly one of them and when I see you and your silver eyes with that damning light shining upon your skin, all I want to do is become one with you. I cannot be with you in my natural form. I am not like my brethren, by birth, I am chaos, unfettered, and unbridled in all things."

"Jix, stop talking." She twisted around to kiss him roughly, realizing she was maneuvering within his world and hers. "You cannot have me as you want."

"And yet, I shall have you," he muttered against her warm flesh.

"No, I shall have you." She removed her clothes, watching as he pretended to do the same. "Your clothes are an illusion."

He ignored her comment, "Visit my world completely, Lor. Allow me to show you true pleasure." He reached out to her.

"Yes, for a moment," she whispered as she took his hand, feeling hard flesh against the softness of her own. "Allow me access into this world of chaos of which you spoke." His true form appeared. Loretta gorged herself with his power, his strength. As he entered her, she took as much from him as he could give. His lips set her flesh afire as he kissed her like a human. It was her first passionate kiss, she moaned as they moved passionately together, becoming one. She allowed every cord within her body to plunge into his, recirculating the pleasure he gave her. She took her fill of him as he did the same with her until she fell into a light slumber on her bedroom floor.

"Lor, you are mine forever." Jix kissed her neck, "I shall never allow you to be free from me now. You are my first and only human."

Loretta giggled upon hearing his words. "How do the souls taste when you devour them?"

Jix's emerald green eyes could not move away from hers. The slivers of silver light emanating from her dark brown orbs fascinated him. "It is delicious, like a sweet nectar upon my tongue, almost as delicious as the taste of your lips."

“That is what I experience every day, each time I bind one to me. You all are sweet nectar upon my tongue and to the very core of my being you all bring me intense pleasure. I am happy here. My mother is happy here with me. Why should I change what I am when my father made me perfect? This experience does not change anything. It simply bound you tighter to me, I’m sorry. It is what I am.”

“Lor, nothing in either world is perfect. There is only perfection in imperfection. If I am bound tighter to you as you say, then you also are bound in the same way to me.”

“You cannot double talk me, Jix. I will remain here in flesh. You must know as I do that there are more life forms to savor than any of us can imagine.” She moved on top of his naked form, “I want to bring each here. I *will* bring them to us. I know you can sense them, do not deny it.”

“Yes, I can. But, they are not for us.” He stroked her hair, relishing the softness of the afro. He could not believe her strength allowed her the ability to move into his world so easily while he remained on the outskirts of hers.

“No, they are not for you. Everything is mine if I so choose.”