



SHELLEY MADDEN

THE GIRL WITH  
A QUAMARINE EYES

WHEN THE SEA GIVES UP HER SECRETS  
SOME THINGS WILL NEVER BE THE SAME...

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# The Girl With Aquamarine Eyes

By  
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*To my fashionable mother, whom inspired me to write during my darkest days, and to my father whom without, I'd be lost.*

## [Aquamarine-The Gem of the Sea](#)

[1. Chapter One](#)

[2. Chapter Two](#)

[3. Chapter Three](#)

[4. Chapter Four](#)

[5. Chapter Five](#)

[6. Chapter Six](#)

[7. Chapter Seven](#)

[8. Chapter Eight](#)

[9. Chapter Nine](#)

[10. Chapter Ten](#)

[11. Chapter Eleven](#)

[12. Chapter Twelve](#)

[13. Chapter Thirteen](#)

[14. Chapter Fourteen](#)

[15. Chapter Fifteen](#)

[16. Chapter Sixteen](#)

[17. Chapter Seventeen](#)

[18. Chapter Eighteen](#)

[19. Chapter Nineteen](#)

[20. Chapter Twenty](#)

[21. Chapter Twenty One](#)

[22. Chapter Twenty Two](#)

[23. Chapter Twenty Three](#)

[24. Chapter Twenty Four](#)

[Epilogue](#)

[About the Author](#)

## [Aquamarine-The Gem of the Sea](#)

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It is said Neptune, The King of the Sea, gave Aquamarine as his gift to the mermaids, and from then on, it has brought love to all who have owned it. Aquamarine was believed to keep sailors safe and guard them against storms. Aquamarine is also a healing stone...

## Chapter One

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The warmth of the sun traced its feathered rays across her face.

Her thoughts gradually came into focus as she woke. She opened her eyes and blinked, gazing at the unfamiliar surroundings within the room. She followed the sunlight toward the curtained window and watched the rays gently filter through.

She carefully studied the room. Strange objects lined the walls in front of her bed. They seemed vaguely familiar, yet her memory could not recall their names. A large black box hung in the corner, by seemingly invisible brackets, its blank glossy screen stared at her in silence. She studied it a moment hoping to remember, but finally gave up in frustration.

She swept her gaze to the opposite side of the bed. A man sat in an armchair nearby, he appeared to be in a deep slumber. Rays of sun played across him, turning his hair a fiery chestnut. Odd designs wove around his upper arm. Colors and patterns whirled into one, perhaps telling stories of his past. On his opposite arm, a red car bursting through flames was carefully imprinted.

A memory stirred within her as she gazed at him. A memory of the sun, and the seas and the sands. She could smell the salty sea wind again. Her eyes momentarily fluttered closed. She could see the island. White beaches and blue lagoons sheltered by billowing palms. The ebb and flow of the tides. The tendrils of sea grass and tiny crabs it left behind.

She was running from him, this man beside her, on the island she lived on and loved for years. She didn't know how many years, for she had no way to track time. But it was him, she had no doubt. He'd come to take her away, along with the only other person who lived on the island. Her friend, Dreams.

She frowned, as she struggled to beckon forth the fuzzy images in her mind. She could see a shadowy grey building, she could hear the laughter of children drifting down the gloomy halls. She squeezed her eyes shut and remembered the orphanage. How much she had hated it there. The daily feeling of despair, loneliness and isolation.

She'd made a plan one day. She and her friend snuck away on a foggy night, and made their way to the shoreline. When the time was right, they quietly crept into a waiting luxury liner and stowed away.

Laughing and giggling in the days that followed, the pair went virtually unnoticed. They bravely made their way amongst the passengers, helping themselves to whatever amnesties befell them.

But the days of bliss on the high seas quickly came to an end. A rouge wave appeared without warning, and nearly capsized the ship. Salty water had poured across the sun-bleached deck, sending the wealthy passengers scurrying away.

Rescue tugs were called. The whitened captain, with his glittering gold buttons and silvery stripes, ordered the passengers into their waiting cabins. He'd explained to the frightened vacationers the liner would be towed back to shore. The girls gazed in horror at each other.

They would never go back to the orphanage. Out of desperation, they tossed several pieces of luggage into the churning waves and leapt from the crippled ship. They clung to the bobbing suitcase with relentless determination throughout the night. Where they were headed, they didn't know. Nor, did they care.

A day later, exhausted, dehydrated and badly sunburned, the current finally carried them to a tiny island. The tiny island became their home. Two unwanted and unloved teenagers had found bliss.

Until the man with hair the color of the island baboons arrived. The same day the great storm struck.

She opened her eyes, finally able to remember the last day on the island. The winds had blown palm tree over. It toppled upon her, and had crushed her legs. She remembered screaming. She remembered the terrible pain. It held her tightly pinned against the whitened sands, as the rains beat down upon her.

He'd done this, the man with the strange pictures on his arms. He was the reason she'd hidden behind the tree. She gazed down the length of the bed and hesitatingly lifted the sheet which covered her legs.

She stared at them in horror, and screamed.

"What the hell?" Harmon Steele leapt from the chair, but he'd awoken too quickly, his body was moving before his feet could catch up. He stumbled forward, landed against the side of the bed and hit his head squarely on the metal frame. He moaned in pain.

The girl screamed again.

He pulled himself up, but the moment his face met hers she bellowed once more and rolled toward the far side of the bed.

His emerald eyes blazed in horror at the brazen girl. Her arms dangled from the side, reaching for the floor as she tried to pull her injured legs behind her. He leapt to the far side of the bed, grabbed her arms and lifted her back onto the bed.

She scowled at him and screamed even louder. The sound reverberated throughout the room, which sent him stumbling backward in surprise. She watched with unhidden glee as his leg caught the small table behind him. His arms propelled madly in the air, reminding her of the small planes which had often flown above the island.

But his situation was hopeless. He toppled over and crashed onto the table. Its legs slowly splayed out and quivered, until at last they exploded across the floor. Splinters of wood flew from beneath as he hit bottom with a resounding bang.

She glared at him for a moment. Unable to help herself, she burst into laughter.

"What in Sam hill is going on in here?" Bice demanded, as he burst into the room.

She gazed at the man in the doorway. This man she'd not seen before. He was tall and lean, his arms rippled with bronzed muscles. His dark wavy hair barely skirted his shoulders. Golden brown eyes stared in disbelief at the mess in the room.

She didn't care. She opened her mouth wide and howled, until both men could only stare at her aghast and simultaneously clutch their ears.

Bice rushed to her bedside. In a moment of desperation and at a lack for realizing the consequences, he clasped his hand across her mouth.

She twisted from under his grasp, and with the swiftness of a snake bit him.

He squealed and yanked his hand away, staring in shock at the blistering red teeth marks across his palm. He shook his hand madly, waving it about wildly through the air until all but the most excruciating of the pain finally ebbed. "Do that again, I'll bite you back."

Harmon sat on the floor amongst the broken pieces of table and laughed. He shook his head, carefully picking splinters from his pants. "I warned you Bice, she's a tiger." He stood up and brushed the remnants of wood from his backside.

"Can you talk?" Bice gazed at her, struggling to smile despite the wrenching pain in his digits.

She was the picture of beauty. Porcelain perfect skin with the face of a doll. A face models would kill to have or to buy. Flowing locks of golden hair hung to her shoulders. Her arms were strong and tanned from the island sun. Plus, she had a damned nice set of teeth. But her aquamarine eyes burned fire at him.

She glared at him, screwed her face into impossible contortions until she resembled a side-show carnival mirror, and screamed again. She didn't know why she was here, how she got here, nor why the baboon with strange pictures on his arms dare bring her to this place.

Whatever their reasons she could care less. She'd been forgotten too many years, which she learned to prefer. She was better off alone. For the most part that is, except for her friend Dreams.

"I don't know." Harmon carefully approached the opposite side of her bed once again. "She was on the island five years. Do you think she forgot how to talk?"

"Let's try this." Bice leaned over the scowling girl.

"I'm Bice Wayne, and this is Harmon Steele. I'm his assistant, and friend. He's a musician, and I manage his band and line up his shows. You are in his mansion near Los Angeles, overlooking the sea."

The men watched as a wave of recognition swept across her face. She blinked and gazed out the window.

She could see the ocean glittering in the distance. She'd been surrounded by the sea for many years. The rolling blue waters had brought her to the island. In this place, she could smell faint traces of the salty sea in the air around her. The azure waters had kept her safe, and brought her peace.

But long ago, before the orphanage, the same ocean brought her unforgiving despair. It'd taken her family. Now, those same blue waters had brought the evil fire-haired man, who'd taken her away from the only peace she'd ever known.

She gazed at Harmon, standing so casually at her bedside seemingly swollen with pride for bringing her to this miserable place. He almost looked happy. It came to her with sudden clarity. The monster was going to take her back to the orphanage she'd snuck away from.

In an instant, she lurched at him. Her upper body flew from the bed as she struck with sinewy precision, having mastered the fine art of climbing the island trees many a dark moon.

Harmon staggered backward in surprise, but she clung to him with one hand and pounded his head with the other. Her broken legs were once again dangling from the bed, as he attempted to back away. She didn't care.

Bice leapt across the room and pulled the maddened teenager away from his wealthy employer. He pulled her back onto the bed, and pressed her shoulders to the mattress.

Gasping for breath, he fought the sinewy girl until she finally tired and lay still.

"She's angry, Harmon." Bice muttered. "She's obviously blaming you for her injury. Not to mention, taking her from the island."

"She'll have to get over it." Harmon replied. "I won't have her attacking me again. Get her calmed down."

"Have you lost your mind? I'm your manager for God's sake, not a damned babysitter."

Harmon gazed at the girl. Sweat was beginning to march its silvery beads across her chest as more droplets materialized across her brow. Her cheeks were flushed pink with anger. He could almost hear the *tick-tick* of her internal time bomb waiting to explode once again.

He couldn't have her hitting his face. His face was loved by thousands of his fans overseas, even though he hadn't sold many records stateside in years. "You live here, you can at least help me teach her to act like a respectable human."

Bice eyed the teenager. "How old is she now, twelve?"

"Bite your tongue." Harmon glared at him, his eyes thinning to slits. "She was ten when I found her on my beachfront, which was seven years ago."

Harmon moved toward the window and drew the curtain back. He gazed beyond the stained gla

pane to the sea below. Waves churned in the distance. A wave of despair washed across him, prickling him to his very bones.

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He could see the very spot where he'd found her. He would never forget. That day haunted his every waking hour. Eventually, it cruelly found a way to penetrate his dreams.

He watched through the window, seeing once again the girl lying in the sand as a single gull chipped away at the flesh on her leg. Strings of seaweed were caught in her hair and wrapped around her ankles.

Ten years ago, he was a nouveau riche musician who'd purchased the mansion only days before. His success was more than he could have ever dreamed. He'd cashed in on his sudden wealth at only twenty five years old. But that first walk along the west side of his property changed his life forever.

Her parents laid face down and bloated in the sands nearby. Dozens of gulls pecked at their bodies. A small wooden boat protruded at an odd angle against the rocky cliff, some of its battered wood scattered across the shoreline. Clothing floated in the waves, moving back and forth along the shoreline as the tide teased the fabric into living forms.

He'd rushed to the girl first. He didn't know why. Perhaps, it was because she wasn't the color of death. Perhaps it was a gut instinct.

He drove the gull away insanely, gently turned her over and wiped the sand from her face. She opened her hazy aquamarine eyes and stared at him.

There was something about her eyes. The way the sunlight caught the golden flecks against the watery blue, making them dance. But there was something much, much more behind her eyes.

For seven long years he'd never forgotten her eyes. She'd gazed deep into his soul that day. He knew she could see everything he'd ever done and every place he'd traveled to. As if he were staring into his own reflection in a mirror of his life. That day, he'd felt some sort of unexplainable connection to the dying girl.

The longer he stared into those bottomless eyes, the more he could feel her probing into the dusty cobwebs of memories long forgotten. The ocean winds whipped his hair into his eyes at that very moment. The spell was broken.

He turned and stared at the frightened girl. His belly suddenly wrenched with guilt. She looked like a trapped animal, staring straight through his skin and into his soul. As she'd done the day he turned her over on the shoreline.

He carried her into the house that miserable day, and called the police.

Silently on the couch she'd lain in shock, until the officers and child welfare workers arrived. In short order the bodies were removed from the beach. The last he heard, she'd been taken to an orphanage. No one came forward to claim her. No one knew her name. Her parents were never identified. Not a living soul knew from where she'd come.

Harmon gazed at Bice. "I need your help for awhile. She obviously loathes the ground I walk on. I'll leave, maybe you can get her to talk. Or better yet, talk some sense into her. She would have died on that island in the storm. We were lucky to get out alive. Not to mention her friend would have died along with her."

"Dreams?" The girl moaned.

Bice and Harmon whirled around and stared in disbelief at the teenager. She could talk, she was not a mute after all. She not only could speak, but was listening carefully to their hushed voices, absorbing their words in stoic silence.

"Now's your chance." Bice shoved Harmon toward the girl. "Tell her the truth. Tell her why she's here."



“No. I can’t. I’m not ready.”

~~“Do it. She has to know. It will be much easier the sooner you tell her.”~~

“Oh hell, not now.” Harmon thought a moment, and carefully took a step toward the bed. He could feel Bice’s eyes searing sizzling heat into his back. Invisible spears of fire were propelling him forward.

His shirt might burst into flames if he were to suddenly stop. He’d make front page of the morning paper, “*Man bursts into flames in his own home, investigators think spontaneous combustion may be a factor.*” At least he’d make the paper that way. It’d been awhile since he’d made front page of any paper stateside.

He shook his head clear, and took another step toward the waiting teenager. He stopped a few feet from the bed, slowly pulling the armchair toward him. Taking great care not to get too close, he eased himself down. Her eyes still burned blue fury at him.

He slowly inhaled, waiting for all hell to break loose again. Unbelievably, she remained silent. He sighed with relief.

Finally, he spoke. “Seven years ago, I found you on my beach, you were nearly dead. You know your parents didn’t make it. I called for help, but since no one knew who you were or if you had any relatives, you were sent to an orphanage.”

He didn’t know how much she understood. He watched her eyes, the glowing aquamarine eyes, the very color of the sea itself, but they would not give up what she might be thinking.

“I was twenty-five years old when I found you.. Since that day, I could not forget you. Don’t ask me why, maybe it was the look in your eyes. From that day forward I thought about you every day no matter what part of the world I was in. You were stuck in my head. I wanted to do something for you that day, to somehow help you, but it was out of my hands. I was gone up to a year at a time on tour with my band.”

She remained silent. He watched her carefully study him. At least she seemed to be listening.

“Later,” he continued, “I found out they put you in an orphanage. This sickened me. I felt guilty day and night, for not having the ability to help find you a home or take you in myself. I could have hired a nanny for you, sent you to the best schools and given you the life you deserved.”

She stared at him with disdain. “Spare me your life story. Tell me where Dreams is.”

“She’s back at the orphanage.” He gripped the arms of the chair tightly, waiting for the backlash.

“Take me the hell back there!”

“Where did you pick up that language? Tell me the monkeys on that island didn’t teach you this?”

“From you, you said it. Now take me back!”

“I can’t. I have temporary guardianship of you, until you are capable and of age to make it on your own. I won’t take you back to the orphanage. Ever.”

She gazed at him in confusion. “What does that mean?”

Bice chuckled. “It means you get to live here for now. You’re stuck with him.”

She glared at Bice. “No, I don’t think so.”

Bice defiantly crossed his arms and glared back at her. But before he could react and run for cover from the demon girl, he watched as she snatched the book off the bedside table and flung it at him. It whirled through the air, hit him across the forehead and tumbled to the floor in a whoosh of pages.

He doubled over in surprise, clutching his head. His hand still stung where she’d bitten him, now his temple was throbbing. He reached up and felt the already-forming welt the book had left behind in

its supersonic travels through midair.

—Enough was enough. He moved toward her with determination, leaned over the bed and met her gaze. “You do that again, I’ll knock you in the head with a book. Got it?”

Unfazed, she grabbed a handful of his long hair and yanked it.

He was ready this time. He quickly grasped her wrist and squeezed, forcing her to loosen her grip.

The girl watched in horror as the color ebbed from her fingers. She realized he meant it, and finally let go. Tears formed in her eyes as she gazed at the two men. Silently, she slid under the sheet and covered her face. The fabric soon began to tremble in time with her heart wrenching cry.

Harmon glared at his assistant. “You scared her!”

“She’ll be fine, she’s being a cry baby.” Bice gently pulled the sheet from her face. “You got a name?”

“Screw you!”

He laughed. “Did I hear you correctly? Is that what they called you back at the home? I can hear it now at roll call. Annie- here. Beth- here. Screw You- here. Now go on, tell us your name.”

Harmon burst into a shoulder-shaking round of laughter. This was better than an movie he’d watched, a hundred times better than the many hysterical groupie fights he’d witnessed.

She gritted her teeth and glared at Bice. “Heaven.”

Bice stared at her in shock. She was the farthest thing from heaven he’d ever set eyes upon. “Are you sure it’s not Hell?”

“That isn’t funny. Dreams and I each picked a name when we lived on the island. I picked Heaven, because that’s what the island was like for us. Until your baboon friend came along.” She glared at Harmon.

“That baboon saved your life.” Bice replied. “You owe him that much, Heaven.”

Harmon leaned forward in the chair. He wouldn’t let a seventeen year old intimidate him. It’d taken months to find her, and for the longest time it was thought she and her friend had perished at sea.

Their break had finally come when several passengers on the doomed ship reported seeing the girls leap overboard to the sea patrol. Harmon sent his plane to circle the nearest archipelago, until one day the pair were finally spotted.

But the hurricane formed from what seemed a minor tropical storm. Its dark tentacles reached out behind the vessel as he sailed at full speed, threatening to drag him and his crew into its watery mansion. He arrived on the island only hours ahead of the deadly storm.

She ran from him the moment he stepped on shore. He caught up to her, and begged her and her friend to come aboard with him. He’d tried in vain to explain to them the monster which lay only miles offshore.

But instead, she’d jerked away from him and turned to leave. At that moment, a band of heavy rain and gale winds hit the island. The torrent threw him face first into the sands, as trees buckled and crashed to the ground around him. The next thing he knew, he was digging her mangled legs from under a felled tree.

Heaven gazed at him with her mysterious golden tinted eyes. “Why do you draw pictures on your arms?”

Bice immediately fell into a hearty round of laughter. He staggered backward against the wall. His laughter steadily grew louder, until he gave up the last of his dignity and wept.

Harmon glared at his shameless assistant. “I didn’t draw them, they’re called tattoos. Each

picture tells a story, a person I might have known or maybe a place I've been. This one is my car."

~~— Heaven studied his arms closely. She gazed at each picture carefully, hoping to decipher the story behind each. Her eyes momentarily fluttered closed. "Fire. There will be a great crash and fire."~~

Harmon frowned. "What do you mean?"

She grew suddenly pale, pulled the sheet over her head and lay trembling beneath. He could almost hear the unmistakable rattle of her broken legs clicking together. She finally peered from beneath the sheet. "I thought I saw a picture on your arm. Never mind."

Bice moved to her bedside. "You need to get some rest. We'll see you later this evening."

Harmon sat silently for a moment. Finally, he broke his gaze from her soulful eyes and slowly followed Bice from the room.

\* \* \*

## Chapter Two

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Bice and Harmon descended the staircase silently.

They walked across the foyer and into Harmon's study. Bice took a seat in the rich leather chair facing Harmon's desk. He could hear the musician moving behind him. Soon a cork popped from a bottle, followed by the tinkling of glasses and spirits sizzling against cubes of crackled ice.

"Thanks." He murmured as Harmon handed him a drink. He could put it off no longer. There was something very odd about their new houseguest. Not to mention her temper.

"Harmon, do you realize what you've gotten yourself into?" He asked. "For God's sake, she was on the island too long. She can't go around biting us and pounding you in the head. Now, she's carrying on about a crash and fire?"

Harmon took his usual seat behind his majestic desk. He swirled his drink, gazing at the gold records adorning the walls. Dozens of them. He'd had it all. Now, something had called him back from touring and here he was, no plans for a new record or another tour. Only plans to rescue an unwanted orphan time hadn't been able to erase from his troubled mind.

She lay upstairs in the very room above his study, a wounded spirit both inside and out. He sighed. "I don't know what she could have possibly meant about a fire. Nor could I have predicted she'd pound me in the head, or bite you. Apparently she has some anger issues toward me for bringing her back to the states."

Bice studied his employer carefully. "Let's hope her anger is resolved soon. I came damn close to threatening to shove that book up her nose." He rubbed his head halfheartedly.

Harmon laughed.

"What's so funny? Do you think I like having a teenager here? What about your career? Don't tell me I came all the way from Philly to manage you for naught."

Harmon sighed and sat his glass down. "I need a break. A year off would be nice, I've been touring the better part of seven years. Stay on here. Enjoy yourself and relax awhile."

Bice leaned across the desk and glared at his employer. "How the hell can I relax when you put that demon that calls herself Heaven in the room next to mine? Forty damn rooms in this mansion, and you have to put her practically in my lap."

He leapt from the chair and stormed to the neat row of imported ales and liquors. He slammed his glass down, picked up a bottle and took a long drink directly from it. He sighed in temporary contentment, and wiped his mouth on his cuff. He knew he'd have to be careful not to drink too much or the Philly Monster would rise from the swamps again.

Harmon chuckled at his manager. "Give it some time, she'll be fine. She needs to adjust and get used to being in the States again. She has a lot to catch up on, and we need to help her. You may have any room in the house after things settle down. Take your pick. Do this for me. You know I'd do it for you in a minute."

Their conversation was abruptly interrupted when the study door flung open with a whoosh, striking the opposite wall. The surprise sent the bottle Bice held crashing to the floor. Harmon's housekeeper rushed in, her dark eyes ablaze.

"Mr. Steele, please come quickly. There are horrible noises coming from that girl's room."

The Mexican woman was dancing from toe to toe, quivering with fright at the dreadful sounds drifting downstairs behind her. She gaped at the ceiling above, as if waiting for some supernatural force to swoop down and teleport her back to her homeland.

"Bonita, her name is Heaven." Harmon scolded the maid politely. "Not 'that girl'."

“Mr. Steele, come quickly.” She demanded, her eyes wide with terror. “She is destroying her suite, and I won’t be the one to clean it!”

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Bice and Harmon stared at each other incredulously. Simultaneously, they raced out the study door, and up the long flight of stairs toward the devil girl’s room.

\* \* \*

She’d waited patiently for the baboon with pictures on his arms and his sidekick to leave. Quietly she listened as their footsteps faded into silence down the hall.

She crawled from the bed and inched herself along the floor toward the room with running water, dragging her wounded legs behind her.

She gazed at the walls from her position on the floor, searching for an object she could use. Soon, she found what she needed. A large metal bar was rooted into the wall, which held some sort of colorful cloth.

She hoisted herself onto the slice of wood which protruded from the wall, and studied the many pretty objects which sat upon it. One at a time, she lifted each bottle and inhaled their scents. Some contained sweet liquids which smelled of the island flowers.

She quickly pushed them aside, and studied the cold tube which was anchored into the wall. She struggled momentarily, lost in time, trying to put a name to the soft cloth which it held. She pressed it to her face and inhaled the scent. A towel. That was it, a towel.

She pulled it off and let it fall silently to the floor. She grasped its holder and pulled with all her strength. Pieces of plaster soon began to crack from behind it, until a spider web of chips fell like raindrops across the floor. She pressed her knees into the wall, rocked back and forth and pulled with every ounce of strength she could muster.

It suddenly gave way and came out of the wall with a whoosh, throwing her off the counter. She landed with a crash amongst a tumble of bottles and other lovely objects which had adorned the surface. They shattered onto the floor around her, filling the air with an almost sickly aroma of every island flower she had ever smelled in her young life.

As she lay stunned on the cold tile, she could feel the cool liquids seep into the lovely nightdress she had awoken in, enveloping her in their powerful fragrance.

Undeterred, she grasped the metal pole and began chipping away at the hardened stone on her leg. From her knee to her ankle she patiently chipped. Soon, the crack grew until she was able to wriggle her fingers into the gap and split it wide open. Pleased, she carefully began working on the opposite leg.

She stood up and dusted the shards of glass and plaster from her nightdress. Gazing in disbelief at the mess she’d made, she reddened with shame. Quickly, she scooped up the pretty bottles into her outstretched gown and carefully placed them back where they once proudly stood.

She sighed and shook her head in frustration. There seemed to be many more bottles now. Maybe the morons wouldn’t notice.

She gazed at the two large chunks of petrified earth she’d pried from her legs. She glanced around in hopes of finding a place to hide them. Maybe, the baboon and his sidekick wouldn’t see they were missing from her legs.

Suddenly, she heard footsteps pounding up the stairs. Frantically, she glanced around the small room, searching for a hiding place for the broken pieces of earth. But there was nothing to be found in the small area.

They were rushing down the hall now. Desperate, she quickly picked the pieces up and tossed

them through the doorway toward the darkened corner in the bedroom. Hopefully, they would lay hidden where they fell.

But too late, she realized with horror she'd missed her mark. She wasn't surprised. She'd never been much good at the coconut toss game back on the island.

To her dismay the heavy pieces spun out of control through the air and as if in slow motion, crashed out the beautiful picture window with a reverberating bang.

Harmon burst into the room and gazed at the sight before him.

What he set eyes upon, his mind could not fully absorb. Maybe Bice was right. Maybe he should have listened to his manager. After all, for the most part he'd listened to him the better part of five years. And for the most part, as much as he hated to admit it, Bice had usually been right about things. Some things at least.

The girl was standing in front of the window, gazing in unmistakable horror at him. A large hole in the ornamental glass framed her silhouette. The ten-thousand dollar, one of a kind artwork he'd flown in from Italy was destroyed. A salty ocean breeze from the cliffs beyond blew gently through the ragged opening. The tattered silk curtains billowed in the breeze, tossing honey colored wisps of hair around Heaven's pale face.

He stared at her feet. Red and blue, yellow and orange cabochons from the window littered the floor around her. Amber liquid dripped from her nightdress, silently falling to the floor amongst the remnants of his masterpiece.

He noticed a smell. A God-awful smell, as the once still air churned throughout the suite. The smell of a thousand old perfumes dumped together and blended into one. An overpowering, sickening scent of a hundred old ladies gathered around him, poking their bony fingers into his face and scolding him for lifting a girl's skirt in class.

But, there was something else. Something more was wrong other than the shattered window. Something besides the smell. He squinted at the girl and studied her carefully. He could feel Bice's hot breath on his neck millimeters behind him, coming in ragged gasps.

Through watery eyes he gazed at her legs. Her porcelain perfect legs. The legs which were mangled on the island only a week ago. The same legs which the doctors told him would never be the same. He'd been warned she would need years of therapy, and she may still never walk. He hadn't even mustered the courage to tell her she'd quite possibly be crippled for life.

He glanced at the calendar on his diamond encrusted watch. The accident was last Friday. Not two weeks ago, not three weeks ago. Seven days ago.

He thumped his watch madly and pressed it to his ear. He struggled to hear the near silent *tick-tick-tick* of the timepiece. It was working perfectly. It damned sure better, it'd cost him a day's salary.

He studied the girl who called herself Heaven once again. She was standing up normally, bearing her full weight. Her legs were perfect. Normal and healthy. No scars, nothing out of the ordinary. Her legs looked like they'd been in a damned shark attack only one week ago.

Now, they appeared as if they'd never injured to begin with. As if she hadn't almost bled to death in front of him, before he finally wrenched the tree from her limp body and stopped the deadly flow.

She moved. He watched as she easily took one step, another and another, until she was nearly to the bed. She leapt the last few feet through the air into it, quickly pulled the covers over herself, until all he could see were her eyes above the sheets.

Her unforgettable aquamarine eyes, with their tiny gold flecks of sun. The same eyes which had

haunted him for years. The penetrating eyes he'd hopelessly tried to forget.

~~The phone was ringing. He turned to look at Bice. Bice was deathly pale, staring in stunned silence at the girl peeking from behind the covers. He must answer the phone, apparently Bice had checked out on him. His manager didn't look well at all. He looked like he needed a very, very long vacation. The ringing, the blasted incessant ringing continued.~~

He'd find the phone, rip it from the wall and toss it out the window. It wasn't like the window wasn't shattered anyway. Maybe he'd toss out the TV as well, for old time's sake.

Then he remembered. There was no phone in this suite. He'd had it taken out when his ex-girlfriend who once occupied it, left him for another musician. One who could sell records in the States. The worthless bimbo and her smelly perfumes. Good riddance.

The ringing persisted. It grew louder and louder, until it finally reached a deafening crescendo.

Too late, he realized the true meaning of the high pitched wail. Dizziness overtook him as his belly began to churn and spin. The room began to shift. His mouth fell open as he watched the broken window move from the western wall, and silently march toward the southern wall.

He stumbled momentarily, teetering on the border of heaven and hell. He hoped he'd fall on the heaven side, he'd honestly tried to do right in his life. For the most part. Well, some of the time. Actually, once in awhile.

Mercifully he passed out in a cold faint, never realizing nor caring which side he landed on.

\* \* \*

Heaven watched as a strange woman dressed in an apron, Bice, and a large burly man with many long yellow braids came into the room.

They lifted the fire-haired man from the floor and carried him silently out the door. The devil who called himself Harmon Steele had fallen fast asleep on the floor. Maybe he'd gone to sleep because she broke the window.

She gazed at the once beautiful ornamental pane from her bed. Her stomach wrenched in dismay. She hadn't meant to break it. She studied the colorful squares of glass scattered across the floor.

Her gaze moved to the room with running water. The counter was littered with shattered bottles and broken decorations, which she'd tried in vain to place back in order. The metal rod from the wall lay bent and twisted on the floor amongst pieces of the dried earth she'd pried from her legs.

His words rang in her mind. He said she would live here, and he wouldn't take her back to the orphanage. Maybe this place wouldn't be so bad after all. It was better than going back to the home for unwanted children. The children who found her odd and strange and who stayed away.

Except for Dreams, her only friend. Dreams understood her and accepted her, when she didn't even understand herself. Maybe, just maybe, if she cleaned up the mess and fixed the broken things Harmon would forgive her. And maybe, he'd bring Dreams back here to live.

She wiped the salty tears from her eyes and quietly slipped from the bed. She picked up the lovely pieces of colored glass scattered across the floor. One at a time, ever so carefully, she placed the shiny stones back into place on the broken pane.

She placed her hand against the glass, feeling as the warmth of the sun swirled and became one with the heat from within her fingertips. Soon, she could feel a vaguely familiar searing fire race across her palm.

She held her hand firmly in place, patiently waiting as the glass beneath became molten lava, melding the broken pieces back into place. One at a time she worked as sweat trickled down her back

soaking her gown. Piece by piece, she carefully placed the broken shards back into the pattern they once occupied.

Finally, all the pieces were back in place. The hole was gone. The lovely picture of a large bird amongst beautiful flowers once again adorned the center of the formerly shattered pane.

She was suddenly very tired. She must sleep. She gazed at the bed, already knowing she could not make it back to its comfort. She teetered in dizziness a moment, fell to the floor in a heap, gasping in exhaustion.

The colorful beams of sunlight filtered through the lovely glass, casting dancing prisms of rainbow hues across her, as she dreamt of her lost island.

\* \* \*

“Harmon, can you hear me?” Bice shook the musician again.

They’d carried the unconscious man to his suite and laid him on the bed. Hawk, Harmon’s bodyguard, excused himself to other matters. Matters which included eating donuts and watching wrestling on TV. Bonita excused herself, feigning dinner time was right around the corner.

He checked his watch. Harmon had been out nearly two hours. He needed to wake soon, someone needed to check on the hell girl in the suite next door. By now she’d be half starved, and from the way she looked and smelled was in desperate need of a bath. He’d be damned if he would give her one. She was Harmon’s problem, not his. He shook the musician again.

Harmon moaned, and fluttered his eyes open. “Bice?”

“You’ve been out nearly two hours. Someone needs to check on Heaven, and I’m not waving my hand in the air as a volunteer.”

Harmon sat up, and gazed around his familiar suite. The setting sun loomed against the hills in the horizon, their orangey glow filtered through the window. He suddenly remembered the majestic window in the suite next door.

His one-of-a-kind masterpiece was destroyed. An object d’art which for all intents and purpose should be hanging safely in an Italian museum. No, it wasn’t the window. He struggled to remember why he’d fainted. He grabbed Bice by the shirt. “Did you see her legs?”

A wave of confusion made its way across his assistant’s face. “Yeah, I did. I don’t know Harmon, you sure brought back some kind of freak from that island.”

“How the hell did she do that?” Harmon cried. “It’s impossible, do you hear me? Impossible. I saw her legs with my own eyes. They looked like shark bait, do you hear me?”

“Calm down. I’m sure there’s a logical explanation for it.”

Bice walked to the window and gazed at the churning ocean beyond the hills. The sun was now a huge ball of fire, slowly fading behind the distant waters. There wasn’t a damned explanation for it.

He too, had seen the girl’s legs during the six days she was unconscious in the hospital. Which might have been a good thing. He could imagine the havoc she may have wrecked in the pristine private room Harmon insisted on. A room for a movie star. Too beautiful for words.

Harmon leapt from the bed. “Bice, listen to me. Whatever happened to her legs, must stay between us. If someone were to find out...”

Bice whirled around and glared at his employer. “What is this fixation you have with her? You have gone above and beyond normal means locating her, and bringing her back to the states. Your many attorneys worked the system, until they found a loophole which would give you guardianship. Why, Harmon?”

Harmon looked as if he had been struck by a bolt of lightning. “Don’t insinuate I have a



fixation on her. For God's sake, I told you I found her right there." He shoved his manager toward the window, until his nose was firmly pressed to the pane. "I turned my back on her that day. Look where she wound up. I've had to live with the guilt for years."

Bice gently peeled his face from the glass. It was time to pull out the kid gloves he always kept handy with his hot-headed employer. "It wasn't your fault she wound up in an orphanage. Why did you have to bring her back here?"

"I had to. It was something about her, something I can't explain. I felt it the second I turned her over in the sand that day. I think you've seen for yourself. Don't deny it."

"You knew she was some kind of freak when you found her?"

Harmon shoved his finger into Bice's face and backed him against the window once again. "Call her that again, I'll beat your ass."

Bice threw his hands into the air in defeat. "All right, all right. Calm down. Let's forget it for now. We have a bigger problem on our hands. Her room is destroyed and your fancy window is history. You can't leave her in there, she'll have to be moved to another room. Hopefully, one on the far wing of the mansion."

"We? You're going to help me?"

Bice gazed at the burgundy carpet and shook his head in resignation. Harmon had him by the throat, it was hopeless. He couldn't take it back. "Yes, we. Now come on, let's get her moved. Bonita's cooking dinner and I'm starved."

He strode to the door and gazed back at the musician. "I want a damned raise for this."

\* \* \*

The two men cautiously approached the doorway to Heaven's room.

Harmon pressed his ear to the door, listening carefully. He didn't want to be in the direct path of a flying book. Too many women loved his face. Women in other countries, but they counted. He hesitated, and finally opened the thick mahogany door.

She lay on the floor beneath his one-of-a-kind designer window. The last of the sun was filtering through it, as it always did at sunset. Fading prisms of color danced across her, lighting her golden hair into a kaleidoscope of color.

She was asleep beneath the former masterpiece. He gazed at the window. The same majestic peacock graced its center, flowing birds-of-paradise swayed behind, dancing amongst green foliage. Like they did before.

He was caught in a time warp. He'd been here before. He'd fallen across the table only hours ago, beneath the majestic window. He'd come back into the room and the window was broken. Shattered into a million colorful pieces.

Now, the window was whole again. History was repeating itself. He pondered leaving the room, coming back and finding the window broken again. He'd leave again, and upon his return the window would be as new.

He gazed at the doorway. He wondered if he'd run into himself at some point, coming and going, gaping at the window, watching as it fell to pieces, only to become whole again upon his re-entry.

Once more the shrill ringing filled the air. The blasted, incessant ringing. He stole a glance at Bice who stood quietly beside him. But Bice was gone. He felt something strike his foot. Almost afraid, he held his breath as his eyes fell to the floor. His assistant was face down, out cold.

The ringing, the God-forsaken unrelenting wail persisted. He'd fight it this time, this time he'd win. He pressed his hands to his ears and squeezed his eyes shut.

As usual, the pitch rose to an impossible decibel. If he could hit that note, he'd make millions. Well, even more millions. ~~Women would swim at his feet and beg him to take them for his own.~~

But it was a note no man could reach, for it was a note only found within his fading thoughts. His legs shook and his knees quivered. He could feel the all too familiar sweat forming behind his neck. To hell with it.

He collapsed to the floor alongside Bice.

\* \* \*

## Chapter Three

---

Bice stood in front of the magnificent window.

He carefully traced his fingertips across the patterned glass, his touch as light as a feather. The cool artwork rose and fell beneath his hand, the cut glass held in place by hardened aluminum beading. He could find no sharp edges, no dings or scratches, nothing unusual. Nothing but a ten thousand dollar piece of art.

He recalled the day Harmon had it flown to the states. The musician found it while on tour in Europe, and immediately purchased it. He hadn't even looked at the price tag. The enormous pane was carefully wrapped and flown to Los Angeles on a private jet.

He remembered the installers who hung it, and how Harmon threatened them with their very lives if they were to so much scuff it. The musician had bought it for his now ex-girlfriend, and had it installed in her suite while she was away.

He stepped back and gazed once more at the enormous masterpiece, taking it all in. As was typical of Harmon, priceless paintings were scattered throughout the long halls of the formerly quiet mansion. This piece was his favorite.

It was a behemoth, stretching to the top of the cathedral ceiling and falling to waist height. The blue-eyed peacock stared back at him, along with hundreds more tiny eyes shimmering from within its tail feathers. The muted hues of sapphire and emerald and amber were all as they should be. Perfect the day it arrived. There was no logical explanation why the glass was as if it was never broken. Or, Heaven's legs.

He turned from the window and gazed at the sleeping girl. He had awoken first from his fainting spell, and carried her to the bed. He called Hawk back upstairs, who once again scooped Harmon up and carried him back to his suite. The gorilla of a man grumbled all the way down the hall, which wasn't unusual, he never talked much anyway.

He silently moved toward her bed, being careful not to wake her. Her arm dangled limply from the side. He carefully lifted it and placed it back on the bed. From the corner of his eye, he noticed something amiss on her hand.

He gently lifted it and gazed curiously at her palm. It was bright red, as if it'd been burned. Tiny blisters had already begun to form. He would have to call Bonita up to wrap it. The Mexican housekeeper was a jack of all trades, Harmon had made a wise choice the day he hired her.

He studied her legs and suddenly felt a prickling sensation move up his spine. Her legs were perfect, as if they'd never been injured. Like the picture window. He clenched his teeth until his jaw throbbed. He knew there must be a logical explanation for the odd occurrences. He'd grown up on the streets in Philly, and had learned to take things at face value. He was much too level headed and logical to believe in something he could not see.

His belly churned with hunger, interrupting his thoughts. He'd find out tomorrow exactly what tricks the girl had been playing on them. He was no fool. He was not about to let an undisciplined and unruly teenager outsmart him.

He quietly covered her up, turned out the light and hurried downstairs.

\* \* \*

Bice strode into the kitchen, hungrily sniffing the tasty aromas escaping from the sizzling pots.

"Dinner will be ready in five minutes." Bonita smiled, as she lifted lid after lid on each steaming pot. "Shall I set the table in the dining room, or will you be eating in your suite?"

"I'll eat with you tonight." He smiled back at her as he sat down at the small table. The maid's

neatly pressed uniform rustled as she whipped out a plate and set it before him. “Bonita, I need to talk to you.”

“Yes Sir?” She gazed at him quizzically. “I’ve prepared filet mignon. I trust the meal suits your tastes?” She stabbed the steaming steak and placed it on his plate.

“Bonita, it looks superb. It’s Harmon, I’m afraid.”

“Aye?” She stopped her incessant paces and gazed at him. “I trust Mr. Steele has not fallen ill?”

“He’s fine, but he fainted again. This is why I need your help with Heaven. It seems somehow she’s burned her hand. Plus, she needs a bath and a good meal. Will you take care of it? I’m not comfortable bathing her.” A crimson blush crept across his cheeks.

“Aye, she can not bathe herself?” The woman cocked an eyebrow at him.

“I doubt it. Where she came from there are no bathtubs, or running water. Before that, I don’t know how much she remembers from the orphanage. It appears very little.”

“Aye Sir, I’d be glad to help.” The housekeeper smiled. She knew it was of no concern of hers to ask about Heaven’s whereabouts after the orphanage. “I’ll get her fed and fixed up right after dinner, Sir.”

“Thanks, Bonita.” He grinned and sighed in relief. One less monkey off his back.

He hungrily dove into his steak, forgetting everything else.

For now, at least.

\* \* \*

Harmon woke, and true to his routine gazed out the window.

The sun had apparently fallen long ago, the city lights shimmered in the distance. He lifted the clock on the bedside table. It was after eleven. He’d been out for hours this time.

Grumbling, he slowly rose from the bed and walked down the hall to Heaven’s room.

This time, he swung the door open without hesitation. Tonight would be the last damn night he fainted. He wasn’t about to let the girl cause him to lose his senses, yet again. Plus, he couldn’t risk injuring his face and disappoint his millions of fans.

She was lying in her bed thumbing through a fashion magazine. He frowned. He really should have Bonita pack the ex’s things away. Or better yet, burn them. He’d waited as long as he would wait for her to come back and collect them. Two years was plenty of time.

A lone silver tray sat near Heaven’s bedside, the remnants of various vegetables scattered across it. Apparently, Bice had brought her dinner up. She was also in a clean nightgown, a few sizes too large, but at least the smell was gone. Another of his ex’s leftovers. Her golden hair had been washed, brushed and absolutely glistened. She was stunning.

He watched her turn page after page in the magazine, gazing at the glossy models in their designer clothing. His gaze fell to her hand. It was wrapped neatly in gauze.

“What happened to your hand?”

“I don’t know. I woke up and it was burned. A nice lady wrapped it.” She stretched her fingers beneath the annoying fabric.

“Do you mean Bonita?”

“Oh yes, that’s it. I forgot her name.”

“Let me see.” He lifted her hand, half expecting the girl to cold-cock him.

He carefully unwrapped it and gazed at her palm. “There is nothing wrong with your hand.”

She momentarily glanced at her palm. “I guess there’s not.” She continued turning page after page, mesmerized with the glossy book.

He gently pried the magazine from her fingers. "I'd like to know what happened to the window in your room. And your legs, while we're at it."

"It was an accident. I heard you coming upstairs, and I was afraid." She gazed at the sheets.

"Look at me." He raised her head to meet his eyes. "First off, don't be afraid of me. Deal?"

"Deal." she smiled. Her face glowed. The fury was long gone from her eyes, her anger long since quieted.

"What kind of accident?"

Her teeth raked across her bottom lip. "I threw those heavy things that were on my legs into the corner. I missed."

"The casts?" I understand you were frightened and they went out the window. Now do tell, how the Sam Hill the window miraculously fixed itself?"

A sudden wave of confusion swept across her aquamarine eyes. "Who is Sam Hill?"

He swallowed a chuckle. "The window. How did it fix itself?"

Her lips nearly disappeared from the grip of her teeth against them. He fought the temptation to grab her cheeks and squeeze them just so, in an effort to pop her mouth back into place.

"I fixed it."

"How?" He watched as the teeth marks slowly began disappearing from her lower lip.

"With my hands. I put the pieces back. No big deal."

"Impossible. I don't believe you." He stared at her legs. "Tell me why you're walking. That too is impossible. The doctors said you would be crippled. I flew in the best from around the world to help you. They all said the same thing, it's hopeless. Now, a week later and you're walking?"

"Maybe they gave up on me too soon?" She winced and fluttered her lashes.

"Tell me."

"I don't know." She cried. "I don't, I don't! I woke up this morning, and somehow they were better."

"You seriously don't know?" He could only gape at her in disbelief.

She stared at him silently as a single tear slowly made its way down her cheek. She was trying hard to be nice, so he would bring Dreams back. She knew she was different, the children in the home reminded her of it daily. They shunned her after that first and only incident. She clearly remembered that awful day.

A small boy had fallen from the slide. The one spot, the only spot where the cold metal didn't quite meet the joint, his head found. As if it had attracted the boy like a tornado to a trailer park. He laid in the sand, crying and screaming in agony. An ugly gash traced its way across his forehead.

She rushed to his side and placed her hand over the gaping wound, hoping to stop the flow of blood until the teachers arrived. When they finally came to her calls for help, she lifted her hand away from the wound. To her horror, the injury had disappeared. As if it had never been there to begin with. As if the entire ordeal was a cruel joke, or a figment of her imagination.

She'd gazed at her blistered palm, but even the blood had somehow evaporated. The teachers pulled her away from the unhurt boy, scolded her and dubbed her a liar.

One particularly domineering nun grabbed her arm, dragged her back into the cold building and locked her in her room. Forevermore, she was shunned.

Before the home, she could remember nothing. Now, she was in a strange room, in a strange place, full of objects she couldn't remember the names of. A strange man with strange pictures on his arms was looking at her, well, strangely. She'd be shunned again. She fell back onto the bed and wept.

"Don't cry." Harmon whispered. "Whatever it is about you, I will try to accept. No one has to

know, all right? I promise I won't say a word."

She sniffed. "All right."

"Get some rest. I'll see you in the morning. I want to show you around this fortress. Then we're going to get you some clothes, and a tutor."

"A what?"

"A tutor is a teacher. You have a lot to catch up on."

"No. I don't want to go to school, the children hate me."

"She'll come here if you prefer."

"Really?"

"Yes."

"New clothes? I get new clothes?"

"Of course. I'll have Bice pick you up some things tomorrow."

She grabbed the magazine and shoved it into his face. "I want a dress like this." She jabbed her finger at the glossy photo.

Harmon gazed at the beautiful model. She was wearing a breathtaking white gown. "No, that's wedding gown. You won't need one of those for a long time." He shuddered at the mere thought of marriage. How dare his ex bring a bridal magazine into his home. He'd be sure to use it to light the fireplace in his study.

"Bedtime, see you in the morning." He gazed at her a moment longer, turned out the light and quietly left the room.

\* \* \*

The following morning, Bice poked his head into Heaven's room.

"Good morning." He beamed. "I hear Harmon is going to show you around the fortress today."

Heaven sat at the vanity table slowly brushing her golden hair. She stared into the mirror at the handsome man behind her. He was absolutely grinning from ear to ear. He reeked of happiness, his dark eyes glittered in anticipation of the day's outing. She'd been happy too. Before she was taken from the island.

Try as she might, she didn't understand why Harmon wanted to give her this new life. A life of luxury, of security and of comfort. She watched in the mirror, as Bice moved up behind her.

"I also hear he's getting you a tutor. How about that?"

She turned from the mirror and gazed at him. "I'm not sure what to think. I don't even know you people. How can I be happy about anything, when everything I've ever known is gone?"

"Give it time, Heaven. Harmon wanted more than anything to help you. Give him a chance. He has a lot of guilt for what happened that day on the beach. He felt he could have done more for you."

She slowly ran the brush through her hair again, and stared at the floor. There were so many things she didn't understand about herself. She'd been shunned from the beginning at the orphanage, through no fault of her own. So, she snuck away and it seemed it hadn't mattered to anyone. Except for one person. Harmon Steele.

The world had forgotten her, except for him. If she'd only agreed to leave the island with him that day. If she only believed him when he told her a deadly storm was coming. But, she didn't remember him.

"Heaven? Are you still with me?"

His eyes fell to her hand. The hand she was brushing her hair with. The bandage was gone. He remembered he'd asked Bonita to wrap it the night before. He knew she bandaged it, she'd mentioned

it later.

— He watched as she sat the brush down on the vanity and turned toward him. His eyes grew wide as he studied her palm. The reddened skin was no more, the blisters were gone. A perfectly normal hand. He followed her hand down to her thigh, slowly letting his eyes fall to her legs. Normal, perfect legs.

He could feel his heart beginning to pound. He finally wrenched his gaze from her and stared at the stained-glass window. The majestic peacock still graced its center, its hundred blue eyes still stared down at him. As before. Perfect. Everything was perfect. Much too perfect.

He'd stood in this very spot only last night and for the first time in his life, fainted. Harmon was right. There was something about this girl, something beyond explanation. Now, he could feel it too as he gazed into her aquamarine eyes.

“Why are you looking at me like that?”

He shook his head clear, hoping his heart would slow down. He didn't want her to see him during a weak moment. He was certainly having one.

“Your hand.” He stuttered. “Your hand is better. It was burned terribly last night.” He pulled a chair beside her. “Do you mind telling me what the hell is going on around here?”

She studied him slyly. “Your mouth reeks of a man who rides on boats.”

“Do you mean a sailor? Sorry, I've been hanging around with Harmon's band too long. So tell me, what's up with you? You caused both Harmon and myself to faint last night.”

“I'm sorry.”

“No, don't be sorry. Please tell me how you did it. What tricks do you have up your sleeves?”

“None. Harmon asked me the same thing last night. No one would understand. I don't even understand. I am what I am, some kind of a freak.”

“No, you're not. You're special, that's all. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise. Now, let's get something to eat and we'll show you around.”

He knew he would never understand what occurred the night before. He couldn't come close to understanding himself. After some time, maybe she'd open up to him one day and explain. Or, maybe he'd figure it out. In the meantime, he planned to keep a close eye on her.

The pair headed out the door and down the long corridor. The halls were hung with magnificent paintings, crystal chandeliers lit the way. He offered her his arm as they approached the grand staircase. She took it, and together they descended into magnificence.

“Who is the gorilla who carried Harmon out of my room last night?” She asked as they reached the lower floor.

Bice chuckled. “That's Hawk, Harmon's bodyguard. He lives here, and travels with us when Harmon is on tour. Fact is, since you've arrived Harmon has decided to take a year off. But Hawk will stay, he's part of the family now. Be prepared, he doesn't talk much.”

“Who is the woman who came into my room last night?”

“That is Bonita, the head housekeeper and Harmon's cook. A mighty fine one at that. There is also Pedro the gardener, and Thornton, Harmon's majordomo.”

“His what?”

“A majordomo, as Harmon likes to call him. He's a butler, a chauffeur and head of the household. Plus, there are a few other maids around. Thornton lives for being able to keep them jumping and hopping.”

“How many people live here?”

“Including you, ten.” He waved her down the hallway toward the dining area, and showed her a

chair. “The house is huge, and there are two wings. The staff is on one side. You and I, Harmon and Hawk are on the other. It stays pretty quiet around here, believe it or not. Until you arrived.”

“Why don’t I remember coming here?” She watched Bonita place their breakfasts in front of them. “I remember waking up, seeing Harmon and screaming. Nothing before that.”

“You were still out of it when you arrived.” He sipped his coffee. “Harmon insisted on bringing you home. The doctors told him they’d done all they could for you. He felt there was no sense keeping you at the hospital a moment longer.”

“Did I hear my name?” Harmon asked, as he strolled in. “Are you two plotting against me?”

“Good morning.” Bice smiled. “I was explaining to Heaven how she wound up in this dump.” He slapped the table and roared with laughter, nearly knocking his coffee over.

Harmon chuckled and took a chair next to Heaven. “How are you this morning?”

She gazed at the handsome musician. His green eyes simply glowed, his auburn hair ablaze in the sunlight which streamed through the window behind him. He too, was a handsome man. Perhaps the most handsome man she’d ever seen.

Regardless, he’d caused a tree to fall on her and crush her legs. For that, she’d never forgive. But she had to play the cards, the cards dealt to her, one at a time. Until she could find a way to reunite with Dreams.

“I’m fine.” She lied.

\* \* \*



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