

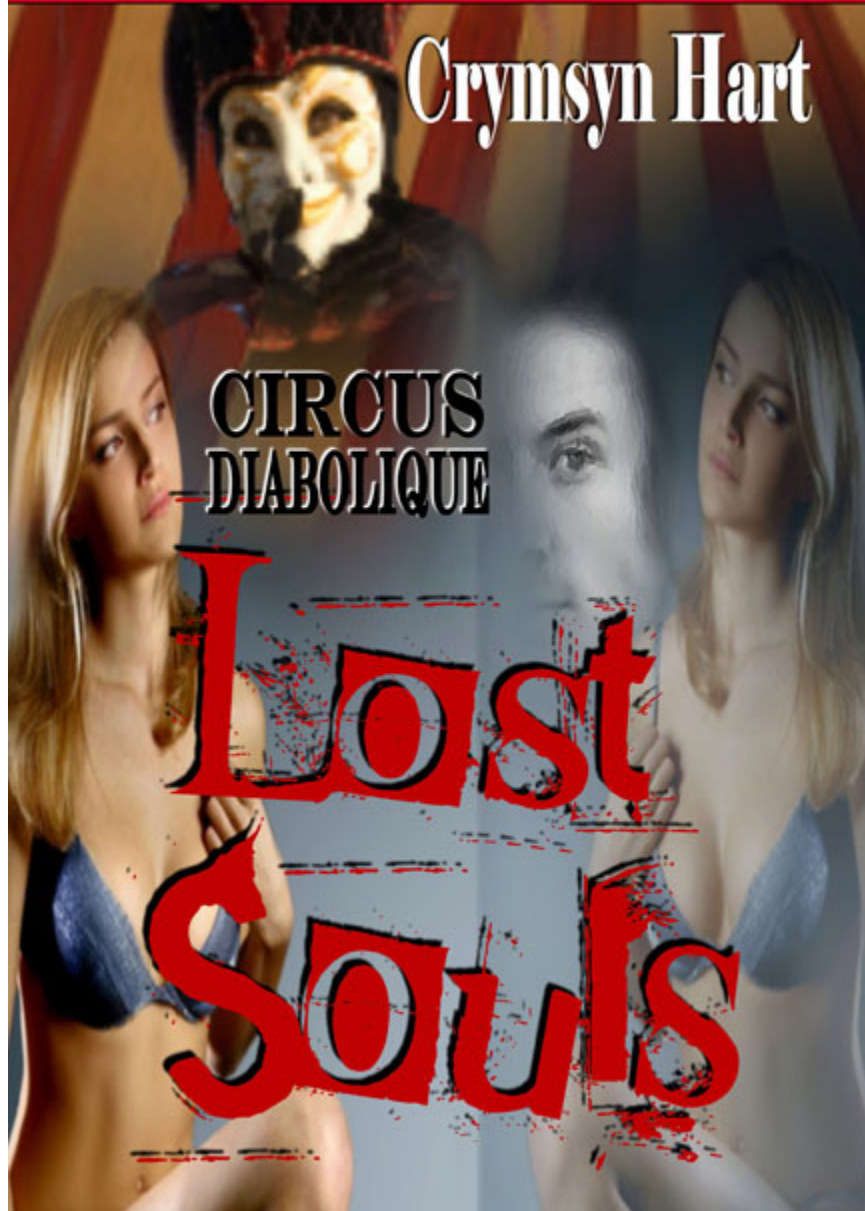
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CIRCUS
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Lost Souls



LOST SOULS

Circus Diabolique

Crymsyn Hart

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LOST SOULS

Circus Diabolique

CRYMSYN HART

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Chapter One

Selena stared at the empty house with a box in her hand. Everything she had wanted to salvage was in it. Hardly anything remained of Trevor, her husband. They had been happy when they looked at the big old house at the end of the cul de sac with plenty of open space all around it. The woods and fields next to the house were a plus. The location reminded her of the place she had grown up.

She had fallen in love with the house, seeing so much potential for the family they had planned. Trevor saw the potential office in the attic, where he could work on the novel he perpetually hacked away at once or twice a month. Selena remembered arguing with him that he would never finish the book because he always had three or four other projects going at the same time. He never completed any of them so she had learned quite a lot about home repair in the past three years of their marriage because it took so much prodding for her husband, who was a carpenter, to get them done.

Selena shifted the weight of the box, realizing now they would never get the deck on the back of the house and Trevor would never finish his book. Tears burned her eyes while she stared at their dream home.

Just after they had bought the house, Trevor had been working on a job when one of the heavy beams he was helping lift hit him on the head, killing him instantly. It was a closed casket funeral. Selena had demanded to see him, but the doctors wouldn't let her due to the severity of the injury. Later at the funeral home, she had stolen a glimpse of him to say good-bye. The mortician had tried to reconstruct his skull, but it was still misshapen. Selena wished she never looked.

The funeral was long and she was a zombie for the next three months. Her friends even stopped coming around to make sure she was okay. By then, she had to tell herself it was okay to get up every morning and function because she was still alive. She still had to get by no matter how much the ache in her soul ate away at her.

Selena contemplated putting their new house back on the market, but she knew how much her husband loved the place and decided to take a leap of faith. Maybe a fresh start was what she needed. She gave up the rented paradise with its lime green and pink walls, sold most of their belongings, and started her drive across the state to Crow's Creek where she was a new resident.

Now Selena slipped the key into the old lock and it went in with ease. She held her breath. Part of her wondered if Trevor was playing a joke on her the way he used to do, and when she opened the door he would be standing there, naked. A smile tugged on her lips thinking of the many times she came home, weary and feeling like hell, to find him completely nude, leaning on the doorway with a drink in one hand and a box of chocolate in the other. The gesture was one of the things she loved about him.

Everyone adored Trevor. He had so many girlfriends when they first met, Selena was surprised he had chosen her out of the lot in college. But he told her she was something special. Once they met, he got rid of all his girlfriends. Selena even befriended many of them, including Phoebe, who had dated Trevor for the first two years of college until she discovered she was gay.

The door opened soundlessly on well-oiled hinges. The movers delivered her belongings more than a week ago. Bubble wrap was still on the futon, but she collapsed onto it, not caring about the small explosion filling her ears. The plastic wrapping was somewhat comfortable, too. Now that her journey was done, the weight of all the months came crashing down around her. Before she knew it, her eyes closed from exhaustion and she slept.

* * * *

“Please, help me!”

Selena opened her eyes to the whisper.

“Trevor?” she asked, not realizing she had said his name out loud. She listened, but didn’t hear anything more. Shaking her head, she decided it was time to get up. Her body was stiff. It was dark out and the front door was still open. A flash of fear moved through her. Had someone gotten into the house and was playing a trick on her? She swallowed dryly, looking around for some kind of a weapon. The house was silent. The night had made it damp and cool. A breeze floated through the house and the draft caused the door to slam shut.

She screamed at the sudden bang. Realizing how silly she was, Selena started laughing with her hand over her racing heart. *Get a grip, Selena. There’s no one there. I bet there’s no crime in this small town. You’ve been through a lot and no need to let yourself get impressionable when the only thing in the house might be a stray cricket.*

“Please, help me.”

Selena did a one eighty. The voice was not her imagination. Someone was in the house, and it sounded like a man. His voice sounded faint coming from upstairs. *Maybe he came in and got hurt while I was asleep.*

Selena hadn’t explored that part of the house yet since she intended to sleep on the futon and not even venture upstairs unless she

had to pee. The thought of being alone in the bed caused her soul to ache. During her drive, she had made up her mind she was going to sleep downstairs until she got used to the house and being alone. Alone and lost—that was how she felt at that moment. If Trevor was there, he would have gone upstairs and taken care of the situation.

Quietly, she tried the light switch at the end of the stairway. After flicking it a few times, she remembered she hadn't had the power turned on yet. She didn't have a flashlight handy, so she pulled out her cell phone from her jeans pocket. The illumination from the phone gave her enough light to see. She bit her lip and stared up the stairs. *No way am I going up there without something.*

She tiptoed into the kitchen and grabbed one of her knives, and clutching the handle in her free hand she went to face the voice. When her foot hit the first wooden step, it creaked and echoed throughout the house. Selena heard something drop and roll across the floor. Next came the sound of jingling bells. Halfway up the stairs, her heart jumped between her throat and her stomach. Her grip tightened on the knife. Her flesh broke out in goose bumps. She was never one for horror movies, but now she was living out the scene of one.

Trevor, if you can hear me, I'm going to kill you for dying.

At the top of the stairs, Selena peered around the doorway. There was nothing in the first bedroom except warped floorboards. She even checked the shadows to be sure they were empty. She went into the room and stared out the window. Blurry shapes moved in the field below. When she blinked, they were gone. Her cell phone beeped, signaling it was running low on batteries.

She closed the phone and then decided to tackle the master bedroom. Selena listened and heard soft tapping on glass coming from the other room. In the hall, everything was dark so she opened her cell phone again. *Damn, the battery. I'll charge it again in the morning.*

When she got into the master bedroom, she noticed the large full length mirror Trevor had made for her for their last anniversary. She saw one in an antique shop and really wanted it. Phoebe was with her

and tried to coax Selena into buying the glass, but she didn't want to spend the money. Phoebe told Trevor about the mirror and he replicated it in his workshop. When Selena arrived home one night, it was sitting in their bedroom with a great red bow on it. Trevor was in the bed, naked, with champagne, two glasses, restraints on the bedposts, and a red bow around his hard cock. She smiled at the image and the love making they had after that. He tied her to the bed to make her "pay" for her new gift. It had been one of the best nights of her life.

When her eyes moved over the mirror, she saw the empty bed. The light in her cell phone was about dead so she turned it off and sat on the bare mattress. She ran her hand over the place where her husband used to sleep. The fear faded away. There was no one in the house with her. She eased her grip on the weapon and let it rest on the bed. Whatever it was, whoever it was, could be left over from her fading dream she had about Trevor. The move and being awake in the middle of the night were playing with her mind.

"Please, help me," whispered a man. This time the voice was in the same room with her.

Selena turned around slowly, and grasped for the knife. The fear, which she thought was gone, doubled in its intensity. In the mirror was a man surrounded by a neon green glow, reaching out to her. He had dark hair, tan skin, and dark green eyes. Half of his face was covered by his hair. He was dressed in a white and green harlequin outfit from another century. Hypnotized, she went to the mirror. The guy was handsome. Something about him tugged on her heart. He seemed familiar to her, like Trevor had been when she first met him.

She didn't believe in the supernatural or things that went bump in the night. Granted, she believed in angels and beings who watched over her, but nothing to make her worry. Her mirror had never done this at the other house.

"Help me!" The plea came again from his lips. The look in his eyes was one of pure agony. He was trapped, and lost like she was.

“How can I help you?” she asked the man in the mirror.

“Free me from this never ending hell. The original mirror was shattered. Help me before he comes back.”

Selena stared into the mirror, noticing that it didn’t reflect her or the clothes strewn about the room behind her. He seemed to be in a cramped space. “Before who comes back? Where are you?”

“No time! He’s herree—” the word was drawn out into a garbled groan. The man covered his face and bent down. A pang of worry went through Selena. *What is going on?* Somehow this man was hurt and needed her help. She inched closer to the mirror, reaching out to touch the glass. The knife clattered to the floor.

When her hand was inches from the surface, the man jumped and uncovered his face. He pressed it up against the glass, trying to get through. However, he was no longer the image Selena had first seen. Instead of the handsome stranger, in his stead was a Jester with a white painted face, jagged brown teeth, no hair, and glowing green fire filled his eyes. His suit was now dirty and torn. Bony fingers stuck out through holes in his white gloves. He belonged in a living dead circus. A scream escaped her lips while she backed away from the mirror.

“You can’t have him, bitch! He’s mine. MINE!” the entity yelled. He stepped away from his side of the mirror and made a running leap, trying to crash through it. Selena instinctively covered her face with her arms and cowered on the floor. However, no spray of glass hit her, only a thud, and then the sound of pounding on heavy glass.

When she peeked through her arms, the Jester was banging on the mirror. He couldn’t get through. Relief washed over Selena while she looked back at the Jester. His lips were pulled up in a perpetual smile revealing all of his teeth. She got the impression he was seething.

“What do you want?” she asked.

He rotated his head all the way around cracking his neck, peering at her. Some force pressed against her mind, trying to break into her thoughts. Her head began to swim as she watched the fire in his eye

sockets dance and grow brighter. Choppy images flashed through her mind but she could barely make them out.

“No. You can’t have her!” A scream rang in her mind and in her ears, and the images vanished. When she blinked, the reflection of the Jester flickered and the man returned. He clutched his head, staring intently at her. One side of his face was horribly scarred, probably from a fire.

“Run. Get out of here now! Leave the house, please!” His voice contained so much agony it touched her heart.

“But I want to help you,” she found herself saying.

“No one can help me. I’m damned. I should never have asked. Please go.” He laid his palm flat on the glass. Selena copied his gesture, but instead of the glass she felt his flesh. The green glow from around him enveloped her hand, zinging up her arm. A look of disbelief crossed his face. Selena desperately yearned to stroke his skin and see if it was rough or smooth. She thought the burn scar would make him seem less handsome, but it enhanced his features.

“It’s not possible,” he muttered.

His fingers closed on hers, breaking the surface of the glass. His flesh was warm and another zap went through her while they touched. The shock flushed her cheeks and reached her thighs. “What are you?”

He pulled his hand away, leaving Selena empty again. “I can’t believe it, but if it’s true he will try to have you. Leave this place before it’s too late. The boundary is the woods. He cannot move past there.” Without another word, his face contorted in pain again. A scream came from his lips. When he turned back to her, his face was half his and half the Jester’s. The Jester was winning. The Jester pushed against the glass and it sounded like it was going to crack. Selena yanked her hand away. The amused smile disappeared and his features contorted into an expression of pure hatred.

“You will pay!” the thing said. Then the Jester was gone. A sudden wind blew up, whirling papers around her. Selena looked up.

Flyers fell from an empty ceiling. Terror encompassed her. She backed out of the bedroom, running down the stairs and out the door. She didn't bother to lock it, but got back into the car and stared at the house, not believing what had happened to her. For a long time she didn't move and wondered if the Jester was somehow going to get out of the mirror. She studied the windows of the house and from her bedroom window she thought she saw the Jester's face staring down at her. When dawn finally eased over the horizon, she drifted off to sleep with the off key melody of Circus Calliope playing in her head and the maniacal laughter of the Jester purring next to her ear.

Chapter Two

Selena opened her eyes and shivered from the chill in the early summer air. She felt a crick in her neck from sleeping scrunched up in the car. It wasn't every day she raced from her house for safety, or saw handsome men in mirrors for that matter. She blinked, wiping the sleep from her eyes while she listened to the birds chirping outside. *It was all a bad dream. That's all it was. I fell asleep in the car, and it was all a strange, messed up dream.*

However, part of her knew she was deluding herself because when she pulled her cell phone out of her pocket, the battery was completely dead. Sighing, she grabbed her car charger from the glove compartment and plugged the phone in. When the little red light came on, she was relieved. At least something was normal and worked the way it was supposed to. Getting out of the car, she stepped into the gravel driveway and looked up at the bedroom window. There was no one there. Even if she had seen something last night, it was all a hallucination brought on by hours of driving. To prove the point, she marched across the driveway and went back into the living room. When she passed the foyer, she noticed a note sitting on a table with an extra set of keys.

Strange. I don't remember that being here last night. Then again, last night I freaked out about my own reflection. Trevor's death is still hitting me hard. Only I would dream up a handsome ghost in a mirror who was possessed by a Jester. A Jester from a circus? I hate the circus. She shook her head, pocketed the keys, and read the note. It was from the former owner.

The note said if she encountered anything odd about the house, to give the previous owner a call and let her know. Cold washed over Selena. She shoved the note in her jeans and took the stairs two at a time. When she got into the master bedroom, she found the mirror only reflecting herself and no strange creatures or men. The hardwood floor was spotless. The mattress was bare. There was nothing out of place; no shower of flyers had rained down on her last night. Laughter burst from her lips as she sat down on the bed and the tension left her body. It had all been her imagination.

Selena stayed in the room for a few more minutes and decided she had wasted enough time being scared. It was time to unpack and get settled in.

“Hello? Anyone home?”

Selena froze, not even daring to breathe. She looked toward her mirror and didn’t see anything.

“Selena, you here?”

A sigh of relief melted her. She jumped off the bed and raced downstairs. The voice was Phoebe. In the foyer, she practically jumped into her friend’s arms and gave her a big hug. She needed to be sure the other woman was real.

“Thank God,” Selena whispered.

Phoebe’s arms went around her automatically and then let her go. Selena was so happy to see her because she had not gotten a chance to say goodbye. Phoebe had been away on business for a couple of months traveling in Japan and China. Selena stepped back and examined her friend. Her dark hair was free from its normal French Twist. Her normal attire of a severe gray suit, black pumps, and briefcase were left behind. Her almond shaped eyes had a dash of blue on their lids to accentuate their gray blue color. Phoebe’s father was a traditional all American guy and her mother was strictly traditional Japanese, but it was her Asian heritage that had sculpted her the most, except for her height. She was almost six feet tall. Selena barely made it up to her chin. When they first met, when Trevor and she were

dating, Selena wondered how she was going to compete for Trevor's affection when he was dating such an exotic beauty. When she found out Phoebe was gay, they hit it off. Now when they went out for drinks, Phoebe had to fight the men off no matter if they were in a gay bar or not, the straight ones always found her.

"I love what you've done with your hair," her friend commented while she took in the aura of the place. After a moment, she decided it was okay and plopped herself down on the still bubble wrapped futon.

Selena's sat next to her while her hand went to her mousey brown hair. She had put red highlights in it before she left. The stylist said it brought out her own hazel eyes and contrasted against her medium skin tone. "Thanks. I almost forgot I had it done. Trevor would have...well..."

Phoebe put an arm around her. "He would have loved it. I know, hon."

Selena couldn't help it, but started crying in her friend's arms. Of all the people she felt close to after her husband's death, Phoebe was the only one who had seen her through the worst. Now and again she would drop by with a chocolate cheesecake and they would spend the night watching campy eighties movies and devouring the cheesecake until Selena didn't want to look at another one again. Finally, feeling foolish, she wiped her eyes and smiled. "I'm sorry. It's been a strange night."

"Don't be sorry. You have nothing to be sorry about. You and Trevor were soul mates. It hurts when you lose one of those. Now, why was last night strange? Did you find monsters in your closet?"

Selena laughed. "Not exactly." Selena told Phoebe about what she experienced, but her friend didn't react.

"Sounds like a crazy dream. I'm sure my mother would have found some significance in it, but you found one handsome dream hunk. Not sure about the crazy Jester though."

"Cute. What about you? What are you doing here?"

“I could use a vacation and my best friend needed someone to help unpack all her stuff. But looking at the place, I didn’t realize how much you had actually sold. Sweetie, are you doing okay?”

Before Phoebe had asked the question, Selena would have wondered the same thing, but now that she thought about it she realized that strangely she was okay. Her heart did not hurt so much. *That’s odd. I haven’t felt at ease since before Trevor’s death. I wonder what triggered it. Maybe getting settled in the new house has made everything all better. Or gotten me on the road to being better?*

“I think the worst of the storm has finally passed. I’ll never completely get over losing Trevor, but all of this and you being here makes me focus on something other than not having him here..”

A rare smile enlightened Phoebe’s face. “Good. I’m glad to hear it. So where do we begin? Let’s get down and dirty.”

* * * *

Between the two of them, they unpacked and cleaned up the downstairs in no time. The house was dusty. They removed the bubble wrap from the futon and it was much more comfortable to sit on, and not so noisy. The one box Phoebe left was the one Selena had brought in with her, the one with just the few things left from Trevor. She put that upstairs on the bed. Selena’s gaze settled on the contents of the box. She kept two of his favorite shirts. She drew one out and lifted it to her nose, inhaling his scent. Under those were a couple of photo albums of pictures he took of them while on vacation and whenever he wanted to be silly. Selena smiled when she flipped through the images. At the very bottom were his watch, wedding ring, and a pocket size tape measure he always carried. She hugged the shirts and then placed everything back in the box.

Glancing outside, the sun was sinking, taking the light with it. She was grateful for Phoebe for buying a generator because she had no power and the power company wouldn’t be out for a couple of

days. While Phoebe explored the basement, she discovered Selena had a gas heater so Selena could take a long soak in the bathtub. That was the next thing on her agenda to soothe her aching muscles. Phoebe was downstairs waiting on their pizza to be delivered.

In the old fashioned claw foot tub, she let the scalding water and lavender bubble bath take her away. Her head fell back against the lip of the tub. Her mind drifted. The scent of lavender was replaced by cotton candy and popcorn. Her ears filled with the strange and yet eerie music of the calliope she had heard last night. Then she felt hands on her shoulders, massaging away her tension. She jumped, but the hands held her steady. An overwhelming sense of serenity washed over her. Whoever this was was not going to hurt her. She let the stranger carry her away to a more peaceful place. The hands traveled lower on her shoulders, over her chest, stopping at the top of her breasts. Lips gently kissed the side of her neck. Hot breath tickled her ear. Selena waited for more.

“Only if you allow it. Do you want me?”

Selena recognized the voice from the man in the mirror. Part of her was afraid of what was happening because she had never experienced anything like it. Another part was so lonely from not having Trevor around that she welcomed it. The man’s hands trailed along her collarbone as he waited for her to answer his question. The softness of his hands caressed her jaw, and he used the water to draw designs on her chest. Everywhere he touched left a warm impression. Desire sparked to life inside of her where she never thought it could again. Did she want him? Oh yes.

“Then say it. Tell me you want me!”

He was reading her thoughts. A bit of fear went through her. *How much does he already know about me? Does he know I haven’t been with anyone since my husband? Does he—*

“I only know what you want me to know. I need your permission to do anything to you. It’s part of the rules that bind me. I won’t hurt you, I promise. The Jester isn’t here. It’s only me.”

“Kiss me,” she whispered.

Soft lips met hers. His tongue parted them while he leaned over her. She arched up out of the tub to meet him better. His fingers entwined with hers. Once they did, she was hit with the same spark she had experienced before except it was stronger and made her swallow a moan as he released her lips.

“What’s your name?”

“Donavan.”

“How come I can’t see you?”

“Think of this as a dream. It’s the only way I can come to you without being outside of the mirror and arousing the demon’s suspicions. I can only be half here because your mind is already halfway between our two worlds. I can give you pleasure, Selena, if you allow me to.”

“Yes.”

“Good.” His hands slipped beneath the water and cupped her breasts. The light flicker of his fingertips on her nipples hardened them instantly. He pinched and massaged them, played with them lightly until her toes were curling, but she slipped her hand over his and pressed it over her breasts.

“Harder.”

“Anything you want.”

At her command, pain erupted from her nipples as he squeezed them. Her toes seized up. Selena bit back a scream of pleasure. Donavan eased up a little, but she shook her head no. Selena loved the pain. She had never experienced the ecstasy of pain until Trevor had shown her, introducing it to her slowly. First with nipple clamps, then spankings, whips, paddles, wax, anything he could think of to make her understand the true meaning of being alive in her flesh. From the first taste of it, she couldn’t get enough. Gone were the days when she wanted a guy to be gentle with her. She liked it hard and rough. The more painful the better because it made her hot. Even now, her pussy throbbed from the experience Donavan was giving her.

He twirled and pinched her nipples harder and longer each time, alternating between them so the sensation would return and she could come down from the high. Finally she was so hot and wet it didn't matter that she was in the tub, she needed to shower all over again. Her toes gripped the outside edge of the tub as her legs spread wide and she waited for him to take her. She needed him to take her.

As if on cue, Donovan's fingers slithered under the water and caressed her clit, then two fingers slipped deep inside her pussy.

"Oh, God!" Selena groaned. The muscles in her thighs contracted. His thumb massaged her hard bud in slow circles while his lips worked the line of her throat. She wished she could see him to look him in the eye. She yearned to see the expression on his face, wondering if he was enjoying her reactions. When she did open her eyes all she saw was blackness. It seemed the world had fallen away. She was lying in the tub and there was nothing else around her. It was frightening.

He worked his magic on her with his lips by biting one of her nipples. Selena arched her back and let her eyes flutter shut. It was easier knowing she could sense him and still feel him. The idea of him being a phantom lover was daunting since she needed him inside of her.

"I want that too, Selena. But it would be too risky and attract the Jester's attention," Donovan whispered in her ear. His fingers applied pressure inside her pussy. She pushed against him while he created a rhythm of pumping in and out of her slowly. That combined with his other manipulations was pushing her over the edge. Her toes hurt from being curled for so long that they were starting to cramp. The more Donovan was kissing, biting, licking her and the faster he moved his hands the more lost she became. Her hips rocked against his fingers. His teeth nipped the side of her neck as if he were a vampire. Each burst of pain from his mouth left her craving more.

"How...can...I...oh, Donovan. Faster."

His thumb rubbed her clit lightning quick and her stomach was in knots. She was surprised her body remembered how to have an orgasm and he was building her to a whopper of one. Donavan's lips locked onto hers. Their tongues caressed one another while with one swift stoke she came so hard she almost blacked out. All she saw behind her eyes was green while she became aware of her body again. However, he didn't stop her with one orgasm. He kept stroking her, carrying her higher so her entire body was electrified. His kisses could no longer hide her moans and Selena gave into sheer abandon.

She was disappointed when he finally brought her back down. He kissed her and caressed her until she was putty in the water. Where his mouth touched her still turned her on. His touch had amplified the sensations in her pussy and clit. Even when the bubbles brushed against her, she was still coming. Finally, Donavan's arms wrapped around her shoulders and he held her, letting the waves of desire settle.

"Thank you, Selena."

"Why are you thanking me?"

"Because you made me understand something my brother said to me."

"What was that?"

There was silence. The air thickened and she felt someone watching her. "Donavan?" The scent of popcorn she had smelled earlier turned stale. The jingle of bells was close. Opening her eyes, she was still surrounded in a black void, which now seemed to be tinged green. Slipping her toes and legs back into the tub, the water was ice cold now. She looked around, but could barely see anything. The jingling bells sounded next to the tub. She slipped her hands into the water, too. Her instincts told her to stay right where she was.

"Donavan? Dona—"

It happened so quick she swallowed a mouthful of water as she went under. She tried to come back up for air, but there was a hand on her head. When she looked up, she didn't see Donavan above her.

Instead, she saw the leering, upturned grin of the Jester. Panic shot through her when she tried to surface for air. Her arms and legs flailed in the water, but his grip was too strong. Her lungs burned for more oxygen. Selena grabbed a hold of his hand and tried to push him off of her but it was no use. Her struggles were futile. She was wasting oxygen fighting to stay alive. Darkness started to appear on the edge of her vision. Her limbs were growing heavy. She tried to pull up one more time. *Donavan, help me. Where are you?*

She reached out to no one in the blackness and someone grabbed her hand. Selena opened her eyes and was able to come above the water. Her lungs drank in the air. She wiped the water out of her eyes. When she looked over, Phoebe was staring at her with a concerned look on her face.

“Are you okay? I heard you flailing around. If I had known you were that tired I would have suggested you take a shower. You have to be careful, Selena. Falling asleep in the tub. It sounded like you were having one hell of a nightmare.”

Selena stared at her friend. Phoebe wouldn't believe her if she told her what had happened with Donovan let alone the Jester. How could she explain mind blowing sex, well, one-sided sex, with a ghost, or not really a ghost since she could feel him? Hell, her nipples still hurt and her muscles were sore from the experience. She had not fallen asleep.

It really happened, which means the other night really happened too, when I saw the Jester in the mirror and Donovan fighting him as if he was possessed. He's asked me to free him. How can I do that? Where do I even start? Is it possible to free him without letting the demon out?

“Selena?”

“What? Yes. I'm fine. You were right. I'm more tired than I thought. Guess that teaches me never to take a bath again. What were you doing, anyway?” Selena noticed Phoebe had her hair up and was all dusty. She had something in her hand.

“You caught me. I was setting up your bedroom. I hope you don’t mind. Oh, I found this.” Phoebe handed her friend a folded up flyer. Selena wrapped herself in a towel and winced at the contact with her flesh. After a moment, she took the flyer. It was an advertisement for a traveling sideshow. There were two jesters on either side of the page. One balanced on a ball while juggling swords and the other was doing some sort of acrobatics. The paper had a clean fresh smell to it, and the ink was still wet. It read:

CIRCUS DIABOLIQUE

**Enter a realm of nightmarish wonders to indulge in your
darkest dreams.**

The marvels will mystify, haunt, and entrance you.

Her hand began to shake when she stared at the jesters. Their leering faces taunted her. The one on the ball winked and seemed to be aiming at her with one of the swords.

He’s mine, bitch! A guttural voice whispered in her ear.

“Where did you find this?”

“It was on the bed. You know, it’s strange because I didn’t see it on your bed when I went in there. It was like it appeared out of nowhere. Selena, I’m not one to believe in weird shit, that’s my mom, but something is going on here, isn’t it? You just didn’t fall asleep in the tub, did you?” Phoebe asked.

Selena stared at the flyer and crumpled it up. The flyers raining from the ceiling had really happened. She glanced at her friend. “I don’t know, but something’s not right with this house.”

“Maybe your house is haunted by the dead owner and they want you out, like *Poltergeist*. Hopefully you won’t get sucked up into the television set.”

“It’s not the old owner and the little girl got sucked into her closet. It’s someone else, something else. Oh, God—” Realization came to her as she remembered the note she had found and shoved into her

jeans. It had said to call if anything strange started happening at the house. What had the old owner meant by that? At first Selena assumed she meant termites or heck, even a skunk living in the attic, not a demonic Jester and a man who knew how to caress her in all the right places but seemed to be a ghost. She rushed into the bedroom and grabbed her jeans from the night before, still balled up on the floor. Inside the pocket was the number.

“Can I use your phone? Mine is still out in the car.”

“Sure. It’s downstairs.”

Selena raced down the stairs and found the phone in Phoebe’s purse. She began to punch in the numbers with shaking fingers. Finally, she was able to press send. She stared at the display waiting for it to connect. When it did, it rang and rang until voicemail picked up. *What am I going to say? Hey, thanks for the note. Love the house, oh, and by the way, I have a crazy demonic Jester living in my mirror who tried to drown me. That would go over really well.* She ended the call and tried to figure out what was going on. Maybe she didn’t need the help of the owner. *Worst off, the owner might think I was nuts if I told her what I had seen. No, I’ll call her if something else happens.*

“So, did you get a hold of whomever you were calling?”

Selena looked up. “No. I’m sorry. This is crazy.”

“Hey, do you hear that?” Phoebe asked.

The house was quiet without the hum of electricity and the generator was not turned on yet. The only sounds she heard were the crickets out in the field. “No, I—” Then she did hear something. It sounded like the rumble of voices in a crowd, then the movement of horses and the snapping of whips, along with the music of a circus calliope that she would have heard if she were on a merry-go-round. Walking to the window, she stared out into the field. Coming down the road were the green outlines of horse drawn wagons, a whole line of them.

Both women watched in awe while the line continued into the field. Before their eyes, there were shapes of tents and transparent

people walking around. Voices echoed in the night all around the house. The ghostly circus took on a life of its own around the two women. Smells of cotton candy, popcorn, and other sticky treats scented the air. Selena watched the spirits set up camp.

“Let’s go out and see!” Phoebe exclaimed.

Selena glanced at her friend and saw the look of childish glee on her face. Phoebe was lost, swaying with the melody of the calliope. Selena touched her friend’s shoulder and she turned to her. “I don’t think that is a good idea. I have a feeling we’re safer in here.”

“Well, of course you can’t go like that, silly. Go upstairs and put something on. Hurry up, Selena. The next show starts in a few minutes.”

“How do you know that?”

“Can’t you hear the ringmaster? He’s right over there!” Phoebe pointed to the middle of the field, but Selena didn’t hear anything. The music and the voices had all blurred together. Selena heard the bang of the door. When she spun around it was open. In the doorway were a bunch of green balloons. Phoebe turned quickly, letting out a small shout of joy, and ran to the balloons. Selena grabbed her hand before she touched them. Her friend gave her a dirty look, but Selena didn’t want her going out alone.

“How about I go up and put on some clothes? Then we can both check it out.”

Phoebe nodded. Selena hurried up the stairs and threw on her clothes from yesterday. She shoved the phone and the number into her pocket and went back downstairs. When she did, Phoebe was already outside holding the balloons. Her fingers were entwined with a pale skinned woman wearing a black dress. Selena guessed she looked normal enough except she doubted it was one of the new nosey neighbors that lived a mile down the road, and the slight green sheen around her gave it away. Selena didn’t want to spook the spook so she touched Phoebe’s hand, but both women stopped.

“Phoebe, I thought you were going to wait for me.”

When her friend turned, her face was blank. The other woman gave her a wicked grin. “Your friend is in here with us,” she hissed.

Selena took a step toward the woman, but she gripped Phoebe, putting her hand around Phoebe’s throat. The woman’s face melted into that of an old crone with bleach white hair and candy apple red eyes. Her nails became sharp points against Phoebe’s skin. Selena’s gaze slid to the field while the atmosphere was thickening. The ghostly carnival had solidified some and was watching the show. “Look, give me back Phoebe. I don’t know what any of this is about. I just bought the house. Do you want me to leave? Is that it?”

The woman smelled Phoebe the way a vampire would, taking in the aroma of her blood. Her tongue stretched out longer than it should and tasted her friend. The spirit licked her lips and turned her red gaze back to Selena.

“She’s ours now. We don’t care about the house. We want our master back, bitch. You trapped him in the other realm, now release him with your magic!”

“What are you taking about? Magic?” The other ghosts were more solid than before. Most of them appeared to be zombies with rotting flesh peeling off their bones. One ghost was missing half its face, revealing part of its cheekbone and a row of intact white teeth. Another had a left eye missing and was dressed in tatters. There were others in various stages of decay. Some were nothing more than skeletons dressed in rags. They were getting closer to her.

“You, witch, stole our master away from us and locked him in the other realm. Free him now or her soul is his.”

Tears streamed down Selena’s face while she studied the creatures around her. She had no idea what was going on. All of this was getting out of hand. Within a couple of days, her life had turned into something out of a horror movie. This did not happen to people. She needed help. She needed Trevor. She was lost without him. Why hadn’t she admitted it to herself before? Then she had met Donovan

and felt like she had with Trevor, but now he was lost to her, too. “Please, I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

The hag growled. “Fuck it! Take her!”

Fear sliced Selena. She wanted to help Phoebe, but didn’t know how. The only way to assist her friend now was to escape these ghosts and figure out a way to free her. Selena turned toward the house, but found the way already blocked. The horde of undead surrounded her from all sides. She bolted from them. Her feet carried her down the gravel road. The field was filling with freaks and everything sounded real. The wagons, the pure smell of cotton candy, and popcorn along with the aroma of burnt wood from the fire. Selena tripped and fell on the ground, slicing open her leg. She looked behind her. They were following, slinking over the dirt road. Defeat washed over her. Everything she and Trevor had worked for was gone. Pain shot up her leg. She tried to get up, but tripped again. Her hope was failing. She began to crawl away from them, but their cold presence was close. She could feel their ghostly hands reaching out, trying to touch her and invade her soul. She closed her eyes.

“Selena...” She heard a voice on the wind. It was Donovan.

She opened her eyes and looked around. She noticed a form standing down the road a few hundred yards, which seemed like a mile. His image faded in and out. She remembered what he said about the barrier. The Jester could not cross over where the field met the woods, so maybe the other ghosts couldn’t either. Hands were enclosing her ankle. Her leg was sticky and her jeans stained red. A surge of hope gave her renewed strength. Maybe she had a chance.

She got up with the pain racing up her leg and tried to run. All she could do was limp, but she got closer to the barrier and further away from the ghosts. The music of the calliope was fainter the closer she got to the woods. The house, Phoebe, and all the others fell behind her. Donovan’s form flickered and stared at her in the night, the glow around him was green, too. She got to him and reached out. He reached back, but his hand passed through hers. She stood on the line

of the forest and the field, watching as the ghosts still pursued her. She took another step and crossed the line. The air was crisper and cooler. It was easier to breathe. Selena looked up toward the horizon. The first rays of sunlight were cresting over the forest.

“Thank you.”

He smiled, but his fingers could not pass over the barrier. He was trapped, too.

“What do I do?”

“Find my brother. He can help.”

“How?”

Donavan’s form wavered with a forlorn expression on his face. “I’m sorry. It’s all I can do.” He tried to brush her face with his fingers. Selena felt the caress in her heart even though it didn’t touch her flesh. She saw the love for her in his eyes.

“I’ll find a way to save you and find your brother.”

He smiled. Selena looked at the green vapor and realized he was melding with it. The emerald mist banked at the barrier, curled upward, and stopped. The zombies had disappeared, leaving Phoebe all alone by the house. Selena’s instinct was to turn back around and go to her. When she thought about stepping over the line, the hag sprang up. Selena jumped back. The hag clawed at the air and screamed.

“We will get you, bitch! He can’t save you!”

The hag smiled a wicked grin and stepped back into the mist, leaving only her red eyes. “We will have your soul...just you wait.”

Chapter Three

For sometime Selena cried, bathing in the dawn light, too afraid to go back into the house to see if there were any more ghosts waiting for her. After wiping her eyes, she looked at her leg. The wound was deeper then she thought and still seeping with bits of gravel in it. She needed to get to a hospital or somewhere where she could clean it out. However, her keys were in the house and she didn't know if she could make it to the neighbors. She was stranded. Then she noticed a vibration in her pocket and realized it was Phoebe's cell phone. Out of habit, she opened the phone.

"Hello," she sniffled.

"Did someone try to call me from this number?" a woman asked on the other end.

Selena swallowed and stared at the digital display. She recognized the number as the one she dialed earlier. A glimmer of hope warmed her heart.

"Yes."

"Did you?"

"Yes. I called. Please, I need help."

"What happened?" the woman's concern in her voice was genuine. "Was it Donavan? Did he hurt you?"

Relief flooded through her. This woman could help. Maybe she had even been the same one the hag mentioned about being a witch. *What happened before I bought the place? The realtor never said anything about it being haunted.* Selena had even met the old owner at the closing. She had seemed normal and didn't mention the house was possessed by some freaky-Jester-demon or that a haunted

sideshow was going on in the field next to the house, either. Why was she asking her about Donovan?

“Are you there?”

“Yes. Sorry. It wasn’t Donovan. He was trying to help. It was the Jester and this crazy woman, hag thing. Look, I’m hurt and I’m afraid to go back into the house. Please, what do I do? They took Phoebe.”

Selena heard the whisperings of a male and female voice on the other end. Finally, the woman came back on. “You’ll be safe in the house during the day. The Jester and the other ghosts can’t come out during the day. We’ll be there in a few hours. There’s a hotel on the outskirts of town. Be there around seven. We’ll meet you in the café next to it. Can you do that, Selena?”

“I guess so.” She thought about it, wondering what had happened to Donovan. She stared at the rising sun and realized she had been sitting outside for a few hours. If she could make it back to the house, she could get cleaned up. “How do you know my name?”

“We met at the closing, right? I’m Rhianna. Look, we’re on our way. Please meet us and get out before sundown. I’ll explain everything then, okay?”

“Fine.” Selena closed the phone, deciding it was time to go face her fears. She couldn’t fall back into the same kind of slump she was in when Trevor was killed. Phoebe’s life depended on her finding out how to save her from the ghosts. Trevor would want her to continue. Selena shoved the phone back into her jeans and tried to get up. She tried to put weight on her leg. Once she did, it hurt like hell, but she could hold herself up. Gritting her teeth, she made her way back over the line and then stopped, waiting for something to come out of the field and claim her. The only thing that greeted her was the cawing of crows.

She needed food and water. Slowly but surely she made her way down the driveway, inching closer to the house. Once she got to her car, she saw a balloon floating by it. It was neon green with a white string. It bobbed and hovered above the ground. Curiosity told her to

investigate it, but she knew better and moved past it, slowly waiting for it to pop or something to jump out at her because that was what happened in the movies. When she went by the floating orb, it followed her until she got to the house. There it drifted in the doorway, but didn't cross the threshold. It turned around and on the other side was an image of the Jester. His white face leered at her as if he was watching her. She waited for it to pop or to hear the jingling of bells, but she heard nothing. Selena felt a little safer in the house, but not much.

"W-what do you want?" Selena asked the balloon.

It banged against the doorway and was not able to enter. At her question, she heard bells jingling in the house. A disembodied voice echoed through the room.

"I want your soul! Now I have your friend's. She's rather tasty. HAHAAHAA! If you want her, come and get her!" The balloon popped, sending confetti into the room and nearly stopped Selena's heart. Fear gripped her and made her move into overdrive. If Rhianna said to be out of there by sunset, then she was getting out of there now. She could deal with her leg the way it was a little longer.

She ran, or hopped, up the stairs, trying not to shake. She went into the bedroom and grabbed her bag from the closet. There she started throwing in some of the clothes she already had on the hanger. She bumped her calf, sending pain shooting up her leg, and she had to sit down. Frustration enveloped her and made her scream. She threw her bag across the room. When she did, she noticed the mirror. There was no one in it, just her reflection. She wondered if Donovan was anywhere. Part of her needed him. After the other night in the tub with his hands all over her, she hadn't thought she could ever feel like that again. Part of her missed Trevor, but he would never return and this complete stranger, a ghost in a mirror had brought her to the brink of ecstasy. Now part of her yearned for his hands to be on her again.

How had he gotten himself caught up with the Jester? Why was he stuck in a mirror and where was his brother? What does all of this have to do with me and the mirror?

Selena sat down on the bed and stared at the sun. The tree outside tapped on the window, making her shiver. She watched a crow perch in the boughs and stare at her with beady black eyes.

“Selena.”

She heard a voice in her room. She looked around. There was no one, but then she realized it was Donovan. Turning back toward the mirror, she saw him standing and watching her. Her heart soared at the sight of him. She wanted to rush into his arms and have him protect her from the evils of the world, but she didn’t know how to get him out of the mirror.

“Donavan, where’s Phoebe?” He was not wearing the Jester’s uniform that he had on before. He wore black pants and a green tunic over then. The outfit showed off his perfectly sculpted body, letting her know he was built in all the right places. His dark hair was pulled away from his face showing the deformed side and the angelic one. Dark green eyes studied her and she yearned to discover how he liked to be touched and fondled.

“I don’t know where your friend is. I’m sorry. I came to see if you were okay.”

Selena chuckled. *Am I okay?* That was funny. The look on Donovan’s face showed he was serious about her well being and he wasn’t joking around. “I’m sorry, but no, I’m not okay. All this is a little much for me. Jesters, ghosts in mirrors, haunted carnivals. This isn’t something I experience everyday. My life has turned into a nightmare these past few days. I regret ever coming here.”

Donavan sighed. “I see. I’ll leave you be then.”

He turned and began to fade out and she realized how she must have sounded. “Donavan, wait. I didn’t mean you. Please come back,” she called into the now empty mirror. She waited and he didn’t return. Defeated, Selena sunk down on the floor with her back against the

dresser. She didn't care if the brass knobs dug into her back. He was the only good thing about her experience in the haunted mansion. Selena rested her hand on the glass. The cool surface felt good on her skin. The ache in her leg had subsided a bit. Getting it looked at was the last thing on her mind. Her thoughts were drifting to Trevor and the times they had been together. Whenever she had been sad, he would make her remember how to live again. She had always loved how he would take control of her and show her the pleasure of being able to rely on someone utterly.

He taught her the art of pain. Pain made her feel alive. It had made her feel the world opening up inside of her all by the manipulations of her lover. God, she needed Trevor. After he died, she never thought she would experience that state again. The pleasure mixed with pain made her know she was not lost anymore and that her soul had been claimed.

"Shh, don't cry, Selena."

She opened her eyes. Donavan had returned. His hand was over hers on the other side of the mirror, and Selena saw the energy between them sparking green against their palms through the glass. It charged up her arm and made her shiver deep inside.

"What's happening?"

"You're my soul mate, Selena. Only my soul mate can free me from this hell. My brother was right."

"What about the Jester? I thought he possessed you."

"Only at night. I've become separated from him ever since my brother escaped this place. The demon does not control me entirely, the way he used to, so I am able to come to you now. If you let me, I can do so much more. Do you want me, Selena?" His voice was soft and seductive.

"Yes. I want you." When the words left her lips, she watched the surface of the glass become liquid. His hand slipped between her fingers and she was able to know he was real and not a figment of her imagination or some dark creation of the Jester. Donavan stepped

through the mirror and appeared on the other side. He enfolded Selena into his arms and kissed her. His tongue met hers as he tasted her mouth and his hands cupped her ass. She tried to stand, but the wound in her leg throbbed again and she couldn't hold up her weight. She cried out, but Donovan held her up.

"You're hurt." He scooped her up and laid her on the bed. He propped her up with a few pillows and then began pulling away the torn fabric of her jeans. She tried not to flinch when he looked at the gash. "You were lucky not to have broken your leg. This wound is pretty bad. I can heal it for you, if you wish."

"You're a doctor? Great. Stitch me up!"

Donovan laughed. "No, I'm not a doctor." He closed his eyes and lifted his hands so his palms were even with one another with a small space in between them. A ball of green light formed between his hands. A wave of fear rolled through her. He knew magic. Maybe he was just using her to free himself and he truly was the Jester.

"Please, don't hurt me."

Donovan opened his eyes, smiled, took the energy between his hands, and lowered it to the wound. A tingle and burning sensation ran up her leg, while green light infused the slice. He moved his hand over the wound, his forehead knotted in concentration. The light wavered some.

Trust me, Selena. If you struggle against me, it drains my already weakened magic. I won't hurt you. You know that. Please, know this is me and not the Jester playing a trick on you.

She sensed the fierce concentration he was using on her and what he said was true. There was no trace of the Jester in his power. The demon was not with him when the sun was up. She relaxed and let him work his magic on her and in no time, the wound began to close and the blood receded as if she was never injured.

Finally, the green light of his power faded and he slumped against the footboard of the bed. Selena ran her hand over the skin and found the spot to be completely solid. Not even a scar remained. She looked

at her savior and her heart swelled at the sight of him. She never thought anyone would replace Trevor in her heart and Donovan already had. She missed her husband, but he would be glad she found someone to be happy with, even though the circumstances behind their meeting were a little unusual.

Selena leaned over on the bed and reached out to feel the scarred side of Donovan's face. Before her fingers touched his cheek, he snatched her wrist. He opened his eyes and drew her into him. The energy ignited between their bodies, burning her up inside. Her nipples were pert against her T-shirt. She desired to tease his entire body and feel the softness of his dick between her lips. She went on her knees, leaned in even more, and claimed his lips. He pulled away from her and got off the bed.

"Strip," he demanded.

Selena took off her clothes and let the cool air caress her naked flesh. Something cool and soft slithered around her wrist. When she tried to move away, Donovan grabbed her other wrist and she felt the same kind of feeling embrace the other hand. When she brought her hands down, they were tied in a thick green cord.

Blood rushed to her cheeks. She could barely look at Donovan. Questions formed in her mind. How did he know?

"I know because I saw it in your thoughts, Selena. God, you're so beautiful and so ripe." He grabbed the cord and his lips met hers in a fierce kiss until he released her. He walked around her and then ran something soft along the curve of her shoulder. "You brought me here, Selena, but I can only do things to you if you let me. I can read your desires, but I can't act on them unless you give me permission. I know you want me, but do you want me to bring you the same pleasure your husband did?"

Donovan grabbed a handful of her ass and pinched it. Her knees buckled from the joy of the pleasure. Images raced through her mind of what Trevor had done to her, the spankings, the whippings, the hours of being tied up and him tickling her until she was in a pool of

her own wanting. Donavan licked her neck and nipped her ear. His hand came around and pinched her other nipple.

“I need you to say it. I can fuck you, punish you, or neither. Do I have your permission?”

Selena heard the pent up passion in his voice and answered, “Yes.”

Donavan snapped his fingers. A hook appeared suspended on a thick green cord hanging from the ceiling. He lifted her over head by unseen hands and she was suspended. Pain erupted on the left mound of her ass. The sensation dulled from the cool air hitting her skin and she shivered from the experience. Another hit her right mound. Once the paddle left her flesh, her skin was warm and prickled from the blood rushing to it. Her thighs clenched together as she jumped forward from the momentum and the yearning for more. He didn’t use a lot of force, but the quick slaps on her ass made her wet and shiver with anticipation.

Before she met Trevor, Selena never imagined she could be awakened to the desires of this form of pleasure. She had lovers before who were all vanilla and liked straight sex. Their idea of kinky was using flavored body lotion. Never in a million years would any of them have the balls to tie her up. Trevor had first suggested it and she went along with it. He blindfolded her to heighten her experience. He used a riding crop on her first. The stiff bristles tickled her nipples while he whipped it across them, but the sting of pleasure and euphoria the pain gave her was like nothing she had ever experience before.

The paddle stopped and immediately she couldn’t see anything. Donavan had blindfolded her. She tried to move her hands when a slight hint of panic moved through her brain, but Donavan leaned in and kissed her quickly, easing her fears. “Whatever you think of, I’ll do. You wished for the crop and you will get it.”

He brushed the bristles across her breasts. Her nipples grew harder at the contact. The cold handle trailed down her belly and touched her

moist slit. Selena gasped. It wasn't enough. She needed more. The crack of the whip split the air. A jump of excitement slithered through her skin at the anticipation of the slice of pain.

"God, Selena. Your appetite is insatiable," Donavan whispered against her ear. The agony of the whip caressed the expanse of her back. Selena strained forward when the sting electrified her body. She bit her lip, but a moan escaped her anyway. Her pussy was wet and she craved more.

"Tell me you want it," Donavan demanded.

"No," Selena whispered.

He hit her with another cut of the whip. This time the tail of it rested on her neck. It was soft and not so harsh. With the blindfold on, she was a creature of whatever sensation he gave her. She was at his mercy, just the way she liked it. Trevor had been an artist and always left his mark, but never split her skin. Donavan flicked the whip diagonally along her back. With one more swing she would come. Her muscles were so tight and she was so wet. All she needed was one more flick.

"Please!" she begged. "More."

"No, Selena. You are mine to do with as I please." Instead of the whip, Selena felt something cold trickling along her breasts. She moaned and quaked at the new sensation. Donavan traced the ice over the lash marks to cool them. Each time the cubes touched her flesh, Selena jumped at the alternating sensations. The longer and slower he trailed the ice down her back, following the curve of her skin, he would then trail his tongue where the ice had been, lapping up the water droplets. She had no idea where the ice had come from, but she was beyond caring. Her entire body was his. Not even Trevor had gone this far with her. He had always stopped at a few licks of the whip, a few slaps of the paddle. He had never brought her this far outside of herself where even the slightest touch was maddening. Her whole body was a pool of desire, but maybe Donavan knew this and was using it against her.

The path of ice glided down between the mounds of her buttocks. Then she felt her tormentor insert the ice cube deep inside her hot, moist depths. “Oh, God.” The words came out on a groan of pleasure and agony. Her muscles contracted around the ice cube and his finger. His other hand brushed her clit in slow, excruciating circles. She panted, trying to stay sane from the arousal devouring her body. She needed more. She needed him inside of her.

“Please!” Her anguished plea escaped her lips while the cold dripped down between her legs along with her warm juices. Donovan moved his fingers faster on her clit. Her hips bucked forward without her consent because he had control of her body now. Another cold cube slid into her, but it he couldn’t get it all the way into her. She was too tight and her muscles were shivering from the orgasms inflicted upon her. If she moved, the air tickled her. The soft cord against her skin rubbed her and added fire to it all. She needed Donovan deep inside of her to satisfy the growing craving.

“God, you’re so tight, Selena. I love that.” He licked the side of her neck while his hands traveled up the inside of her arms to the cords. She felt him tug on the bonds and then she was free. He caught her, lifting her up and placing her on the bed.

She still couldn’t see because of the blindfold, but felt him spread her legs and wrap the cord around her ankles. This time he left her hands free. His tongue traced the inside of her thigh while his fingers lightly scratched the other side until he got to her pussy. There, his tongue lapped at her nether regions, burying inside her.

Selena completely lost it. Her moans had become grunts. She grabbed the sheets to remind herself she was still attached to her body. Her lover laved her, slowly nibbling her clit. Each time she was sent into another roller coaster of ecstasy until her heart was going a mile a minute and she thought she was going to black out. Minutes seemed to pass like hours for her as he tortured her with pleasure.

Finally, giving her what she longed for, he entered her slick depths. Donovan was bigger than Trevor, but he fit inside of her

better. His strokes were slow at first, but the tension between them built fast. Selena desperately wanted to wrap her legs around him, but they were still tied. His lips met hers. Their kisses were no longer tender, but needy and full of anticipation. Selena wrapped her arms around his neck while he pumped into her. One hand rested on her hip and the other touched the back of her neck. Energy she flared down her spine in short bursts in time with her heart.

“Fuck me, Donovan. Please, fuck me. Don’t stop.”

“Oh, baby. I couldn’t if I wanted to. You’re so good to fuck.”

Donovan increased his rhythm. Their pelvises touched each time he dove inside of her. Her nails dug trails along his back.

“God, Donovan.” When she reached her height, she saw the green energy flowing between them behind her eyes. Her mind opened to his otherworldliness. She craved more of him. At that moment, the bonds around her ankles disappeared and she was able to wrap her legs around him.

“Selena, I love you,” he whispered in her ear and released inside of her. She cried out from the orgasm ripping her apart until they both collapsed on the bed.

For a moment, they rested, locked together. Finally, Donovan removed the blindfold from Selena. When he did, he brushed the hair away from her face and smiled at her. To her it was amazing to see the difference in him just by looking at him. One side of his face was so badly burned and the other was angelic without a mark. She smiled back and traced the lines of his scars. He curled his face into her palm, captured it, and then kissed it. Their noses were inches from one another. She never had such an intimate and vulnerable moment with Trevor. Donovan was showing her part of his soul and she cherished that.

“What happened to you?”

Donovan glanced outside and then back at her. “My story can wait for another time. You should go soon. The sun will be setting in less than an hour and I don’t want to be on this side of the mirror when the

demon emerges. I fear what he will do to you. Already I can feel him encroaching on my thoughts. He knows I'm here with you and hates that you have the power to free me when he is still trapped in the other realm."

Selena looked at the bedside clock and her heart plummeted. They had been together for hours and it seemed like no time had passed at all. She nestled into his arms, feeling how well his body fit against hers. Everything about her was so tired and so relaxed she could just fall asleep. It seemed Donovan sapped all the strength from her limbs and put a spell on her. She tried to move, knowing the danger, but she couldn't.

"Selena, love, you have to get up and leave before the sun sets." Donovan ran a hand over her stomach and brushed it over her hardened nipple. A shiver of lust went through her. Slowly, he untangled himself from her and she noticed a tattoo on the back of his shoulder. It was a Jester. The leering face gave her a small jolt of energy to rouse her.

"Why do you have the tattoo?"

The expression on his face hardened somewhat and was a little paler than it was even a few minutes ago. Selena glanced at the window and saw that the sun was on its descent. She had to get up, but it was so hard to move.

"It binds me to the demon. It was his twisted idea to brand me with it to remind me of the role I would always play."

"You mean the Jester? Is that what you used to do in the side show?"

Donovan nodded. He crossed the room to Selena and cupped her face between his hands. His green gaze stared deeply into hers. "My brother and I summoned the demon up from a text that my father had. It contained dark spells to banish and to call up beings from hell. I used to entertain in the sideshow of the circus as a Jester. My brother, Alexander, was ringmaster. We ran it together. It was the perfect way to gather souls. My brother came up with the idea since the demon

had picked him for its favorite at first. To gain power, Alexander killed our father. Over the years, my brother grew to hate what the demon had made us.”

“What did he make you?”

Donavan kissed her. “I have to go, and you have to meet Alexander. He is close. I can sense him. Please leave now while you still have time.”

Selena tried to get up, but found that she couldn’t. All she wanted to do was fall back to sleep. “I promise, but I can’t keep my eyes open right now.”

Donavan nodded. He caressed her cheek and walked to the mirror. “I’ll keep him away from here as long as I can, but you must leave. I’m sorry that my magic has sapped your strength. It must be a side effect of the magic. Sleep for now, my love.” He placed his hand on the surface of the mirror and it turned liquid when he stepped through the opening. When he was all the way through, he turned and stared at her. He put his hand on the glass and this time it did not come back through. He nodded toward the sun and she nodded back, understanding his warning. She tried to rise again, but was unable to. The only thing she could do was let the darkness take her into oblivion.

Chapter Four

Selena opened her eyes and stared at the bedside clock. She had slept for another three hours. It was full dark now. The house was silent. She glanced at the mirror and saw nothing in it save her own reflection. She listened intently and didn't hear anything off in the house. She was supposed to meet Rhianna and Alexander, but they could wait a little longer. Her entire being hummed from the aftermath of her love making with Donovan and she needed to take a shower. *A little bit longer in the house can't hurt. At least long enough to get cleaned up and then go.*

She got out of bed, still feeling drained, but able to move this time around. She gathered her clothes and her purse to leave directly after she dried off and placed them on the hamper. She let water wash over her, but it did little to satisfy the growing lust she had for Donovan. With the water droplets caressing her flesh, her mind wandered to the experience she had with the man only a few hours ago. His hand and actions had tattooed themselves to her flesh. Just thinking about him made her hot. Without thinking, her fingers trailed to her nether regions, settling on her clit. Her eyes closed and she stood back against the cool tile wall to try to calm the tidal wave of sensations washing over her. Moving the node in circles, the tension mounted inside of her. Her muscles clenched. Behind her closed eyes, she saw the green energy, which had sparked between her and Donovan. She licked her lips and found herself panting, imagining Donovan doing the actual fondling.

I only wish I was. She heard his voice next to her. She opened her eyes to be sure but he had not magically appeared even though she desperately wanted him to.

Baby, where are you? Selena thought.

He appeared in her mind and she felt him caress her breast the way he had the other night when she was in the bathtub. His hands replaced hers, he moved her clit slowly, and then she felt his mouth working on her. Her hands gripped the shower bar above her while his tongue flicked lightning quick over her hard node. Shivers of ecstasy coursed through her. Her breathing came in small gasps. He was fucking her with his tongue in long luscious licks.

More, baby, please. I'm ready.

She felt a pause in him. The green energy zinged through her. Selena barely noticed the water had grown cold. She was so hot she couldn't contain her moans. At that moment, she didn't care what he did to her, she just needed him. Then he started up again. His fingers slipped inside of her. One. Two. And then three. He curled them inside her pussy. His teeth nibbled at her. Her hands gripped the bar tighter when she pushed her pussy into his face. Even though it was a ghostly sensation, she felt him through their connection.

Do you like it? Do you enjoy being eaten?

Yes. Yes! I need you in the flesh like earlier. Come to me, please.

I was waiting for you to say that, but aren't you afraid of the Jester? I can only keep him away for so long.

I trust you. Please, I need you.

The jingle of bells and laughter filtered through the bathroom. Suddenly, Donovan's manipulations grew rough, but she didn't care. She needed him.

You taste so good. His fingers moved inside of her more. Donovan's power descended over her. She tried to open her eyes, but her body was not responding to her commands. The green energy surrounding her became a vice. Instead of being alone in the shower, she sensed someone else was with her. Donovan had crossed over and

come to her. Hands kneaded her breasts hard. Selena was amazed at the passion moving through her. Her hips buckled at the sensations.

You want more. Tell me you do. I can give you more if you let me. You reached out and I answered your call. Are you afraid of me? Afraid I'll consume you?

Selena wasn't sure what Donovan was talking about. How could she be afraid of him? He was rough with her before and this was nothing new. *I love it. You know I want it. Give me all you have. I can take it. Please!*

Please what? Lips touched the back of her neck. She didn't want it to stop. She wanted to be fucked.

Do you want me? Tell me and I'll give you what you crave.

Selena didn't dare open her eyes in case she broke the mood and Donovan would retreat back into the mirror. She was proud of him for keeping the Jester at bay. It only meant that he was stronger than the demon. Hands clutched her ass. Something hard touched the inside of her thigh. It was colder than the water. A tongue licked the side of her face. Fingers rubbed against her faster. She moaned. God, she wanted him. Trevor had opened her up to a whole new kind of sexual appetite she had never thought would be sated and now Donovan had brought her to another level.

I came here to satisfy both our needs, Selena. You get one free pass and this is it. Tell me quickly before the Jester comes. He's near. I can smell your lust and see it in your thoughts. I can fuck you as you ask, but I need your permission.

"Fuck me. Hard," she screamed.

I thought you would never ask.

Donovan worked her clit. She pushed her ass into him, gripping the bar so hard she didn't know it if would break. After a moment, his dick slid into her. *Oh, fuck.* It felt so good and calmed the raging sensations. She needed him. Needed all of it. Without another word, he thrust himself all the way into her.

Does this feel good, Selena? Is this what you wanted? Donavan purred in her mind.

Yes. God help me, yes.

You're such a good lay. It's been a long time since I've had such a great piece of ass. You know what you want and we make such beautiful music together.

He moved deeper inside of her, sending chills to calm the waves of ecstatic torment flowing through her. She tried to hold in the moans, but couldn't. His fingers ran trails along her stomach and the inside of her thighs, making indentations and pressing her hard enough to leave bruises. With her eyes closed, she could see the green energy glowing strong around her. That energy buzzed between them and only grew stronger from their lovemaking.

One hand rested over her heart and the other settled below her belly button. Pulses of energy moved through her, matching the rhythm as he fucked her. Each one brought her to new heights. Donavan showed her where she had the power to do whatever she wanted. She could have any man she desired. All her lusts could be sated. Donavan was offering her the world and all she needed to do was reach out and grab it.

He rocked into her. Selena was beyond moaning and grinding her hips. Her body was his. He continued to pump inside of her, filling her mind with power. The high was so wonderful she didn't want him to stop. Donavan knew her soul, could read the lust and perversions she wanted to do and have done to her. Everything in her yearned to be used and abused and she could have it all.

Her pussy quivered at each thrust. Her soul craved what Donavan was offering. The power wasn't so bad. He was giving her the choice to join him completely. His spell over her was complete, owning her body and soul. She wanted him to fuck her and be at her disposal to fill her naughty fantasies. They were both there and she could feel him under her skin.

Oh, Selena. I could offer you so much more than what you ever imagined. Do you want that? Do you want me to fill you up? Do you want me to give you the ride of your life?

Fuck me. Just fuck me. I need it. Oh, God. I need it.

Donavan smiled and slowed his rhythm. Her body was beginning to hurt from all the stress it had experienced. His hands were still above her heart, but he was loading her with energy that burned through her soul. It was a roller coaster ride of sensation she didn't know existed until Donovan had broken it wide open earlier.

Tell me what you want. He rolled his dick around in her pussy so she moaned out in pleasure while the biggest and hardest orgasm she had took hold of her. She rode the waves that kept bringing her higher. What did she want? She wouldn't have to be alone ever again. Donovan would be there with her always if that was what she desired. She just had to give in to him. His hands moved lower and rubbed her clit again as he stayed buried deep inside of her. He wasn't letting her go. It seemed he was fucking her to death and she was letting him, loving every minute of it. How could she say no to the man that she loved?

Yes, Selena. You want me. You've always wanted me. This is your destiny. I'll never leave you. I swear it. You can have me all to yourself. Will you have me? Will you let me fuck you forever?

His free hand moved over her heart again. She wanted it all. "Yes. I don't care. Do it. Take me please. I'm yours."

Oh, baby, you don't know how much I wanted you to say that. His tongue worked on her faster and she was lost. She saw the green energy surrounding her. Donovan was so deep inside of her now, body and soul, that nothing could separate them. *One more thing, Selena. Turn around. Open your eyes. I need you to look at me.*

"But...can't stop...please!" Selena stammered.

We won't stop, baby. I'm more than flesh and blood now and can do whatever I want to your mortal body. More than you ever dreamed. Trust me.

Selena nodded. She trusted him. Why would she not trust him? Slowly, she turned around. She opened her eyes and realized the water had somehow turned off. Maybe the Jester had done it. As she turned, she stared into the handsome features of her beloved. For a moment she thought his image wavered. A jolt of fear moved through her, but it was overcome with the ecstasy he gave her. There was nothing to worry about. Her fear of the Jester was overtaking her reason. The allure of the Donavan's eyes tugged on her soul.

Yes, just a little more, love. One more push and you can have whatever you want. I'll be there for you always. You don't have to worry about losing me. I'll never be unfaithful to you. You can have me all to yourself.

His words echoed in her mind. Selena tried to keep her composure, but it was so hard. His tongue darted over her lips, while his hands caught both of her wrists and held them above her head while she bucked against him. He supported her weight now. She was beyond caring what he did to her, she just longed to be taken.

Selena, no. Don't give in to him. If you do, you'll lose me forever. She heard Donavan's voice in her thoughts, but how could that be because Donavan was here with her? The voice must have been the Jester trying to trick her. It was so far away she could barely make it out. He kept pleading with her not to give in. Donavan was already so much inside of her that she didn't know if she could stop. It felt so good. His power was so cold and she was so hot.

Don't listen to him. He's trying to trick you. It's only the Jester. , Listen only to me, come for me, baby. Just one more time. Can't you do that for me? Donavan redoubled his efforts on her body. Selena was slipping into his delicious power even more. Her body was building toward an orgasm that was near earthquake proportions setting to rock her body. Donavan had unending stamina and was fucking her harder, riding her so she couldn't get away. The green flames in his eyes had expanded and flared in her soul. The fire was a cold fire, full of lust. Part of her consciousness was filled with so

much power she didn't know where the universe ended and she began.

Donavan's voice was retreating fast. *Please, Selena. I love you. Don't give in.*

A current of love surged along the connection she shared with Donovan. At that moment, the image before her wavered. She saw a pale white face and glowing flames for eyes. She shut her eyes against the image and focused on Donovan. This was something the Jester was doing to her. Selena remembered her love had freed Donovan from the clutches of the Jester and she latched onto their connection by seeing the images Donovan showed her. Eons of taking souls to feed the beast, of losing his wife and child. How he got the burn because he had tried to save his wife, Rachel. Something awakened inside of her. This wasn't right.

Don't listen to him. You know you want it. Look into my eyes. You're so close. We can both taste it. If you stop now, you'll never know what I can truly give you.

Selena let her head fall back against the wall. Donovan's mouth was on her breasts. God, it felt so good, but she couldn't completely give up. "No, this isn't right," she whispered.

He rammed into her harder than he had before and his hands were around her throat. *You're so close that I can gobble you all up in one bite. There's nothing else that you can do, you're already mine.*

"Get away from her!"

Selena looked over at the sudden intrusion. There was a woman in her bathroom she had only met once before at the closing of her house, Rhianna. A blue glow surrounded her.

Selena's gaze switched to the man before her. It wasn't Donovan, but the Jester. The demon grinned and waved its fingers at her. The Jester's eyes narrowed and his smile widened. All the sensations he was playing on her ceased. He still gripped her arms in his and she was burning from the inside out.

My, my, the witch is back. I didn't expect that. Where is my darling Alexander? I'm sure he's not far behind. You can't have this one. She already gave herself to me just like you did. The Jester's long pointed tongue wagged at Rhianna. She then formed a ball of blue energy in her hand.

"She might have given herself to you, but what wiles did you use to fool her? Either way she did not pledge herself to you. Let her go or I'll make you!"

Dark laughter filled the bathroom that shook Selena's soul. *I'm not afraid of you!*

Rhianna's eyes narrowed. She murmured something and the ball in her hand grew bigger. She flung it at the demon, hitting him square in the chest. The Jester let his gaze slide down to the hole, and his face began to crack and crumble. His hand around Selena's wrist released, followed by the rest of him. Selena tried to squirm away as the Jester's remains turned to ash and the stench of burnt popcorn filled the bathroom.

Frigid water came on full blast. However, Selena wasn't shivering from the water. Rhianna turned off the water and the ashes were washed down the drain. She reached for Selena, but now that the Jester was gone, Selena found she was dizzy. Darkness wavered on the edge of her vision. The woman said something to her, but the words sounded garbled. Selena reached out, but her consciousness snuffed out and she plunged into oblivion.

Chapter Five

Selena opened her eyes only to discover she was no longer in the bathroom, but lying on a foreign bed. She was wrapped in a towel and her robe. Part of her felt empty, where the Jester had sucked out part of her soul. Even though he was gone, she could still sense him, still see the green flames burning in the back of her mind.

She sat up slowly and saw she was in a hotel room. Her clothes sat on the bed across from her. Selena pulled on the jeans and T-shirt. When she looked at herself in the mirror a bolt of shock went through her. Her face was gaunt and her cheeks were hollow. Her blue eyes were tinged green and her hair had gone bone white. When she smiled, her teeth were a little sharper. To confirm it, she ran her tongue over them and almost cut herself. Anger welled up inside of her and she balled her fist and smashed the mirror, but her hand never hit the glass even though it shattered onto the bureau. Her fingers were covered with green light like that of the Jester. She swallowed hard and when she relaxed, the energy dissipated. Selena wondered what it meant. She closed her eyes and tried to get it together.

“Are you okay? I heard something break.” Rhianna in on Selena and saw the mirror along with the fading green light from her hand. Their eyes met. Selena realized they shared adjoining rooms in the hotel and the door was open.

“Can you explain any of this?” Selena walked into Rhianna’s room and saw a man staring out the hotel window. When he turned around, she gasped. He could have been Donovan’s twin except his face was not scarred and his eyes were blue and not green. She blushed when she thought about all the things Donovan had done to

her. Obviously, this was not him, but his brother, Alexander. Donovan had not told her he was an identical twin. It might have been better if he did, then she would not have been so shocked at seeing the man standing in front of her.

Looking at the two in the room, she could plainly see a blue energy around them. This was getting way too complicated and creepy for her. Selena had just entered the Twilight Zone and wondered if she was going to have any sense of sanity anytime soon. She needed answers. She needed to free Donovan from wherever he was trapped and get Phoebe before the demon did anything to her. But the big concern was killing the demon. Whatever the old owner, Rhianna, did had hurt it and sent it back to its own hellish dimension.

“When was the last time you saw my brother?”

Selena looked up and saw Alexander was staring at her. His power surrounded her and brushed against her mind. She sensed he was trying to see if she was lying or how much of her was influenced by the Jester.

“I...I...” she stammered and tried to catch her breath, but all she could hear was the Jester laughing in her mind. She covered her ears with hands and cried out. “Make it stop!”

Alexander put a hand on her shoulder. The evil presence vanished. Alexander’s cool power washed over her. He led her to the bed to sit down. Rhianna handed her a glass of water, which she took with shaky hands. She took a sip and was then able to answer his questions.

“I saw him this morning.”

“And he was normal? The demon wasn’t bound to him?”

Selena shook her head. “No. I pulled him out of the mirror in my bedroom and we, um, you know...” She gestured and felt her cheeks turn red. Her gaze fell to the floor as she could not look directly at Alexander and tell him the things she had done with his brother, or the things his brother had done to her. However, in her mind, she wanted Alexander to do those things to her also.

"It's okay. I can understand how alluring the Rosin men can be," Rhianna chimed in. "The mirror. Did you find it in the attic?"

"Attic? No. My husband—late husband—made it for me. It was one of the only things I kept from after...sorry, it's still hard." Selena smiled and felt her teeth shift slightly back to normal, even though they were still pointy. It was strange. *I wonder what the dentist will say next time I go.*

"What happened with my brother? Why was the demon in the shower with you? Why were you giving yourself over to it? How did you free my brother? Can you call him?" Alexander started questioning Selena.

Rhianna shot him a look and poked him in the stomach with her elbow. Selena thought it was funny, but it did get him to purse his lips and take a big sigh. The energy around him evened out. He relaxed and ran a hand through his hair.

"I'm sorry. I don't mean to be so pressing, but it's important you tell me everything you know. I want—we want to help you. It's just, the last time I saw my brother I thought would be the last time I ever saw him. He was trapped in the same world I was in and I didn't think he could get out. I tried to get to him, but it was too late. I had to leave or I would have been lost, too. As it was it took me so long to find Rhianna again."

She heard the concern in his voice for Donavan. It made her feel good he truly was interested in helping him. She calmed herself and started her tale from the beginning, from after they bought the house, to when Trevor died, to when she moved in and how strange things started happening the same night when she heard Donavan's voice in the mirror. She even described how she pulled him from the mirror just hours earlier, how the demon was still attached to him at night, and what had happened in the bathroom. Rhianna and Alexander listened and did not interrupt her this time.

When she was done, Selena listened to the story of how Rhianna met Alexander and how she had stepped through the mirror to bring

him back. Selena wondered if she would have to do the same thing. She might have to for Phoebe. Rhianna explained how Alexander had appeared to her in her own mirror, how she had rescued him from the demon, learned she was a witch, and that they had hurt the demon.

"I'm sorry to hear about your friend," Alexander said. "Whatever damage we did to the Jester has had a lasting effect. That's a good thing, but it worries me about Donavan. You said he's only tied to him at night and it seems through his futile attempt at converting you, you have gained some of his powers."

"Will I stay like this?" Selena asked Alexander.

"I'm not sure. The Jester completely took over my brother for centuries because he gave into the guilt of Rachel's death, his first wife. My brother looked somewhat like you do now, but you did not give up your soul to the demon. It's apparent he's influenced you, hence you are still connected to him and have some of his power. Will you be able to keep out his evil? Can you fight him?"

"I'm not sure. I hear him in my thoughts. You're the only thing keeping him out."

"Selena, do you love Donavan?" Rhianna asked.

Selena stared at Rhianna. It was a question she had posed to herself recently and had not really been able to answer. She loved the feel of his hands on her body, of him buried inside of her. They fit together so well. When she had heard the loss in Donavan's voice and thought she would never see him again, she knew she felt something for him. He had said he loved her. That statement was what had made her hold on so she would not give herself up completely to the evil growing inside of her. Yes, she loved him more than she had loved Trevor, if that was possible, and it was.

"Yes. I love him. He's part of me. It was like that with Trevor, too. But this is deeper, like we're cut from the same mold. Is that wrong? I've felt so lost these past few months since Trevor was killed. I felt so responsible for his death. I know it was an accident, but he was working so hard so we could buy the house, you know,

and putting money away so we could start a family. Look where it got him.”

“Guilt is a hard emotion to wipe away from the soul. It was what Donovan wallowed in and he gave himself over to the demon. Even I was prey to it until I met Rhianna and understood that she was my soul mate. It was how I was able to come through the mirror. When my brother and I first summoned the demon from the book, we made a pact with it for power and immortality. I retained the power even after I escaped the realm. Rhianna discovered her magic. Now you’re tied to my brother and the Jester, too. Together, I am sure there’s a way we can defeat him.”

“Great. How do we do that?”

“I’m not sure. I have to talk to my brother. Which means we have to go back to the house where we found you.”

“I don’t ever want to go back there.”

“Why do you think I sold it?” Rhianna chuckled.

“So, you sold it knowing this could happen? Gee, thanks for telling me! At least you could have given me more of a warning instead of a note that said, ‘Call me if anything seems a little weird.’ This is pretty fucking weird, okay?” Selena started screaming at Rhianna. She should’ve told her if the house was possessed when they first bought it. Wasn’t it against the law to sell a haunted house and not tell the new owners? *Maybe not in her world!* Selena thought.

“Look, I never asked for this. For all I know the house killed my husband or some shit! I’m not going back to the house!” Selena felt the energy crackling around her, and when she looked at her hands, they were lined with fuzzy green energy.

The power consuming her made her feel all powerful. The voice of the Jester filled her thoughts. He was a dark tide and had taken over. He whispered for her to kill Alexander and Rhianna. If she did that, she could have Donovan with no strings attached. All he wanted was souls. If she gave him souls, he would leave her in peace. She was the perfect emissary for him. She could bring him what he needed

to be strong. His power caressed the inside of her. She shuddered and drank it in. A heavy ball of green energy appeared in her hand. The corners of her mouth twisted up into a smile. She brought her hand back and was about to throw it when she realized what she was doing.

She stopped herself in mid throw, but the energy ball veered off and went straight for Rhianna. Alexander dived in front of her and caught the ball, absorbing it into himself.

Selena swallowed and started. "I'm sorry. I can't do this. I can't!" She rushed out of the hotel room door and into her car. Rage burned through her and cracked around her in a neon green haze. She was mad at herself. She didn't care where she was going, just away from Crow's Creek. The further away the better.

Chapter Six

Selena didn't know how long she drove. Time was a blur and seemed nonexistent. Her emotions spurred her onward to get away from her new life. Finally, she stopped her car, got out and stretched. She barely knew where she was she was so tired. Her body felt worn out. Her feet took her to a spot where she sat down, curled up and went to sleep.

"Selena!"

Selena opened her eyes. She winced at the bright sun flooding her kitchen window. She looked around, wondering what she was doing sitting at the Formica table she hated so much. It had belonged to Trevor's mother. When they first got married, he had stolen the kitchen set from her basement so they could have something to eat at. She ran her hands over the speckled tabletop and caught the nicks in it from the many times they had played target practice with the table. She had hated it so much. When Trevor died, she put it out on the side of the road hoping a bus would hit it. No such luck it seemed.

She scanned the rest of the kitchen and it was exactly the same. The wooden spoon and fork were still on the wall. Trevor thought it would be kitschy to have them out, she thought it was stupid and something her parents would have on the wall, but she let it go. He was so insistent and he let her have her collection of gargoyles and dragons in the house peeking out from everywhere, so she was happy with the trade off. Now her knickknacks were in boxes waiting to go up to the attic. She hadn't been able to take them out since they had reminded her too much of Trevor.

Selena had some of her happiest memories in the kitchen. It was cramped with the table and had a small breakfast bar, which went into the dining room. She blushed to think how many times she and Trevor had made love on the bar. If houses could talk, theirs would have a couple of series to tell with all that went on between them.

“Selena.”

She looked across the table. Warm brown eyes met hers and a smile that lit up the room more than the sun. Trevor had started to thin a little on the top of his head from wearing a baseball cap all the time and she jokingly complained about it, but he didn’t stop, considering he worked out in the sun a lot. Working with his hands had sculpted his muscles and body so that he was a perfect specimen of a man with a golden tan and a beautiful demeanor. He always knew how to make her feel better no matter how foul a mood she was in.

“Am I dreaming?”

Trevor smiled. He ran a finger down her nose and hit it. It was his little pet way of telling her he loved her. He felt real enough.

“You’re kinda dreaming. Your body is asleep and your mind is here with me.”

Selena pulled back from him. He could be the Jester trying to mess with her mind. She got up from the chair and grabbed a knife from the holder. “I told you I don’t want any part of you. Get the hell away from me!”

Trevor’s smile didn’t falter. He held out his hands for her, letting her know he was not a threat. “Selena, I’m not the Jester. It’s me. It’s Trevor. Please, put the knife down. I’m only here for a little bit. It’s all I’m allowed.” He walked toward her and gripped her hand. She let him have the knife and take her into his arms as she began crying. It really was him. She tightened around him, not wanting to let him go.

“Sweetie, I still need to breathe,” Trevor chuckled.

“God, Trevor, it’s really you.” Selena wiped the tears from her eyes. He was real, at least for now, and she was grateful for the slight reprieve from the hell her life had become.

“Yes, it’s me. You asked for a place that would make you happy before all of the craziness in your life started. Well, here we are. Are you happy?”

“I’m so sorry you died. I didn’t know what to do. What was I supposed to do?”

Trevor kissed her lightly on the lips. His mouth still felt the same and his gesture was like a prayer had been answered. She wanted to slip into his arms, crawl back under the covers, and make love to him. It was all she wanted and she couldn’t have that with him again. Did he mind what she had become? Did he blame her?

“No, Selena. I don’t blame you for anything. Sometimes things are meant to happen. Everything we are is meant to happen. I loved you. I still love you, but this is something you were destined to do. I’ll always be watching over you, I promise. Just don’t let this thing beat you. I know it’s hard and the evil is inside of you, but don’t let it win. Remember our love. Remember the love you have for Donovan. Together, all your power can kill it. Evil, which was summoned ages ago, does not belong in this world.” He cupped her cheek and ran his hand along the curve of her neck.

“Trevor, what does all of this mean? Why me?”

Trevor wrapped his hands around her waist. Selena closed her eyes and enjoyed the sensation. He was so warm and felt so alive. Why did he have to die? Was it true what he said, that she was fated to meet Donovan? That her life was meant to change the way it had? Was he so sure she could fight the evil that had taken root inside of her? She wasn’t. She was afraid to face it. What if the Jester won and everything Alexander and Rhianna had worked for was lost? What if they were killed? What if Donovan was killed?

“I’m scared, Trevor. I never thought my life would turn out this way. Can’t I stay here with you?”

He squeezed her a little tighter. Selena looked over at the window, seeing the sun was a little brighter and the Formica table was starting to blur. “I’d love you to stay with me, but it’s not your place. You

have to go back. Listen to your heart, Selena. It will tell you what you have to do. When you think you are at your weakest, just remember what I said and what you have in your soul. You're stronger than you think you are."

"Don't leave me!"

"I have no choice."

The room was fading now and she could barely feel him against her. Trevor had told her how to overcome the evil inside of her. If she followed his advice she would be able to save Donovan and Phoebe. To do that, she had to go back to the house and face her fears. She had to own up to everything.

"I love you."

"You too..." His voice echoed in the light. It was so bright she had to cover her eyes. When she did, she realized she had opened her eyes and the sun was shining directly in her face.

Selena looked around. She was in a graveyard. Her back was against something cold and smooth. It was a tombstone of black marble. She traced the carved letters with her fingers, feeling their angles. She stared at Trevor's name, feeling the finality of his passing. Trevor was never coming back. She had known that before, since she had been at the funeral, but now she was left with a sense of hope. It was time for her to let him go completely. She had to worry about rescuing her best friend and the man she loved. She would always love Trevor, but he was in a better place and she had to live her life. Maybe moving into the house had been the right thing to do.

She got up, stretching out her stiff muscles. Selena didn't know how long she had been there, but it was long enough that everything hurt and the sun was starting to climb into the sky. She took in a deep breath and scanned the surroundings of the graveyard. Forms hovered near some of the stones scattered throughout the cemetery. When she looked back at Trevor's, there was nothing there. These were spirits in some form, which was new and interesting at the same time. What other kinds of powers had she gotten from the Jester? Selena felt bad

for these lost souls and realized for a long time now she had been one of them. Of course, she wasn't dead. Even with Trevor, she had been lost. He had anchored her for a while, but now she had found her place in the world. She was the one who would make the decisions about her life and who ran it.

A sense of resolve and strength awakened in her. It was still shaky since she was not used to the feeling, but she was going to cultivate it and not lose it to a crazy demon. Now she had to worry about saving Donovan. She was really the only one who could reach him in the other realm and not even his brother could pull him out. Selena ran her hand over the black marble, feeling the life in the stone. At that moment, she understood how everything was connected.

The Jester had given her more of his power than he expected. Whatever power he had imparted to her she was going to use to kick some demon butt. Selena smiled at the thought and stared at the sun. It was going to take her several hours to get back to the house. She had driven in a fog last night, so mad and scared she didn't realize where she was going. It must have been fate that led her here or Trevor had pulled her toward him, but it was the last time he would have to do that. She kissed her fingers and placed them on the stone.

“Good-bye.”

Chapter Seven

Her gaze kept going between the sun and the speedometer on the car. She was pushing her car to the max and flying down the highway doing ninety. She normally played it safe, but time was against her. It was at least a six hour drive and she had gotten caught in traffic, not to mention it was nearly impossible to find a gas station on the highway. Everyplace she went was closed or out of gas. It was just her luck until finally on fumes that she was able to fill up.

She had tried every radio station on the way, but all she could get was country and gospel, and she was not in a praying kind of mood. Her mind was set on seeing the demon defeated, but as the hours grew later and darkness loomed her thoughts turned darker, too. Selena had begun plotting how easily she could play the nice, concerned, helpless victim and then kill Alexander and Rhianna so she could have their power, too.

Of course, she knew this was not her thinking, but the Jester. The smell of burnt popcorn was faint in her car, but she could still smell it along with the sickly sweet aroma of cotton candy. It stuck to the back her mouth. The Jester was trying to hack into her thoughts and control her, but she was not going to let him do it. She pressed her foot to the floor, not caring if she got a ticket. She had to get to the house before sun down. She only hoped Alexander and Rhianna were there waiting for her.

When she pulled up the gravel road the sun balanced on the horizon and twilight was only a few streaks away from claiming the sky. A green haze had settled over the field like pre-dawn fog.

Rhianna's Jeep was in the driveway next to the house. The front door was open and Selena could see movement in the bedroom upstairs. She pulled up closer to the house, got out of the car, and ran up the stairs. She got into the bedroom and found the bed had been turned and pushed against the wall. The carpet was rolled up and the mirror now stood all alone in the center of the room in a circle of candles. Alexander sat before it, staring deep into the reflection, waiting to see what would happen. Rhianna was behind him.

They both looked up when she entered.

"I didn't think you'd be coming back," Alexander stated. His focus remained on the mirror while Rhianna watched the sun.

A splinter of anger tinged Selena's emotions. The heat of her new power rose up in her. She even heard it crackling in the air. However, she closed her eyes and squelched her feelings. Alexander was testing her to see if she had changed her mind. She swallowed and did what Trevor said; she thought about the love she had for him and for Donavan. It was about saving him now and Phoebe, not about her. When she opened her eyes, Alexander nodded.

"Good. You're getting a handle on the power. You understand it is fueled by rage and strong emotion. The demon feeds on the rage, guilt, any dark emotion we have. Hold on to what you love and you can conquer the darkness."

"I'll try. What are you doing? Or what's the plan?"

Her gaze skimmed to the windows. Outside the sun was about gone and night had taken hold. The green haze solidified into buildings and people as it drifted through the grass. It was creeping closer to the house. The sound of a calliope echoed through the house sending shivers up Selena's spine. After this, she did not want to go to another circus in her life.

"I feel the same way," Rhianna chimed in. "If I ever hear that sound again, I'll scream. It grates on your nerves to hear the same off key melody over and over again."

"Yes, it does."

The door downstairs slammed against the wall. Selena jumped. The atmosphere grew heavy. The little hairs on her arms stood up. She heard bells in the background. Whatever was outside was coming inside. The other ghosts were not playing around this time. They were playing for keeps.

“Can they get in here?” Selena asked.

“No. Do you see the symbol above the door and on the floor? It prevents them from entering and the Jester from getting out.”

“But I thought you didn’t want the Jester to get out. I thought you wanted to get Donovan out of the other realm.”

“We want both. Our plan is to separate the Jester and Donovan here. If the Jester can remain on this side of the mirror, we can destroy him once and for all. All the souls he has trapped will be free,” Rhianna explained.

“First, I need you to summon Donovan.” Alexander motioned for her to sit inside the circle of candles.

Selena nodded. She sat cross legged on the floor, stared into the mirror, and studied her own image. Her eyes seemed greener than they had the other night and she was still pale, but her face had filled out more. Her hair was bleach white and she had a sense it was not going to go back to its original color no matter what she did. Maybe it could hold a dye job if she tried. She would worry about it later. Selena looked over at Alexander.

“Just call out to him?”

“Whatever it is you do to call him to you.”

Selena thought about Donovan. How he smelled. How he felt. How he sounded. It wasn’t too hard considering his mirror image was seated right behind her. But there were differences, like his eyes. Donovan’s hands knew her body and where to tickle her, but most of all she followed the connection between the two of them. It burned hotter and stronger now that she understood a little about the power inside of her. She let the floodgates open on her emotions and poured

it into finding him, pulling him to her. When she opened her eyes, she was staring into his.

“Hi,” Selena said.

He smiled at her, but his eyes went to his brother behind her. “Alexander, it’s good to see you.”

“You too, big brother. You ready to end this?”

“More than you’ll ever know. If it wasn’t for you I wouldn’t have gotten this far. And if it wasn’t for Selena I never would have had the freedom I do now.” He took in her new appearance. She looked away, ashamed at what she had given in to to become the way she looked now. However, she felt a wave of such love and endearment from Donovan that it brought tears to her eyes. Within their silent communication there was also an understanding.

“Selena, when I tell you, I want you to pull Donovan through the mirror. No matter what you do, don’t break the circle of candles. It will keep you and him safe,” Alexander instructed.

Selena looked into the mirror and nodded. Alexander was the more experienced one so she was going to do what he said. She put her hand on the glass and watched Donovan do the same. The energy sparked between them. Behind them she watched Rhianna pull out a book and hand it to Alexander. She sensed it was filled with power.

“Alexander, what are you doing? You know what can happen from reading that. Remember what happened to Father? What happened to us?!”

“I know, Donovan, but there’s no other way to summon the demon in its true form. The spell will pull it from your soul and manifest it here. Once that happens, you will be free. Then we can use it to destroy the Jester.”

“If you let the Jester roam free, his minions will be free to descend on the house. If he can get past the barrier, do you know what havoc he will wreck? I can’t let you do it. Selena, pull me through the mirror. Do it now,” Donovan demanded.

Selena looked between him and Alexander. She started to send the current of energy along their connection when she heard the faint jingle of bells. Swiftly she shut down her power before the glass was completely liquid and she could take hold of Donovan's hands. "You're not Donovan. What did you do with him?"

Lightning cracked in the sky outside. Calliope music and the din of voices were clearer than they ever have been. The stench of rotting food and burning wood and flesh filled the room. Rhianna coughed behind her. A gust of wind blew through the room. Selena stared back into the mirror and there before her was the true Jester.

His eyes were completely hollow except for green flames. His teeth were pointed and browner than she remembered. His lips were frozen in a perpetual grin and seemed to curl into his cheeks, revealing all of his teeth. Once white gloves were torn showing knobby, bony fingers. His harlequin suite was green on one side and white on the opposite. Marble sized jingle bells made up the buttons of his suit. They were tarnished and rusted. He even had on matching slippers that curled on the ends with bells. The suite was torn, showing patches of white and decaying skin. Strands of stringy hair clung to his scalp. He was everything she had seen in her worst nightmares. Silently, she cursed herself to think she had given up part of herself to that thing. Now she was altered because of it.

You're a smart one, Selena. And such a great fuck. I saw all the naughty things you did with your dead husband. How sweet. We could have had so much fun. We still can. Just kill them for me.

"Go to hell!"

I've been there, love, and it smells like roses this time of year. Dear, Alexander, so predictable, trying to save your brother. You won't find him. You see, since Selena, my luscious kitten here, decided to give me part of her soul I got strong enough to detach from your pathetic brother. He was getting on my nerves. So what do you say? Want to go at it a few rounds? Deep laughter filled the bedroom. The demon disappeared from the mirror. The gust of wind came blasting

out the glass. Selena dived down and covered her face to protect herself.

Chapter Eight

When she uncovered her head, one single candle was spared the onslaught of the phantom wind. She picked it up and looked at the damage the room sustained. The mirror was completely devoid of glass. Her heart sank when she saw the treasure Trevor had made for her. There was no way for her to pull Donovan from the other realm.

“Rhianna?” Selena whispered.

She didn’t hear anything and then there was a giggle in the background. When she stood up, she saw Phoebe. Relief washed over her, but when she got closer she realized what was standing in front of her was no longer her friend. The woman she knew was gone. Phoebe’s dark hair was chopped off. There were slashed scars on her face. Her eyes were tinged red and so were her lips. She was dressed in a white baby doll dress with a red corset that was too tight and pushed her tits out so it gave her the appearance she had some. On her cheeks were perfect red circles of blush.

“Phoebe, what happened to you?”

“What? You don’t like the new look, Selena? Come on, I figured I would try it for you.” Her friend moved closer to her and she caught the scent of decay. Selena backed away. Her foot hit something. When she looked down it was Rhianna’s hand. She was buried under the bed. Selena looked back at Phoebe, but she was already gone. Hands closed around her shoulders and hot rank breath filled her ear.

“Come on, chicky. I know you want me! I’ve wanted you for a long time. Trevor and I used to argue over you for a long time. I wanted to fuck the both of you, but he wouldn’t let me near you. He said you were all his. He was so selfish, don’t you think?”

“Where’s Donovan? How come you were able to get in here? They said—”

“What? That the big evil monsters couldn’t get through the doorway because of the itty bitty protection symbols? Tsk tsk. Bad sorcerer. Bad witch,” Phoebe said to her.

Selena hopped over the remains of the bed and looked out the window. What she saw mortified her. “Oh, my God!” Selena turned back around to face her friend.

“Surprise! Don’t you like it?” Phoebe clapped her hands and jumped up and down.

“The Jester didn’t just cross over. He crossed everything over. The whole carnival is here.”

“How did you get so smart?” Phoebe tapped Selena on the nose. She tried to react, but her friend was gone again. Rage burned through Selena. She figured that Alexander and Rhianna had not presumed the demon would be powerful enough to break through the mirror again or bring his carnival over. They had assumed he could come over on some spell they read in that book. The book? Where was it? Selena had sensed the power in it. Both brothers said that was how the demon was summoned in the first place, by reading from the book. If the Jester had it then it was bad. She had to find the book, Alexander and then Donovan. First she had to get by her friend.

Selena looked around the room and realized there was no one. She tried to move the remains of the bed off Rhianna and was able to move a few things. Selena checked Rhianna’s pulse. She seemed to be okay since there was no blood and she was breathing. It just appeared she was knocked out.

Selena had to venture into the carnival alone. She made her way to the door, still holding the candle, which was near the end of its wick.

When she got to the door, Phoebe was there staring at her with her eyes burning red. Fear moved through her and she felt the power inside of her spark to life around her hands.

“You’re not going any where, love.” Phoebe stepped into the room. Selena moved her hand back, but Phoebe caught it and shook her head. The smile on her lips curled into a devilish grin. “Shame. Trying to hurt your best friend. Why don’t you give us a kiss and we can make up? I so want to gobble you up.” Phoebe began pulling Selena into her and pursed her lips.

I’m so sorry. A jolt passed between them when their lips touched. Phoebe stopped and Selena dropped the candle so it snuffed out. However, the glow of the green carnival outside made her see Phoebe’s eyes go from red to green. The expression on her face froze and she stopped, splitting apart into a thousand pieces. Selena raced down the hallway and downstairs. When she got to the door, she saw floating balloons like a lining on a walkway. Next to the tree by the field was a large banner suspended in the air. It read:

:

Circus Diabolique

The melody of the calliope blared, reminding her of a carousel. Horses were tethered to old fashioned wagons. Stages were set up along the sides of the circus and there was a large center stage, too. There was nothing going on in the center stage, but everyone was gathered around the stage awaiting a show to begin. Selena wondered what kind of show that was going to be. Quietly, she made her way between the balloons, expecting them to pop as she walked by, but they never did. It was hot outside and the smell of cotton candy choked her. Everything in her told her she was never going to look at the circus the same way again.

She passed underneath the banner and into the well-trodden field. Fear amped up her power. Donavan was close by, she only hoped he was okay. The demon said he had plans for her lover. Even Alexander was in danger. Both of them had known the demon longer than she had ever dreamed up. Alexander told her about the pact the two brothers had made with the demon. Souls for immortality and power.

They had delivered souls for years under the guise of a carnival, trapping them in the hall of mirrors, but when Selena looked around, she did not see the hall of mirrors. Rhianna said she had destroyed it when she had hurt the demon before and evidently the demon was not able to recreate it. Maybe that was a good thing. At least the souls trapped there had been released, but as Selena got closer and saw the hundreds still sitting and waiting on at the stage she knew all of these were still lost. Whatever it took, she would free them.

“Hurry, hurry, hurry. The show is about to begin. Come and see an amazing and horrifying site. For one night only see the death defying skills of the amazing Rosin twins.”

Selena recognized the voice of the demon. It was amplified bouncing off the trees and drawing her attention. Selena held her breath while she wound her way through the carnival. Not all of its inhabitants were at the show. There was a skeleton dressed in a top hat and tails with a whip, flicking it at a woman who appeared to be half crocodile and half woman. Selena didn't see where the separation ended so she guessed it was the real thing. When she saw the lash marks on her back and the anguish on her face, she knew this was one of the souls who had given themselves over to the Jester to become a freak in his dark side show.

Meandering along, there was another wagon covered with shrunken heads, dried roots, finger and toe bones. A hunched over woman sat outside with a tattered green shawl covering her hair and shoulders. Next to her was a sandwich board sporting a palm with an eye in the middle of it and a crystal ball. On the table was a spread of tarot cards. When the old woman sensed Selena's interest, she looked up. Her face was smooth except for her two eyes, which were white and another, a third one, which was open. It was clear green and it blinked at her. Selena held in a shiver of disgust and kept on walking. The old woman turned her head and pointed a finger at her.

As Selena made her way further into the dark circus, she came upon the calliope. It was set up on a wagon all by itself. Steam wafted

out of its long pipes and the crank was slowly turning on its own. The music was off key and eerie.

As Selena continued to walk, she heard the screams of another lost soul. She looked over and saw a woman pinned to a twirling wheel with knives in her wrists and ankles. One of the Jesters' zombies was throwing more daggers at her while the wheel spun.

Selena finally came to the outskirts of the small stage. All the inhabitants on the benches turned and stared at her. Their expressions were empty and yet filled with wanting, waiting for her to go up on stage. Her eyes scanned the lot and her heart went out to them. The ghastly sight ignited her power. She swallowed and stared at the Jester.

She understood why Alexander and Donovan wanted to be free of the torment they had put themselves under. Selena would help free them and herself from the Jester. Looking at the seated audience, she understood the meaning of the sideshow. Dark carnival. Diabolic circus. Circus of the damned and the lost. She had almost been one of these souls.

My, my, my. We have a volunteer from the audience. Why don't you come up and join us? The Jester's smile widened. Hollow applause filled the air. She stared at the demon.

He was dressed in a white top hat and green tails over his harlequin suit. He was the parody of a circus ringmaster. Next to him on stage was Alexander. His head was down and his body slumped over. He was dressed in a red robe, and yet he was perfectly still. Even in the stillness, Selena sensed his power was building. Next to him Donovan was dressed in a black tunic and green tights. His arms were spread out and his wrists were limp. His head rested on his shoulder, showing the burned side of his face. His left wrist was moving. His eyes were closed. The brothers appeared to be living puppets waiting for someone to pull their strings.

Selena got to the stage. A hand was offered to her from the hag who had taken Phoebe. She looked normal, dressed in a black lacey

high collared dress. Her brown hair was unbound around her shoulders and her eyes burned red. This was Rachel, Donavan's first wife, or at least her soul. She stared at the hand and then back at the Jester who waited patiently.

"You don't want to keep the audience waiting, do you?" Rachel purred. "Be a good little girl and come up on stage so everyone can see you!"

Selena took her hand and played along. The audience clapped again while Rachel brought her between the two brothers and had her stand next to the Jester. Selena spied the book off to the side of the stage. If she could get her hands on it maybe she could send the demon back to hell.

The Jester ran his bony fingers over her shoulder and she saw her clothing change into a diamond checkered green and white outfit that was identical to his. It was form fitting and low cut, showing the tops of her breasts. The only difference was she had a skirt to go over the tights. She even had the curly belled shoes to match. Her hair was curled in tight ringlets and fastened on top of her head with a comb.

We can't have you be part of the show if you're not dressed for the part, now can we? The Jester handed her a mirror. Selena gasped when she saw her reflection.

Her face was pale and gaunt. Her eyes were bright green like his and she could almost see the fire in them. Her lips were painted blood red to stand out against her white face. Her teeth were longer and sharper. Her fingernails were painted the same color as her eyes. Before she could do anything, the demon clasped her around the waist. She dropped the mirror and found his lips locked on hers. Instant orgasm and passion filled her soul. She tried to fight his grip, but there was nothing she could do. Everything about her wanted to be thrown against the stage and be fucked in front of the audience, in front of the man she loved.

Wouldn't that be a lovely sight, to see Donavan squirm? Her lips twisted in an evil smile while kissing the Jester harder.

Oh, Selena. Join me and we can rule the world. The Jester was winding around her brain, trying to strangle her will.

What do you want in return?

The Jester purred in her mind like a satisfied lion. *I'll let you keep your soul and your body, pretty one. I just want to fuck you. You're so delicious and your mind is almost as twisted as mine. I love it.*

I thought you wanted to kill me. Phoebe almost did me in. Besides, you're a demon. I thought demons couldn't love.

She felt the Jester's thoughts burn in anger. *She was not my creation. It seems Rachel is a little jealous. I've punished her, but if you desire we can easily take care of her.*

A scream filled the air. Selena looked up from the Jester's lips. Rachel was screaming in pain and horror from the green and black flames surrounding her. She pressed herself against the demon harder, showing her appreciation. His fingers dug into her ass while she wrapped one leg around his waist, pressing herself against the bulge in his suit. His will lessened some, but his power was still surging through her, making her moan against him. *Oh, God!*

Yes. I can be that for you, Selena. Give yourself to me and I'll give you anything you want.

Her mind slid to Donovan. Since she was fusing with the Jester she could feel Donovan's will. He was aware even though he was trapped. Fury and rage rolled through him as he knew what she was doing with the Jester. A sadness so profound also consumed him from her actions and Rachel's death. Alexander was struggling against the demon too, and he was winning because the Jester was distracted.

I'll stay with you. Let them go. If you want souls, I'll bring you souls. Each time I fuck someone you can have them. You can enter me and consume them through me. Then I'll be all yours. Selena ran her hand along his thick cock, slow and then fast, through the fabric. Her body craved for him to drive his shaft deep inside of her, but she had to hold onto her will. She had to play her cards right.

The Jester's nails dug furrows in her back, shredding the cloth. She didn't cry out, but moaned when his tongue licked the side of her neck. She closed her eyes, letting her power grow inside of her. The demon was playing with her thoughts, using her body for its own gratification as he manipulated her into another orgasm. She screamed, this time not able to contain herself.

Scream louder for me when I fuck you and I'll give you anything. You're such a whore. You know that, don't you? You know you want me to fuck the life from you, don't you?

"Yes!" It was true because part of her wanted that desperately. She needed the pain to make her remember she was alive. She was trying to remember Donovan and hoped he would understand. She felt along their connection and through him that he understood, and he was battling the demon's will too, and he was winning. Her distractions were working.

"You promised to let them go," she whispered aloud while the demon was sucking on her ear. His hands came around her front, tearing her suit so her breasts sprang free. He gripped them hard and stared deep into her eyes.

Give yourself to me first and I'll let them go free of my will.

"Swear it," she managed to say when the Jester held her body in a constant state of arousal. He had toned down his power, but every caress of air, of his fingers, was murder and she needed to be filled soon.

I'm not stupid, Selena. Did you really think I was going to fall for your little trick? Oh, you're good. And I will have you replace Rachel. I'll let you keep your soul and you'll be my fuck toy. I'll make you enjoy it. Every tickle, every caress, you'll beg me for more and Donovan will be watching. What do you think of that?

He pushed his will against hers, but this time she remembered what Trevor had said. Don't give into the evil. It was the only way to be free of the demon. Selena met the demon with her own power. It might have originated from him, but by claiming love and light she

had turned it into her own. She pushed back against the Jester. He released her from the hold on her body, but he was not letting up on the onslaught of her will. He redoubled his efforts and Selena was cracking under the pressure of it. The pain in her head was magnifying and she tried to hold on, but he was beating her down mentally. She could feel the cracks in her power falling, failing. She was already on her knees and clutching her head.

You are no match for me. You really think I would swear to give up my two most valued prizes? I was willing to give you a chance, and you destroyed that. Do you know how many people I actually let keep their souls? Do you, bitch? Now you'll be like the rest of them and I'll eat you up. Once I'm free of this place I'll take the carnival on the road. I hear there are more magnificent circuses in this century. Imagine the souls I can get from just one of them. In time, I will be more powerful than your god and you'll wish you had been at my side. Time's up, Selena.

The demon drew the full force of his will down on her. However, the death blow she expected did not come. Instead, she felt a wall in her mind. When she looked up, she saw Alexander and Donovan staring at the Jester. She could see their combined power had wrapped around her to keep her safe. The demon looked at the twins and smiled. He pulled back his hand and threw a ball of red energy at them. Alexander dodged it, but did not break his hold.

Selena spied the book and made a dodge for it. When she was about to grab it, a hand got a hold of it before she did. When she looked up, it was Rhianna. She looked a little pale, but she smiled. She opened the book.

The demon must have sensed it because he spun around and stared at the both of them. The witch didn't look at him, but began reciting from the page. It didn't seem to affect the Jester, only pissed him off more. Selena looked at Donovan and saw the effort he was putting forth at trying to fight the demon so Rhianna could read a spell.

Selena looked out into the audience and was amazed to see the outskirts of the carnival did not seem so substantial anymore.

“It’s working.”

Not for long, The Jester turned his gaze on the both of them. The green flames in his eyes expanded and shot out at them. Selena jumped in front of Rhianna and felt the heat sear her flesh. She screamed in pain as the flames licked at her hair and her face, but even before they were any bigger they were gone. A blue bolt of energy hit the Jester in the back, causing him to stagger and stop the onslaught on her.

Rhianna kept re-reading the spell. The carnival had now receded to the outside of the stage. Even some of the inhabitants on the benches seemed to disappear. The demon was losing his power even if he didn’t want to admit it, but so were the brothers and so was Rhianna. Selena looked at the twins and sensed they were weary. She knew she had to act. She took a step forward and grabbed a hold of the demon’s arms. He spun around and growled at her. She pulled him into her and planted her lips on his. He was overtaken by shock.

You have the power to kill them all. I want that kind of power. Take my soul, take whatever you want. She rubbed her hand along his dick and knew she had his attention.

Oh, Selena. You are such a whore. Batting for both teams. We will have so much fun. Stand aside and let daddy work then.

Selena kept rubbing him. Her gaze met Donovan’s. He nodded, sensing what she was doing.

“Focus all of your power on Selena. Give it to her now!” he yelled to Alexander and Rhianna.

All of a sudden, Selena felt a blast of wind take her. Green and blue energies swirled and met inside of her. She grabbed the Jester’s skull between her hands. She closed her eyes, feeling the rush of power pour out of her and into the Jester. The other three were chanting around her and she was not sure if she heard them in her head or in her mind, it was just the sheer high of the power. It curled

her toes like no orgasm she ever had. She understood in that one second how the power could have been so seductive, why Alexander and Donovan had sold their souls for it, why anyone would sell their souls for it. Even though she wanted to bask in it, she knew she couldn't. The link she shared with Donovan was vibrating not only with the combined power of his brother and the witch, but with love. Selena grabbed a hold of that love and pushed it into the Jester through their close contact.

The demon was trying to get away, but this time she was the one who had an ironclad grip. His cries of pain sliced through her mind but she didn't let him go. She continued to kiss him and mold her body to his. He wanted to fuck her, but she showed him images of what true love was. It wasn't all about having sex. It was about trust, being together, understanding, loyalty, devotion, and feelings there were no words for. She poured all of this into him and he was not able to handle it. Finally, the demon shoved her away. When she looked up the other three had surrounded him. She joined in the circle and picked up the rhythm of the chant. The power lent to her had seared it into her consciousness along with other knowledge waiting for her to discover.

The Jester looked at her and put his hand to his head. A crack formed in the stage. The Jester was out of power. He was out of time. The demon was going back to his own dimension. Selena saw a white light appear in the night sky and shine directly on the Jester. A bolt of lightning hit the demon square in the chest. Suddenly, the light was gone and the demon was going up in white and blue flames. His screams filled Selena's ears and part of her was dying, too. However, she did not stop the chanting. She continued. She locked her eyes with Donovan and smiled. He returned the gesture. They kept on chanting until the fire died down and there was nothing left of the demon except a blackened bell button from his harlequin suit.

Chapter Nine

Selena stared at the twin and saw Donovan's face was completely healed. There was no mark from when he went into the fire years ago to save Rachel. She crossed the small space between them and ran her hand along his cheek. He smiled and kissed it in return.

"You're healed."

"Yup. Now he can't brag about being the handsomest of the both of us." Alexander patted his brother on the back.

Selena looked between the two of them and realized the only way to tell them apart now was from the color of their eyes. Donovan's were still green. Selena looked down at her hands and noticed her nails were still sharper, but when she ran her tongue over her teeth they had returned to normal. So had the color of her skin. She wondered about her hair.

"You are beautiful no matter what you look like." Donovan wrapped his arms around her waist and lifted her off her feet. He brought her down to meet her lips and gave her a long drawn out kiss. "I've been waiting to do that since the other night. We had fun, didn't we?"

Selena caught the gleam in his eyes and looked down, remembering all the wonderful things he had done to her. Her body needed to be reminded what it was like, but this time she had a few ideas of her own. She returned his gesture with a devilish smile. Her hand traced his crotch while she felt his cock respond to her caress.

"Maybe I don't want to play your games any more."

"You don't want me anymore?" The hurt in his voice made her heart skip a beat. He sounded so vulnerable.

She kissed him back harder, desperately. "I didn't say that. I want to play my own games this time, silly."

Donavan laughed. "Well, I guess I'll have to learn to play nice."

"Come on you two. Can we go back to the house, please?" Rhianna asked.

"Is it safe? I mean is the Jester really gone?" Selena asked.

She saw Donavan look at Alexander who took a moment and then nodded. "He is gone. The house and the land are clean. It's been over a hundred years and finally the land is pure again. Just like us, right brother?"

Selena saw Donavan eye the book Rhianna held. He unwound it from her grasp and took the book. "I think it's time we get rid of this once and for all. What do you say, Alexander? This way the demon can stay gone and no one will ever be able to summon it again."

His brother nodded. Both brothers formed balls of energy in their hands and together they threw it at the book. One minute it was there, and the next it was gone.

Peace and serenity washed over Selena and a sense of finality came into her being. It was over. She didn't have to worry about being haunted anymore. Trevor was at peace and her love for him would never die. Donavan had come into her heart, but did not replace that of her first husband. He only expanded on it. When she looked over at Rhianna, she saw the same peace come over her, too. Selena wondered what her encounter with the demon had been like. Maybe they could swap stories after time had gone by. It seemed they all were free.

Love encompassed her heart when she looked over at Donavan. She had come a long way from not being lost anymore and so had he. He had lived two centuries in another dimension to come to her and finally beat the demons in his soul. None of them were lost anymore. They had just been found.

“I want to go take a shower and, um, put some more clothes on. I don’t think I ever want to hear anything about another circus in my life. Donovan, you want to join me?”

A wide smile spread across his features. “Do you really have to ask that?” He pulled off his shirt and draped it over her shoulders to cover up her exposed breasts. She licked her lips at the expanse of his chest. She had many wonderful ideas on what she was going to do with him. Her eyes trailed over Alexander and Rhianna. It was strange because she could feel the lust coming off of the both of them, too. It seemed a brush with death made anyone horny, or at least them.

She had an idea and whispered it in Donovan’s ear. He pulled away from her for a second, almost shocked she had suggested it, but a delicious smile lit his features and he nodded. He looked over at Alexander and conveyed the thought to his brother. Selena figured he was the more conservative of the two. Alexander then nibbled Rhianna’s ear. When he pulled away, Selena saw the suggestion move across her mind when she thought about it. The tension in the air was thick from wanting, but after a moment the witch moved to Selena and let her hand slide underneath the torn material and touch her breast. Selena’s nipple hardened instantly.

“All you had to do was ask, Selena, but I think I’ll watch. Alexander has been eyeing you since he first saw you in the shower at the hotel. I know Donovan won’t mind sharing. They’ve done it before.” Rhianna kissed her lightly. “But I think we all need to take a shower before anything happens. Don’t you think so?”

Selena nodded and leaned into Donovan. Rhianna backed away and entwined her fingers with Alexander. The couple followed Alexander and Rhianna back into the house. Selena stopped at the door and noticed a single green balloon hovered by the doorway. She looked over at Donovan, who nodded. She reached out and touched the balloon. It popped in a burst of confetti and bells. She let out a small yip and flung herself into his arms. He smoothed her hair.

“It’s just the demon’s last word to make us jump. He has no more influence over us, I swear. I don’t feel his weight on my soul anymore. And I have you to thank for that. Selena, I love you.”

“Donavan, I did things with—“

He put a finger to her lips and shushed her. “It doesn’t matter what happened or what you did. It’s in the past. We all did things in our past we wish we never did, but we did them and we move on. I did horrible things. Maybe one day I will tell you what I actually did when I was possessed. But for now, I have other needs. And you did promise me.” He leaned in and kissed her deeply. She blushed, crossed the threshold of the house, and when she did, she saw Phoebe lying on the floor.

“Oh my God, Phoebe. I thought she was dead.” Selena glanced back to Donovan. He knelt by her and checked for a pulse.

“She’ll be okay. The Jester’s power didn’t have an ironclad grip on her. When he destroyed Rachel, your friend’s soul was released. Alexander, help me with her.”

The other brother helped lift Phoebe up and they placed her on the futon. Selena went by her friend’s side and ran a hand over her face, feeling relief flood her system. She had saved her after all. “What’s the matter with her?”

“She’ll sleep for the night and wake up feeling like she had an awful hangover, but she’ll be okay,” Alexander reassured her.

Selena brushed the hair away from her friend’s face and kissed her lightly on the forehead. “Sleep well.” She stood up knowing her friend would be okay and stared at Donovan who had lust in his eyes. She stuck her tongue out at him and made her way up to the shower. As she did, she stopped and stared at her reflection. Her eyes were still the same color they were. Her hair was bone white, but everything else about her was the same. She slipped out of the suit and promised herself she was going to burn it. She undid her hair and saw it was held up with an ivory comb carved with a C and a D intertwined together. Circus Diabolique. She put the comb in the

basket and slipped under the water, letting it wash away the grime and dirt.

Once she was done, she wrapped a towel around herself to find the other three waiting in the bedroom for her. Alexander and Donovan were on the bed and Rhianna sat in a chair in the corner watching. It appeared nothing had ever happened. The only thing wrong with the picture was the mirror was gone. Her bed hadn't been that big before. It was a full and now it was appeared to be a king size. Donovan saw her look of confusion and laughed.

He got up and crossed to her. "Isn't magic wonderful?" He pressed his lips to hers and tugged at her towel. Selena slid her gaze to Rhianna who gave her a smile and nodded, giving her permission for this to happen. Alexander leaned his head back against the wall waiting. Selena grabbed Donovan's hand.

"Ladies first." She pushed him away and disrobed in front of Rhianna.

Selena set her knee on the bed between Alexander's legs. She leaned in and kissed the other man. His lips were soft, inviting, and eager to meet hers. Alexander was the mirror image of Donovan, but that didn't mean that they tasted the same or that they liked to be touched in the same manner. Her finger trailed up the inside of Alexander's legs. She felt a shiver of excitement move through him as her mouth moved from his lips and captured one of his nipples. She bit down gently. Her lover responded in kind and slid his fingers down to Selena's clit. She let out a moan of pleasure and pulled away from Alexander. Selena kissed the side of his neck and let her power flood through him. He arched his back and groaned. Selena felt the echo of it ripple through her too because of their connection. Next she ran her hand along his shaft in slow steady motions. Rhianna moaned in the background also feeling Alexander's pleasure through the shared link.

Selena felt Donovan's lips on her flesh, leaving hot trails of kisses and the hardness of his cock pushed into the small of her back. His

hands wrapped around her waist and tickled up to her breasts, which he held gently thumbing her nipples. Alexander's rhythm increased on her clit. She arched her back and found herself pushing into Donovan.

"God, Alexander," Selena whispered. She opened her eyes to see blue energy encompassing the both of them. She could feel the buzz of it hovering on the outside of her mind. Alexander's passion was rocking her, too. Selena pumped her hand up and down, slow and then fast. Donovan wrapped his hands over Selena's breasts, squeezing the nipples hard, the way she liked it. She let her head fall back against Donovan's chest. Alexander's manipulations brought her higher and higher and when Donovan rubbed her nipples everything in her quaked. She turned her face to Donovan. His lips sucked on hers and his tongue probed her mouth. His kiss was hungry for her and yet gentle. She opened her eyes and saw the spark of green fire igniting in his.

He released her lips. Selena leaned in and kissed Alexander, letting her tongue explore his mouth. His hips bucked forward. Donovan was hard against her back, too. The power joining all of them was intense, burning her mind and theirs also. Selena felt Alexander's and his brother's needs. Donovan sent a jolt of energy crawling up her back sending Selena into an instant orgasm.

"Oh, fuck," she moaned. "More. Please more."

The power was overwhelming and kept cycling through them all, and Selena wasn't sure after awhile where she began or ended. It was like having their minds meld together.

Alexander's teeth nipped at her lips.

Selena, now. Please now. Donovan begged her in his mind. He wanted to feel his dick plunging inside of her. Alexander freed her lips while Donovan parted her legs from behind. Alexander bit down on Selena's lips, drawing blood, but the pain sent her into another orgasm as Donovan slid his cock deep inside her pussy. She broke the kiss then and focused on setting a rhythm with Donovan. His hands

grabbed her hips hard to control their pace. Selena hung her head down and took Alexander's cock into her mouth. Every time Donovan pushed into her, she went down on Alexander's dick, taking more of it into her mouth and swirling her tongue around the shaft.

Selena tried to keep herself focused on just Donovan, but it was hard because the pleasure gripping her was so intense. Donovan was creating a rhythm that was hard to keep up with, banging into her so every time his dick buried inside her pussy, she wanted another pounding. Through their combined power they were wrapping their bonds closer. Their instincts were weaving together. Selena tasted the first drops of pre-cum on her tongue from Alexander. Selena sensed something magical was going to come out of this, but she didn't know what.

"Selena, take all of me, baby," Alexander mumbled.

Selena increased her pace on his cock, pulling him in and out of her mouth. Donovan gripped her hips harder. Inside her mind, Selena saw their combined energies building to a climax. All at once, she felt and saw it collapse. Donovan released inside of her and she came, while Alexander ejaculated and she swallowed his sweet seed.

After a few moments, Donovan removed himself and let her catch her breath. When she looked up, he was smiling. Rhianna sauntered over from the chair and pulled the covers down. She patted the other side of the bed and winked at Selena. Selena looked at both Alexander and Donovan who had devilish grins on their faces. Selena punched Donovan lightly in the chest, knowing the brothers were saying something about the two women. He didn't respond, but pushed her gently toward the bed. After a moment, she slipped in between the covers and Rhianna ran her hand over Selena's breast. Donovan crawled into the bed behind Selena. She could feel he was already hard again.

"I think we might have created a monster," Alexander said to Donovan.

Donavan kissed Selena's neck. "Naw. I think we unleashed one. What do you say brother, you up for another round?"

Alexander's fingers played with Rhianna's nipple.

"Only if the ladies are."

"I never thought you'd ask," the witch asked.

"Guys, I don't know about you, but if it doesn't involve carnivals, circuses, zombies, or jesters, I'm up for just about anything."

All four of them paused and bust into laughter. This was the start of something she was never going to forget. No matter what happened between them, she would always have Donovan. She stretched out her new found power and touched his mind.

I love you.

He smiled in her thoughts while his fingers traced her shoulder blade. *I love you, too. Now and forever.*

Selena nodded as she felt Rhianna's mouth on her breast. Yes, now and forever. That was the way love was supposed to be. And she had it. She wasn't lost anymore, on the contrary, she had been found.

THE END

www.ravynhart.com

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Crymsyn Hart's worlds are filled with luscious vampires, gorgeous gods, quirky witches, and brooding shifters.

Crymsyn is a psychic who, for many years, worked in Boston while attending Emerson College. She graduated with a degree in Creative Writing. When she gets bored, she sneaks away to local cemeteries and coffee shops to find peace and quiet. Crymsyn shares her life with a small zoo including two playful puppies and her hubby, Mark.



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