



Gorgeous Nightmare

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Category: Fantasy

Description: She's chaos. He's obsession.

And something dark wants her back.

Aisling doesn't do love—she barely does reality. Men are easy to use and easier to forget, and nothing ever feels real until she slips into a strange dreamworld she can't escape. The place she is born from, stitched together by shadows that remember her name. That's where he is. The boy with the stormy brown eyes and the voice that makes her feel safe, wanted, and maybe... cursed.

Ronan has dreamed of her for years—this girl he's never met, who comes to him at night like a storm he can't outrun. She's fire and teeth, soft lips and sharp edges. When she crashes into his world—bleeding, broken, and impossibly real—everything changes.

But something is watching them.

Something ancient. Hungry. And furious.

The dreams aren't just dreams.

The bond between them isn't human.

And the closer they get, the more reality begins to fracture.

Now, Aisling is being hunted—not just in sleep, but in every shadow. And Ronan? He'll do whatever it takes to keep her alive... even if it means burning down the dreamworld itself.

Some nightmares don't end when you wake up.

And some love stories were never meant to be safe.

Welcome to the Dreamworld, Gorgeous.

Total Pages (Source): 39

Page 1

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 8:09 am

Aisling

I wake to the sound of feet stomping above me and what I assume to be furniture being dragged across the floor.

I swear this is like the fifth time this week they've done this.

Ahh, good old apartment living—shit's not for the weak.

I grab my phone and roll out of bed before heading to the bathroom.

I'm not looking forward to today. Shit, I don't look forward to most days. Stuck at a mindless job, doing daily mundane tasks I never asked for, and being surrounded by people who I swear don't understand me most of the time. It's not that I'm unlikable, it's just that I've never quite fit in .

The conversations always begin well, but most end in an awkward silence that makes me want to crawl into my skin and never talk to anyone again.

But I always do. I have to.

I start the shower and throw my dark hair up into a messy bun as warm steam begins to fill the room.

I've always loved showers, but the actual process of taking one is a war I'll always have with myself.

The changes from being cold to wet to hot to cold makes my skin crawl just thinking about it, so I take my time.

I eventually get in, soaking up every ounce of hot water until there's nothing left but a cold chill running down my body.

I guess it's time to get out .

Grabbing my fluffy black towel, I wrap myself up and slip on my plague doctor slippers as I hear my phone go off.

Tyler: Skatepark and sesh tonight?

It's almost too easy. Smoke with them, tease them a little, take what I want from them, then leave. They always come back for more.

It's not that I'm the prettiest girl by far, I just don't care about shit. But for whatever reason, these boys seem to love that. I don't ask for much, just a smoke and fuck sesh. Easy for me and them.

Me: Sure.

I'm just a dream to keep in the shadows .

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Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 8:09 am

Ronan

“ F ucking, seriously,” I groan as I reach over, grabbing my phone from my nightstand. The screen tells me it's time to wake up but why did it have to be right when shit was getting good.

This hot goth girl had her lips around my dick and I was about to finish all over her tits, but not any-fucking-more.

Dreaming isn't a normal thing for me, but for the past few weeks, this girl has been finding her way to me... Every. Single. Night.

And, honestly, who am I to complain ?

I get to fuck the girl of my dreams, literally , every night with no strings attached, no emotions. The only thing she leaves me with is being more and more fucking exhausted every morning.

With the way I feel when I wake up, you'd think she was actually there, writhing under me, screaming my name into the darkness.

I tried to tell my best friend Kassius about it but he just laughed me off and told me I was “down bad for that dream pussy.”

My phone vibrates in my hand, and I realize I have a few missed messages. Mostly just from the group chat with Kassius, Tyler, and Cade. They're going to the skatepark tonight, which doesn't sound like a bad idea.

I don't skate, but I do like to chill at the top of the bowl smoking weed, while I watch their dumbasses fall off their boards over and over again. It's pretty entertaining.

Me: See you fuckers tonight.

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Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 8:09 am

Aisling

I step into the gated skate park, adjusting my black tank and mini skirt, as I hear the familiar sound of wheels grinding on metal. I look up and lock eyes with a grinning Tyler, who's stalking toward me.

"Hey, pretty mama!" He shouts from the other side of the bowl.

Time slows, and everything gets quiet. Eyes burrow into me like maggots waiting to feast on my decomposing body. I hate men but Gods can their dicks be useful.

"Tylerrrr!" I squeal excitedly as I drop down to sit on the edge of the drop .

I put my hands on my knees, using my elbows to squeeze my tits together and watch his eyes light up.

Like I said, too easy.

He puts one foot on his board and drops down into the bottom of the bowl before flying back up toward me. He takes a quick pause on the edge next to me, throwing me a wink before dropping in and out a few more times, landing next to me after his final run.

I feel a warm hand on my lower back as he settles down beside me, roughly pulling me into his side. He smells like sweat and weed, a sickly sweet smell that lingers in the air, penetrating everything around us.

I love the smell of Mary Jane, but the added undertones of body odor combined with what I'm sure is some hard drug makes me gag a little.

Tyler nudges me, pulling me out of my thoughts. When my eyes meet his, I catch it instantly—his pupils are blown wide like he's rolling on something.

Suspicious have been confirmed .

He passes me a joint and lighter—his lips turning up in a smirk like he knows what this will get him.

And he's absolutely right.

The night drags on as I watch the boys skate around the park, some of them following behind on their boards. They snap pics and record clips, already thinking about how it'll look on their socials later.

I was honestly surprised to find out that most skaters aren't as lazy as everyone makes them out to be; it just depends on how much they care about what they're doing. If they don't, I've learned not to expect much.

“Hey A, you tryna join me for a walk?” Tyler asks as he grabs my hand roughly, already expecting me to agree. And honestly, why wouldn't I?

I give his hand a light squeeze and look up into his eyes, a glimmer of mischief reflects back. As my tongue runs along my top teeth, I can't help but smirk back at him.

“Yeah, I'd like that a lot.” There's a promise of what's to come laced into my words.

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Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 8:09 am

Aisling

Tyler grabs my arm and pulls me toward the skate park bathroom. My heart pounds like it's going to beat right out of my ribcage. A tingle works its way up my spine as his fingers dig deep into my arm. From fear? Excitement? I'm not sure.

My stomach flips as I start to feel the pain radiating from where he's holding me. He's never grabbed me like this before, and I'm starting to not like where this is going.

This is what I wanted. Right? No... not anymore.

"I...I don't know if this is the best idea right now, I..." My words are swallowed by Tyler's hot mouth on mine as he pulls me into his body, his hands gripping my waist like he needs this, like he needs me.

He grabs my wrist, squeezing so hard I know it's going to bruise later, and drags me through the bathroom doorway.

"Come on, baby. It'll be quick, but I can't promise it will be painless."

His eyes darken as he slams my face against the wall, the force so rough that it leaves my head ringing.

I try to scream, but am stopped by his massive hand covering the bottom half of my face, effectively cutting off my airway. His other hand starts to roam up the back of my thigh. My breath hitches, and my thighs close on instinct.

“Tyler sto-.”

The sound of the bathroom door being opened causes us both to freeze, cutting my pleas short. I glance over and freeze. A stranger from the park. My blood runs cold. My pulse stalls. Even the air feels heavier .

“Ah, Justin, I’m glad you could join me, bro. I was just about to show this little bitch why she shouldn’t be walking around the skate park like this. Practically begging to be fucked, am I right?” Tyler greets the man, snickering like the whole situation is just some sick joke.

I squirm against his grasp, but it’s no use. His body pushes harder into me, forcing me against the damp wall. I’m a big girl, but he’s even bigger– and now that his friend is here, my chances of getting away are slim to none.

I clench my hands into fists so tight my nails dig crescent-shaped moons into my palms, and I’m practically drawing blood.

At least I’ll be high for this.

My breath hitches as I feel his fingers brush against my panties, running trails up and down the seams, his fingers grazing my center.

“Ah, such a dirty little slut. She’s already wet for me, bro.” He pulls his fingers away to show his friend, and a shaky breath escapes my lips .

Of course my stupid fucking body would do this to me.

I hear a dark chuckle from behind me as Tyler leans into my ear, pushing my chest even harder into the bathroom wall just as his large hand forcibly rips my fishnets from my body.

“I’m not done with you yet, whore.” His voice is dark and primal, sending a chill straight to my toes.

He growls and my pulse quickens as I feel him line his cock up with my entrance.

Without warning, he forces himself inside of me. A broken sob escapes my lips, my pain a song only the walls can hear.

The sting of him ripping into me over and over again is something I know will be ingrained in my mind.

He slams my face into the wall, causing me to look at his friend standing in the corner, my vision starts to go white around the edges, and bile rises in my throat.

His friend Justin has his pants around his ankles, cock in one hand and a phone in the other. I start to say something in protest, every scream trying so hard to break free. But my thoughts are cut short by the force of my face bashing into the wall again, the cold cement screeching deeper.

Blood runs down my face, dripping onto my torn tank top as Tyler slides out of me. I release a sigh of relief and instantly realize my mistake.

I try to back away from him, my palms out in protest, but he’s too quick. He grabs the back of my neck and pushes me down to my hands and knees in front of him, my skin breaking against the rough surface. I can feel the sharp pebbles digging their way into the cuts.

Fuck , I’m going to have to clean those later.

“What are you doing?! Tyler! Stop!” I scream, my voice raspy as my heart beats ruthlessly in my chest.

The tears are flowing freely now, and I don't have the strength to hide them anymore.

“Stop crying. You act so fucking innocent like you aren't the one who made me do this!” He shouts, his anger blossoming into something intangible.

I try to shuffle away, but my muscles don't have enough energy in them to get me very far very fast. I feel the heavy weight of Tyler's hands grabbing my waist before he places his shins on my ankles, effectively pinning me down.

“Maybe now you'll stop pretending you don't know what you are,” he growls as he lines himself up behind me.

A feral scream bursts from my lips as I feel his dick tear through my asshole, shattering the last shred of hope I had of getting out of this in one piece.

Time stills, and suddenly I'm not me anymore. I'm not Tyler's or any of the men I've fucked before. I'm empty, something for someone to use and dispose of once they've had their fill. A lifeless body bending to their will. Alive but not.

Just a dream dressed in flesh and bone, beautiful only when I'm breaking beneath them.

The tears don't stop falling down my face, a small puddle forming on the cold tile as he assaults my ass and pussy over and over again. Flipping me around into every position he wants me in.

At some point, his friend joins, as well as a knife that Tyler had stashed somewhere. I can hear the tearing of my panties and my skin as he drags the blade across my flesh, creating bloody reminders of his touch wherever he wants.

By the time he's done, it feels like hours have passed. I can barely feel the bottom

half of my body when he stands over me, covering my stomach in his final release. It's stickiness mixing with the blood and dirt coating my body.

I feel so fucking disgusting.

His eyes darken as he looks down at me.

“My dick looks so good covered in your blood, slut. Too bad it didn't make very good lube. That probably would've helped, huh?” He taunts as he leans down and spits onto my chest, the warm liquid spreading over me like a disease, seeping its way into my being .

A constant reminder that he was there.

Tyler stands abruptly, the movement so quick it causes me to flinch. He stares at me for just a moment before releasing a deep chuckle as he begins to straighten his faded band tee. Turning around, he heads toward the door, his friend following not too far behind.

“Don't worry, I'll be back for you soon, little slut,” he says as the door clicks shut.

I hold my breath, the sudden silence is deafening—my least favorite enemy.

I reach for the edge of the sink and pull myself off the grime-coated floor, my muscles screaming at me in response.

Everything. Fucking. Hurts.

My eyes drift up slowly to the mirror, a reflection I don't recognize staring back at me.

Tattoos of all shapes and sizes cover my body, bruised and scratched through.

Blood and tears coat my face. It's a macabre piece of pain, the layers of dirt and tiny cuts showing a battle I lost but never wanted to be in to begin with.

I grip the edge of the sink so hard I know my knuckles are turning white. I'm trying, searching to find some sort of stability as my world starts to spin. My breath hitches, and I can feel my muscles starting to panic.

No. No. No.

Not now.

Breathe, babe...breathe.

I try to distract myself by fixing my makeup in the mirror, while somehow also trying to avoid my own gaze as much as possible—a goal that's not easily attainable. The tears linger at my lash line, waiting to spill over, but I won't let them. I refuse.

He's not getting any-fucking-thing else from me.

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Ronan

“ W oah, what the fuck?” I say as my hand catches the bathroom door just inches before it slams into my face.

“Oh, shit, I-I’m sorry.”

A pair of red-rimmed deep blue eyes peek around the corner, catching mine, and time itself freezes, like someone clicked pause on a remote or something.

Standing in front of me is the embodiment of darkness itself, a vision I’ve only ever seen in my dreams.

It’s her .

My dream girl.

Except she’s covered in dirt, small cuts cover her body like she was just dragged through a graveyard. Her clothes are torn, small holes revealing crimson-coated gashes. My hands clench at my side as I wonder if any of this was her choice.

“Um, excuse me,” she states flatly, her voice void of any emotion, completely empty.

I don’t say a thing, I just stare at her, unwilling to believe that I’m anything but tucked in my bed right now, dreaming. But I know I’m not.

“Get the fuck out of my way!” She slams her hands into my chest, pushing against

me with what I would assume is all her force by the way she grunts as her hands make contact with me.

Stepping to the side, she loses what little balance she has left. Before she can fall, I reach my hand out and brace for the impact. Her soft tummy presses into my forearm, my hand just barely grazing the top of her hip.

“Don’t. Fucking. Touch me,” she growls at me .

Oh, she’s feisty .

It’s one of those warnings that seeps into your bones and tells you this girl has been through so much more than she would ever let on.

I remove my hand and begin to back up, raising both of them in front of me as a sign of submission. I smirk at her, holding back a chuckle as she rolls her eyes and turns to leave.

I watch her fat ass jiggle beneath that too fucking short skirt as she walks towards the parking lot. Bruised and bloody but still fucking feisty.

Holy fucking hell .

She’s lucky I have enough self-control to stop myself from dragging her by that long red-black hair right to my car, but she’s not ready for me to fight back.

Not yet .

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Aisling

He backs away slowly, palms open in a quiet offering, but something in his eyes tells me he would burn the world if I asked him to.

If it weren't for the fact that I just got fucked in some grimy bathroom, I might have gone home with him.

He's a sight to behold. Standing just a couple of inches taller than me, medium build, and caramel colored skin that looks like a shadow has kissed it. Dark hair falls around his face in lazy, middle-parted waves that brush his ears.

His glasses are slightly crooked on his nose, and his subtle facial hair frames his goofy grin just perfectly. He's exactly the kind of guy that I'd see, smoke some weed with, then fuck. Maybe even keep his number in my phone for a little while, you know, in case I get bored.

Wrong place, wrong time, pretty boy. Story of my fucking life.

I roll my eyes at him as I turn to walk toward my car, and I feel his watchful gaze following me, tracking me, searing itself into my back.

Goosebumps erupt from my neck and arms. I recognize my body's reaction instantly. This isn't just some skater boy at a park watching some pretty girl walking to her car.

This is a predator sizing up its prey.

Not this shit again.

I pull into my driveway, not remembering much of the ride home. It was one of those drives where you arrive at your destination but don't quite recall how you got there, an out-of-body experience without the second body.

My feet try to betray me multiple times as I walk through my doorway. Not having the usual energy to climb the steps ahead of me, I grasp the wall for some stability. The darkness is a calm embrace, wrapping around me like a blanket of safety.

The weight of my body drags heavily as I reach out and switch on the little mushroom lamp I strategically placed inside my front door to avoid having to turn on 'the big light.' We don't use that light in this house. It's 'the devil,' as Bobby Boucher's momma from *The Waterboy* would say.

My exhausted hands start pulling at my dirt and blood-coated clothes. The weight of them finally became too much, too tight, too itchy. I leave them in a small pile in the hallway, knowing I'll pick them up later. Besides, I live alone, so it's not like it'll piss anyone off.

I move down the hallway, flipping on a couple of lamps and LED lights as I go to create the cozy ambiance I love so much.

Maybe it'll help me feel better.

Walking through my room, I grab the oversized Bad Omens tee and a pair of panties I left on my bed before I went out today, and head for the bathroom.

Getting into the shower isn't the same internal struggle as it was less than twelve hours ago. The sound of the running water drowns out the thoughts of him in my head, creating a sanctuary I don't want to leave.

A safe space.

The feeling of freezing cold water brings me crashing back into an even colder reality. For years, I would play with men like they were my toys, taking advantage, but never once being taken advantage of. Then it hits me..

This is my karma.

Holy shit.

I deserve this.

I shut off the water, pull the curtain back, and reach for my fluffy towel.

I'm searching for some sort of comfort, but all I'm met with is the feeling of raw skin meeting fabric.

I don't even look in the mirror. I'm not ready to face the emptiness staring back.

Instead, I hang my towel up, head to my bed, and curl up on my side, letting the warm tears fall from my face and silently soothe myself to sleep.

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Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 8:09 am

Ronan

I can't stop thinking about her, no matter how hard I try. I'll admit, it was much easier when she was only in my dreams. But there she was, as real as me or Cade, running out of the men's bathroom like a bat out of hell.

This absolutely cannot be a coincidence, and I refuse to call it one.

But if it's not a coincidence, then what is it? Because there has to be a reason this hot-as-sin woman keeps showing up everywhere I look. I just need to find out what exactly that reason is.

I head back toward the guys. My thoughts are a tangled mess that I'm trying my best to stuff away, at least until I have more time to sit down and think.

My ears perk up hearing the boy's muted laughter in front of me. Perfect. Exactly the distraction I need.

Some dude I don't recognize is holding out his phone as the other guys are gathered around. It looks like they are watching some sort of video, probably someone bottoming out or face-planting.

"Yo, dude, you gotta come check this out!" Tyler shouts as soon as we lock eyes, and he motions for me to join him and the group.

He wraps his arm over my shoulder, allowing me a better look at the screen as I squeeze in between him and the new guy.

My eyes and ears take a second to catch on to what's laid out in front of me... or rather who is fucking laid out in front of me. The sounds of her screams and pleas start to drown out in comparison to the blood rushing to my head.

Before I even realize what I'm doing, my hand is around the phone, slamming it to the ground. The sound of it cracking resonates in my ears. I lift my black combat boot, stomping on it over and fucking over again until it's nothing but worthless dust.

"What the fuck du-," the unknown prick tries to shout in my ear, but my hand is on his throat before he can finish. I glance over my shoulder, catching eyes with Tyler.

"What. The fuck. Was that?" I ask, but it comes out as a feral growl, ripping straight from my soul.

I release the fucker's throat, pushing him to the ground so hard you can hear his ass hit the concrete. He scrambles to his feet, slipping a couple times before breaking into a run, pushing through the small crowd that has formed around us.

Snapping my head back to Tyler, a low chuckle rumbles out of my chest, and I can feel my eyes grow darker.

"I'm not going to ask you again, Tyler. Who the fuck was that?"

"That wasn't what you asked the first ti- "

He chokes on his words as my fist connects with his face. The people around us start to yell things... things that I can't even hear over the pounding of blood rushing through my ears.

"HOW."

*Punch

“FUCKING.”

*Punch

“DARE.”

*Punch

“YOU.”

*Punch

“TOUCH HER!”

*Punch.

Tyler’s head rolls to the side on that last one before falling to the floor in a bloody, lifeless pile.

Hmm, kind of looks like he took a meat grinder to the face, just with a little less blood. Damn. Forgot I could do that. Oops .

“We don’t hurt women, fucker.”

I kick my boot into his stomach, just for good measure. Let’s hope I broke a rib or two .

I look down and see the scarlet blood draining out of his face like a crimson river before looking at my own crimson-soaked hands, smiling to myself just a little.

I always did like red .

I turn to walk away without throwing him or any of my not-any-fucking-more friends a glance. They run to his side, scrambling to try and figure out how to help him. Good . They can try and pick up the pieces.

I have more important things to worry about right now.

My little nightmare needs me.

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Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 8:09 am

Aisling

I've been stuck in this damn chamber for what feels like an eternity. I've tried falling back asleep, pinching myself, but nothing brings me back. The dream world has always been a bitch for me to navigate and tonight's no exception.

The room I woke up in is, and I'm not going to lie, absolutely stunning.

High vaulted ceiling with exposed wooden beams, the color of night crawls high above me.

The walls are coated in velvet, eerily similar to the color of blood, but still the perfect contrast to the black, wrought iron lanterns and accents that are spread along it.

Black candles are splayed throughout the room, their light dancing off full-length mirrors with dark, intricate frames, making the room feel both inviting and slightly off .

If I didn't know better, I'd think this place was styled by the Gods. I'd wake up here again if it gave me the chance to discover their decorator's secrets.

My eyes fixate on the giant cathedral-style doors in front of me, and I take a deep breath in, grounding myself.

No better time than the present, I guess .

My arms strain against the weight of the solid wood, opening it just enough for my

body to slip through. My hands instinctively wrap around my barely clothed body, a shiver clawing its way down my back.

Even in my dreams, I can't show up in some mysterious dream-like leather, like I'm ready for battle. Nope. Just me and my oversized tee, looking like I sleepwalked straight out of an existential crisis.

I take in the long hallway in front of me, grand arches and winding corridors that have doors lining each side. Might as well gamble with my nightmare—worst case, I wake up.

Best case, I meet my monsters.

I move through the hallway silently. Every door I try to open pushes back against me, as if it holds secrets they don't want me to know about. Until one gives, slow and deliberate, like it's been waiting here for me.

“Hello?” I whisper into the room.

No answer.

I step into the darkness as it drapes over me like a shadowy veil, the outside light disappearing into nothingness as if it were snuffed out completely.

The only glow in the room comes from those same candles, black and low-burning, flickering like they're about to witness something wicked.

My eyes take a couple of seconds to adjust, and then I see it.

Look, I know curiosity killed the cat, but if you were in my shoes, you would investigate too.

My legs step forward, seemingly at their own volition, and a lump begins to form in my throat at the sight before me.

Tyler lies there, naked and tied up like an offering to the Gods.

He's covered in dried blood, and his body is filled with gashes so deep you can see the different layers of tissue beneath his skin.

His arms are tied above his head with ropes winding so tightly around him that you can see the bruises forming on his body.

Symbols are etched into the floor around him, arranged too precisely to be accidental, glistening like fresh ink. Gods, I really hope it's just ink.

This is a dream, this isn't real .

I keep repeating the same mantra in my head like this isn't some fucked up joke my mind is playing on me.

Then I feel it.

The air around me shifts.

It grows colder.

Darker.

More suffocating .

Then I hear it.

“This isn’t a dream, my child. You are here in flesh and bone. Same as that parasite ,” the last word is a hiss that lingers in the air too long, like a snake before it’s going to attack.

“I-I’m sorry, but I don’t understand,” I reply, confusion coating my tongue.

The flames glow brighter, and I notice a small obsidian bowl and a mirror set up between Tyler’s legs. I creep closer and touch the red velvet fabric under him; it feels like butter and is softer than anything I’ve ever felt.

Inside the bowl sits some red crystals, snake skin, a knife, and an assortment of red and black feathers.

No idea what that is about, but... sure, why not, right?

I reach out and grasp a feather between my fingers, and my body goes blank. My head flies back, forcing me to look up at the endless ceiling. My eyes roll back as my arms and legs tingle, a feral screech tearing from my throat .

I have no idea what drugs they gave Tyler, but that sound should’ve woken the dead. My hand reaches for the knife, and I try to resist, but I’m no longer in control of myself.

Before I can comprehend what’s happening, I’m on top of Tyler, straddling his leg. An unknown weight pushes me down, creating a warm friction between my legs.

“You know what you must do, my child. Seduce and destroy. It’s what you were made for.”

The voice is in my head now, a siren’s song entangling me in its trance. Tyler’s eyes begin to open, and the fear takes over almost instantly.

“You fucking bitch!” Tyler roars, trying to get his hands on me, but he can’t move.

He’s trapped.

Oh, how the tables have turned you bastard fuck.

I don’t say a word as I begin to play with my abuser. I don’t understand what’s happening, but the Gods were nice enough to serve him up on a silver platter after all, and I’m not one to ignore a gift. There’s no more second-guessing anymore. Each movement is calculated and cold.

I make quick work of the remaining empty space on his skin, every slash dragging me down deeper and deeper into this fucked up moment. My core tightens, and I can feel my thighs getting wetter with each drop of blood escaping his body.

Am I fucking turned on right now?

Instead of shying away from the feeling, I lean into it. Focusing on the friction between my legs and Tyler’s thigh with every river of blood I create. I can hear his screams turning to wet gurgles.

I hope he chokes on his blood.

My finger traces through the sticky red substance as I continue to ride Tyler’s leg. I slip away again for just a second, my mind becoming a blank mess.

Coming back to reality moments later, my attention is drawn to the bloody symbol now scrawled across Tyler’s chest. A crescent moon atop an upside-down cross. It’s familiar, but I can’t place where I know it from.

My arms rise above my head on their own, hands grasping onto something above me.

I try to resist but whatever has this hold on me is fucking strong.

“Ahhhh!” I screech, trying my best to stop my body and make it listen.

But it doesn’t halt, and honestly, I’m not sure if I want it to.

Every squirm, every movement I make brings me a step closer to my ending as my thighs begin to tighten beneath me. I try to focus on my arms despite my body’s continued assault on Tyler's leg, but it’s no use.

My thighs tremble and tighten. My arms are trying even harder now to force themselves down.

“Fuu-fuuucccckkkkkkkk” I hiss out, my body folding in on itself, the invisible force finally releasing its hold on me.

I scream out as my orgasm washes over me, my vision goes white, and I can see tiny little stars dancing behind my eyelids.

As I come down from the haze, my eyes follow the blood trails across Tyler’s body. That’s when I notice my hands are gripping a knife engraved with symbols along its long curved handle.

A knife that is currently lodged in my abuser’s chest.

What the fuck have I just done.

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Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 8:09 am

Ronan

He touched her .

That son of a bitch touched her— and I let him live?

Fuck.

I should've just finished the job, but she needs me. She may not know it yet, but I'll make sure she understands soon enough.

My perfect little nightmare came into my dreams at just the right time, and I'm not going to let her drift away that easily.

I can still hear the blood pulsing in my ears as I pull into the driveway of my townhome. Grabbing my shit, I run upstairs to my motherboard as I like to call her.

The motherboard is where I play all my games and stream. When I'm not streaming, I may or may not have picked up a couple of tips and tricks on how to keep track of someone's movements.

Look. I never said I was a good guy, okay?

I power her up, a soft thrum of electricity filling the room as the glow from the screens brings me out of the darkness. The last place I saw her was at the skatepark, so that's where I begin my search.

Following her car through town is easier than expected. Just had to hack into a couple of business cameras until I found the right ones. Lucky for me, most people are just dumb enough not to change their passwords when they get new WiFi, which makes this even easier.

Once I have her address, I can feel the weight of unease slowly lift off my shoulders.

She's safer now that I know where she is .

I straighten my back, taking a deep breath. I know she's home for the time being. I'm able to hack into her neighbor's doorbell camera and have the feed live streaming in the background of my phone.

They already have the motion sensor feature set up, so I just rigged it to send an alert to my email, phone, and desktop in case she leaves.

I'm not willing to take any risks when it comes to her.

I strip my shirt and jeans off, making sure to toss them in the hamper before I crawl into bed. My warm skin hits the cool satin sheets, and I'm ready for sleep.

It's time to visit my little nightmare.

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Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 8:09 am

Aisling

I stumble backwards, nearly falling off the velvet-coated slab that holds Tyler's lifeless body. My hands tremble, and my breath escapes my lips in ragged waves.

I need to get the fuck out of here.

I do my best to collect my thoughts and take in my surroundings. From what I can see, there are no other doors in this room, or at least, the darkness isn't allowing me to see them. Instead of stumbling around blindly, I decide to go back the way I came.

Exiting into the hallway, I continue further down, trying more doors as I go. Most are locked, and the ones that do open are empty, so I continue.

It's not until the second-to-last door that I find a room that looks somewhat lived in. I step into a dimly lit dining room, and the smell of freshly baked bread and some kind of meat fills my senses, causing my mouth to water.

My skin warms from the candles filling the room. They come in various shapes and sizes. I've never seen anything like it.

I run my hand along the mahogany table, feeling each groove and crevice. My eyes wander to the food laid out, and my belly rumbles.

Damn, I'm hungry.

I poke a finger into what looks like a steak, then I swipe it through a bowl of mashed

potatoes. Bringing it to my face, I inspect it closely. This is my dream, so it can't be poison... right ?

Without a second thought, I put the mashed goodness between my lips. My eyes go wide and I start to do a little food dance, my body realizing that these are the best mashed potatoes I've ever had before my brain can .

Grabbing a nearby spoon, I bring a heaping spoonful of buttery, garlicky perfection to my mouth. The second it hits my tastebuds, a soft moan escapes my lips. Pure, filthy bliss. It's not just potatoes—It's sin made edible.

“Do that again for me, little nightmare. I like it when you make that sound.” A voice startles me from my food trance, crashing me back into reality.

Or, at least, my dream reality .

I turn my head, following the voice, and freeze.

“H-how are you here?”

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Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 8:09 am

Ronan

“H-how are you here?” Her voice falters, and I can feel the fear she’s trying to hide. It seeps into my bones, drawing me closer to her like a moth to a flame.

“It’s your dream, gorgeous. You tell me.”

The words fall from my lips, smoothing over her panic like a warm blanket. I can see her relaxing, her shoulders slouching just the slightest bit.

I take a small step towards her.

“My love, you have blood all over you. Are you okay? Did someone hurt you?” My voice lowers with each question, a telling reaction to the fury running through my veins.

If someone hurt her, again...

My eye twitches at the thought, fists curling by my sides.

“N-no I, I...” she starts to trail off, getting lost in her memories of something I can’t see.

I rush toward my girl, the fear of scaring her outweighed by something much deeper—my need to protect her. She’s mine. And right now, she needs me more than she needs space.

“Hey, you’re okay. I’m here, gorgeous. Nothing can hurt you now,” I coo to her softly .

Lifting my hand to her face, I cradle her soft cheek in my palm. Touching her sparks something deep and undeniable. She feels like home. Like I’ve always known her, even if I’ve never had her.

“I can’t change the past, but I can be whatever you need me to be right now. You say the words and I’ll take care of it,” I tell her, and it’s true. I would do anything to keep a smile on that pretty face.

She sniffles, and her red-rimmed and glossy eyes rise to meet mine.

“Can you make the bad touches go away?”

Aisling

The words escape my lips like a confession. I don't know what I'm expecting. Shit, I don't even know how he's here. None of this makes sense, and at this point, I don't think it's supposed to.

My thoughts escape me as his strong arms wrap around my waist. He places his forehead to mine and breathes out slowly, his eyes searching mine.

"Are you sure about that, little nightmare? Because once I'm done with you, breathing won't just be hard - it will be impossible."

I almost choke on my spit. I'm sorry, but this is definitely a dream. Never in my life has a man talked to me like that – and by the way my pussy is tingling right now, she likes it too.

I try to speak, but my words come out in stutters.

Yeah, I think he broke my brain.

"Words, princess," he growls, the sound low and restrained like he's holding himself back by a thread. "Dream or not, I won't touch you unless you beg me to."

Goosebumps erupt across my skin, and every rational thought is gone in an instant. To fuck or not to fuck? Yeah... I think we all know where this is going.

"I'm sure."

The moment I speak those words, I feel the energy in the air shift – his energy shift. A shiver blooms beneath my skin as his fingers lazily glide across my jawline. He begins to drag them down my throat, following his own movements as carefully as a surgeon would focus on a patient.

My pussy throbs as he traces patterns across my collar bone and down my cleavage. He pushes my shirt up, revealing the luna moth tattoo on my stomach, and I look up at him, my throat filled with stones. His eyes search mine, and in that moment, I've never needed someone's touch more in my life.

He grabs my hips, causing my heart to skip a beat, before lifting me onto the table. My arms move on their own volition as his lips crash into mine.

My fingers find his thick, messy hair, gripping him like I've always belonged here. Reality slips away the moment his rough hands find my thighs.

I pull back, just enough to look at him. To see him. Every sharp line of his jaw, the contrast of his caramel skin against the paleness of mine. He's the dark to my light, the storm to my quiet. And I want to remember him like this, right before I fall.

Without giving me even a second more, he reaches behind me, grabbing something from the table. My pulse quickens as I take in the giant candlestick he's holding. It's one of the few that hasn't been lit yet.

He falls to his knees before me, like he's meant to be there. His hand finds my thigh again, grounding me while everything else spirals.

“Please,” I breathe, the word barely a whisper, but he catches it.

Of course he does.

He doesn't look up at me, he doesn't stop, but I can see the corner of his mouth tilt up into a smirk, showing me something primal within him.

He's teasing me.

I allow myself to give in to this moment as my head falls back, mouth opening ever so slightly. I focus on every movement he makes, memorizing every breath and every brush of his fingers. My breath catches when I feel his hand glide between my thighs, claiming what's already his.

The heat from his hand spreads like fire, igniting a slow burn between my thighs. I can feel the dampness gathering, and I know he feels it too. My cheeks burn with the awareness of it all, just as something cold brushes against the curve of my leg .

The candlestick.

He's not thinking about...

There's absolutely no way that would even...

My thoughts snap back into reality when his fingers pull at the thin piece of fabric covering my clit, moving it to the side, allowing him full access to me.

"Such a pretty pussy, princess," he groans as he glides his finger between my folds. "And you're already so wet for me."

I shiver, his words wrapping around me like a noose. No one has ever talked to me like that, let alone my pussy. My hips jerk towards him, begging for more.

His fingers continue to graze the sensitive mound in a slow, increasing glide before he presses two fingers between my lips, spreading them open. He begins to work my

clit, gathering my wetness before he breaches my cunt, filling me with the heat of his fingers.

My back arches as he starts to open me up, his fingers moving in slow, deliberate strokes that have stars dancing on the edge of my vision. I let out a feral cry, getting lost in the moment, as he drags the candle down to my glistening folds.

I tilt my head up the smallest bit, and it's as if everything slows. He's hovering at my entrance, on the edge of pressing the candle into me, wick first, his eyes low and hooded.

He's not looking at me, he's looking at my pussy like it's his last meal and his sweet addiction.

Dark hair falls into his face, his lips parted, and his chest rising fast.

My sweet boy... he's coming undone.

He lets out a ragged exhale as he burrows the candle deep into me. The stretch has me gasping, its thickness filling me to the brim. My breathing becomes uneven and desperate as he ruins me with every thrust he gives.

“You’re doing so good for me, gorgeous. Just like that,” he groans. “Think I can make it to the bottom?”

A garbled moan escapes my lips as he pushes into me even deeper. He has to be insane; that thing was at least twelve inches long. There's no fucking wa... and just like that I tople over the edge .

"Fuuuuuuuuucccccckkkkk," I let out a scream as an orgasm bursts through me.

Shockwaves of ecstasy rolling through me until I'm a shuddering, whimpering mess.
I can hear what sounds like water dripping onto the floor.

Did I just squirt?

"You did such a good job for me, gorgeous," he chuckles as he slowly pulls the candle out of me. "Even turned you into my own personal splash zone."

A giggle bursts through my lips. How did this man just make me see the Gods, then cause a laughing fit right after?

He's crawling under my skin, carving out a space I'll never want to fill with anyone else.

And I welcome every second of it.

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Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 8:09 am

Ronan

Holy fuck that was the hottest shit I've ever seen. It takes a second for my brain to snap back into reality before I gently remove the candle from her.

It's glistening under the light, drenched in her sweet juices. Her slickness runs along the wax like honey spun in sin, and I have to stop myself from licking it clean right then and there. I have plans for it later.

Grabbing a nearby napkin and glass of water, I soak the towel before moving between her legs. She watches me intently, never breaking her gaze. I reach forward to clean her off and wipe away any remnants of our shared moment .

She looks ethereal like this, freshly fucked and blissed out like a walking goddess.

I wish I could keep her like this forever.

I reach my hand out toward her face, but my body is jerked back by an unseen force, causing me to scream out in pain.

The dream world I've become so used to fades from around me, like I'm falling but still weightless.

Like I'm floating. The breath escapes my lungs as I crash ass first into something soft and familiar. My bed.

Fuck .

“Bro! Open up! You gotta check this shit out!”

The sound of heavy pounding on my bedroom door pulls me back into reality. A place I don’t even want to fucking be right now.

I toss the covers off my body and storm over, yanking it open with a force that shakes the walls.

“What!” I bark at a drunk Kassius.

He stumbles backwards, taken off guard by my bare dick in his peripheral.

He laughs, almost toppling over.

“Bro! You could have at least put some pants on first.”

He blocks his eyes with his hands dramatically as if he hasn’t practically grown up with me and seen my dick on more than one occasion.

I wouldn’t consider myself gay, but we’ve shared women before. Yet this man is seriously acting like he’s never seen a pierced dick before.

I gasp, acting offended.

“What are you trying to say? You don’t like this?”

I shake my hips at him, causing my dick to swing side to side and slap my thighs. I can’t even contain my seriousness as we both almost immediately fall to the floor in a fit of laughter.

Kassius has been my best friend since we were eight years old. After his parents died,

he moved in, and from that moment on, we were inseparable. At this point, he's more like a brother than a friend. Which means by default, he got my dad, too .

We don't talk about Dad. Too much fucked up shit happened in that house and dragging it back up never did us any good. After we got out, we made a pact to move on and forget it. Maybe it's not the healthiest coping mechanism, but it's the only thing that ever worked for us.

Our laughter fades, and I rise to my feet before motioning him to follow me into my room.

“What did you want to show me, Kay?” I ask as he trails in behind me.

I grab the shorts hanging off the edge of my bed and pull them on.

Pulling his phone out of his pocket, he unlocks it and scrolls through a couple of things before turning it around to show me. It's a post from Tyler's mom's Facebook account showing a picture of Tyler in a hospital bed, both eyes swollen and bruises covering his face.

It's captioned, ‘My baby boy will be stuck in the hospital for at least a month. Send us love and prayers as we continue to try and find his abusers,’ with the link to a GoFundMe account under it .

I lock eyes with Kassius, barely able to contain myself as we burst out into another fit of laughter.

“You've got to be fucking kidding me,” I groan in disbelief. “His dad is literally the head of some big fucking tech company. As if he didn't already have money and sympathy. What a fucking joke.”

“Hey, at least we won’t have to see him around for a while, though. You can save all your ass kicking energy until then,” Kassius quips back, punching the air like a trained MMA fighter.

I chuckle at his remark and turn toward my bed. Where the hell is my phone ? I flip the comforter back and freeze.

There it is.

That same fucking candle, sitting there like it’s been waiting for me. My brows knit together, confusion flashing across my face as a quiet, “What the fuck?” escapes my lips.

How the fuck is this here.

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 8:09 am

Aisling

I jolt upright as my alarm screams into the silence. I slap it off, accidentally causing my phone to fall to the floor with a dull thud.

Perfect.

Kicking the covers off, I drag myself out of bed, already regretting every life choice I've made that's led me to working mornings. Still...the morning shifts have a steady flow, familiar faces, and a little chaos. But Gods, it doesn't make waking up before the sun any less soul-crushing.

I go through the normal motions of getting ready for work. I brush my teeth, then throw on some black eyeliner and lipstick. Simple but a statement. The bruises Tyler left are still faint on my skin, so I dab on a bit of concealer and press in powder, like I'm painting over a crime scene.

After throwing on some fishnets, ripped boyfriend jeans, and my Potion Press tee, I wrangle my reddish black hair into a couple of braids. A pair of worn-in Doc Martens wait by the door, and I lace them up like armor.

My mini coffin purse holds my essentials, a weed vape, a nic vape, wallet, and keys. I double-check it's there just out of habit before sliding my phone into my back pocket and stepping out.

The walk to The Potion Press is short, but it's just long enough for my thoughts to drag me back to last night's dream. A smile crosses my lips, my cheeks growing hot

as I recall the mess I made.

Stop it, A! Now is not the time.

I open the door to the shop and step inside. The smell of coffee and incense assaults my nose, easily triggering me to fall right into work mode.

“Good morningggg, A,” Ash’s singsong voice carries through the shop like a siren, always ready to bring men to their demise.

“Good morning, my love!” I reply cheerfully before making my way to her.

“Did night shift leave us high and dry this morning?” I raise my eyebrows at her questioningly.

Stepping behind the counter, I reach across her to grab my uniform, a black apron with a cauldron bubbling out coffee.

“Actually, I closed last night, so we should be all good,” she replies with a yawn, a tell-tale sign she was up playing video games again.

“Oh, you poor thing. I’ll get the espresso machine warmed up and make your favorite,” I respond, yawning myself.

“You too, babe?” Ash questions, looking me up and down. “You look like the walking dead,” she giggles .

“Wow, thanks,” I quip back, sticking my tongue out.

“Anytime, love,” she states before sashaying away.

What a drama queen.

I've known Ash since we were teenagers. She's always had an affinity for anything weird and spooky. She's been doing rituals for as long as I can remember, making deals with something far more powerful than herself.

That's why she opened this shop to begin with. She was always convinced she could heal someone with divine powers from the universe or something like that. And this is a way for her to help teach others about that.

I smile to myself. She's a piece of work, some would call her crazy, but I just call her my best friend.

We spend the next twenty minutes getting the shop ready to open. By seven, there's already a line wrapped around the corner - an army of sleep-deprived souls desperate for their dirty bean water fix.

I focus on the coffee and pastry side of things, while Ash manages the mystics. An assortment of various crystals, oils, and herbs that we carry and their promises of healing or hexing.

It's not long before the store falls back into its usual rhythm, a handful of customers trickling in every hour. I start prepping a fresh press of espresso, the steady hiss of the machine filling the silence, when the bell above the door chimes.

My eyes shoot up.

"Welcome in," I say before spotting him.

The fucking guy that made me turn into a waterfall with a candlestick.

No. Fucking. Way.

My body moves before my brain can catch up, my knees slamming into the floor as my arms flail out, espresso powder flying in every direction.

Fuck.

I put my fingers to my forehead, letting out a slow breath as I survey the mess. When my gaze shifts to the counter, my breath catches. Two dark chocolate eyes are locked onto mine.

“You good down there?” he chuckles, leaning over the counter, assessing the damage he so obviously caused.

I stare up at him, brows furrowed.

“Yeah, all good. I just uh... I tripped on the mat, no biggie.” I try to brush it off casually, but I know he’s not falling for any of it.

“Mhmm, sure, got it. Do you need any help?” He looks between me and the layer of coffee grounds covering the counters and floor.

“No-no, I’m good, but thanks though,” I say as I rise to my feet. “What can I get you?”

“Well, I was gonna get some coffee, but I don’t think you have much left at the moment,” he says, eyeing the mess with a smirk.

“So I’ll take an almond croissant for myself, and one of those bacon croissant sandwiches for the drunkard at home,” he says with a grin, before handing me a twenty-dollar bill.

“Oh, you have a girlfriend,” I blurt out before I can stop myself.

He bursts out into laughter, rubbing the back of his neck with a sheepish grin.

“More like an asshole brother who wakes me up at three am to spill the latest bar drama. But, yeah, pretty much the same thing.”

I giggle at that, grabbing his order from the pastry case and placing it carefully into a paper bag.

“Well, hopefully these help both of you,” I say, sliding the croissant toward him before turning to pop the sandwich in the mini oven.

I set the timer, and as the oven door closes, I catch his reflection in the glass, his gaze lingering on me.

He’s watching me again.

It’s that same look he gave me before he made me see the Gods last night. I swear I catch a flicker of recognition in his gaze, like he knows what I’m thinking.

The ding from the oven pulls me from my thoughts. I grab the tongs and slide the sandwich into a bag.

Turning around, I set the bag on the counter before giving him his total and cashing him out. He’s no longer looking at me like he wants to devour me, but I can still feel something lingering in the air.

He knows . He has to.

Ronan

My girl is so cute when she's flustered. I can tell she's going over the events of last night in her brain. I don't blame her, I haven't been able to stop thinking about it myself.

I'm just saying that candle dream was a chef's kiss.

After handing her a twenty and telling her to keep the change, I spot her face dropping just the smallest bit. Aw, she doesn't want me to leave. How precious. She'll find out soon enough what the object of my desire is. But until then, I might as well keep her guessing.

"Thanks for the sweets, gorgeous. "

Her face falters a bit more, brows drawing together in confusion. I could get used to that little nose crinkle she's doing, too.

"I'll have to stop by more often now that I know you're here," I say with a wink, pushing the hair out of my face.

"Have a good day!" She practically sings to me, making my heart flutter.

My Gods, this woman has no idea what she's doing to me .

I send her a quick wave before grabbing the door, the bell jingling above me, signaling my exit.

The walk home is a quick one, that's why I had originally picked The Potion Press. That and I refuse to spend my money at those big-name corporations that take advantage of their workers. Support small businesses, or whatever they say.

Look, just because I'm a man, doesn't mean I can't be progressive.

Once I'm home again, I head to my room and boot up my computer. I waste no time finding out everything humanly possible about my gorgeous nightmare.

She grew up in foster care, her parents are unknown, and it seemed like she got passed around a lot, never finding a forever home. I don't know much about the system, but from what I've heard, I can't imagine she had an easy time.

From what I can see, she also never went to college. Only high school, working odd jobs here and there until she graduated and ended up getting her own apartment shortly after.

It's surprising the things people share about themselves on social media. It only took me about two hours to find everything I needed, including her phone number.

Once it's saved in my phone, I shoot off a quick text to her letting her know she's forever stuck in my web now.

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Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 8:09 am

Unknown

Letting out a sigh, I come out of my trance. I only carry enough power to watch her for a short time.

My Aisling.

God's demons have been busy destroying all of my children, the ones I worked so hard to bring to life. But they haven't found her.

She's been hiding in the shadows, avoiding monsters her world couldn't even begin to fathom. Going about her life unknowingly, completely oblivious of the power that runs deep within her veins .

I've spent my life trying to find the perfect underling. A soul dark enough, hurt enough, to take my place once He figures out how to banish me for good. You see, men don't like me much.

I'm like a parasite, finding my way under their skin. It begins in their dreams. I come to them, the perfect vision of beauty, of power, of desire. Then I make a home there in their mind. Taking more and more of them every night.

They become addicted, feral even. It's quite entertaining, really. You wouldn't believe the number of men that I've brought to their death, the last words they utter being "Thank you, goddess." It makes me ravenous just thinking about it.

I release a soft sigh, the memories of each soul I've brought to its demise awakening

a heat between my legs.

Lying my head back on the velvet sofa, I let my fingers roam down my neck. I focus on the feeling of them, my sharp claws delicately scratching down to my breasts .

Bringing my other hand to the top of my corset, I reach underneath the boning, sliding my breasts free.

“Velora, come,” I order, my words cutting through the silence.

The sound of a large door opening follows moments after, small steps bringing my attention to the spot in front of me.

“You called for me, mistress?” She questions, stepping in front of the fire’s warm glow.

My eyes roam her body, taking in her light skin, almost every inch covered in dark ink with small pops of a bluish glow bringing attention to the details.

I continue to palm my large breasts, my fingers teasing and circling until my nipples harden into tight, aching peaks. She’s still too far away.

“I said come ,” I snap, causing her to rush to my side.

“I-I’m sorry, mistress. I- ”

“Mouth,” I interrupt her, pushing my tits together.

An invitation and an order. She doesn’t hesitate before latching her mouth onto my nipple, sucking and nibbling feverishly.

I let out a soft moan, bringing my hands to my thighs and gathering my dress into my palms. I push my hips up slightly, pulling the fabric over my ass. Velora is still ravishing my breasts, moving between the two, licking and sucking like it's her last meal.

I let out a strangled breath, my legs falling apart as I move my fingers to my warm center and begin to apply pressure, but I'm quickly swatted away by my sub's eager hands.

"Please, allow me, mistress," she whispers before pushing the thin lace to the side and dipping her fingers between my folds.

She gathers my wetness between her digits before moving upwards, stimulating my sensitive nub.

"Ohhh, fucckkkkk," I whimper as she picks up speed, her teeth still rolling my nipple between them, flicking her tongue every few seconds .

"More," I order, and she quickly rises to stand, dropping her short black satin dress to the floor, revealing her overflowing breasts to me.

My mouth practically waters as she drops to her knees between my spread legs. Taking one of her tits in her hands, she places it strategically under her mouth before letting a trail of spit fall onto it.

My breath hitches as she brings her nipple to my swollen center, teasing me with her softness. I let out a pleased sigh, taking in the feeling of her between my thighs.

She begins using her nipple to rub small circles around my clit, stimulating me until I'm a writhing mess under her.

Gods, I love women.

My core starts to clench, a heat rising from my insides that's uncontrollable. She continues to work my pussy until I explode around her, pleasure rolling out of me in waves.

I can hear the sound of my release dripping off of her onto the floor. One thing about demons and beings of that nature, we have a lot more to provide when the time comes. My pleasure is covering her, and she's practically sparkling from it.

"Thank you, mistress," she breathes out, a rosy color spreading across her cheeks.

What a beautiful sight.

My pussy aches for more attention but there's no time to continue playing. I sit up, bringing my palm up to caress her face as she softly nuzzles into it.

"You did so good for me, pet. Why don't you go wash up and get some food? I have more work to complete, but you made it so much easier for me."

Her eyes shine up at me, adoration covering her face.

What a precious thing.

It's as easy as a few sweet words, and you have them practically eating out of the palm of your hand. She rises to her feet, gathering her clothes in her arms before making her way out of the room .

I turn back to my altar, adjusting my skirt and pushing my breasts back into their rightful place. I take a deep breath and walk towards it.

Time for my darling daughter to find out who's really in control here.

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 8:09 am

Aisling

unknown: Breakfast is so much sweeter when you're the one serving it to me.

My lips spread into a thin line as I read the text over and over again, making my way up to my condo. I'm sorry but what creepy ass motherfucker decided he was going to cross all the fucking boundaries!

I can feel my ears getting hot as I continue to look down at the message going over every weirdo that stopped by today. Unfortunately for me, we had a handful of them. Great.

I block the number and delete the message before I make my way into my apartment. I slide the deadbolt into place and turn on my little mushroom lamp again. I'm home, I'm safe.

I go through my nightly tasks, making sure to set out the items I would need for work the following day, always trying to make tomorrow-me's life easier.

After making myself some dino nuggies, I head to my bedroom and turn on some ghost hunting on YouTube. After I finish, I feel sleep start to take over my body. The darkness is a welcome comfort as I head into the dream world.

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 8:09 am

Ronan

My little demon left me on read. I can't say I'm surprised about it. What was she supposed to say, "oh yes big daddy, I made sure to grab the one with the most cream for you" or some shit . Absolutely not. Not my girl... at least not yet.

Once I realized she wasn't going to entertain the unknown messenger, I decided to stream for a couple of hours. After switching between getting my ass kicked and kicking ass in different lobbies, I close out the game for the night.

I reach over to place my headset and controller on their stand and notice the candle from my dream. I wrap my fingers around the smooth wax, still coated in her, before grabbing a nearby lighter.

Flicking the Zippo open, I wave the flame under the base of it a couple of times. I spot a nearby almost burned-through candle and push the one I'm holding to the bottom, creating a makeshift candle holder. Good enough .

I light the lighter again, bringing it to the wick. It takes a couple of seconds before the flame catches, bathing the room in a warm ambience. I breathe in deeply and smell her in the air. Her sweet musk is a welcome invasion of my senses.

A sharp pain in the back of my neck causes my hand to fly to it.

"What the-"

My fingers run over the area. I don't feel anything suspicious. Weird. Maybe I pulled

it or something.

Stripping my pants off, I lay in bed, thoughts of her flooding my mind. The smell of her takes me back to that night, her eyes rolled back in ecstasy, thick thighs shaking around me. A dream I never wanted to wake up from.

I lay back, resting my head on my arms above me. Thoughts of her carry me to the darkness, surrounding me and dragging me deeper down into my dreams. Until it all goes black.

Aisling

I wake up, gasping for air, my lungs burning as they try to catch up to my brain.

My eyes crack open, and I see familiar blood red walls surrounding me.

I push myself into a sitting position and notice a light sound swirling around the room.

Curious, I rise to my feet as my eyes adjust to the darkness.

I stand in astonishment at the sight before me. Hundreds, if not thousands, of luna moths circle the room. The eerie sound of their flapping wings linger in the walls around me. Their light green color is a stark contrast against the crimson room.

Looking up, they dance around me, their wings brushing my body as they circle. Placing my arms out in front of me, I hold my breath. A single moth flies toward my open palms, its silky wings beating in my hands. So small and fragile, but so beautiful.

A tear slides down my face as I appreciate this ethereal moment. More of the moon-winged creatures lay their weight on me. Grounding me. These little misunderstood night butterflies, a symbol for the freaks, the ones who find their spark even when the darkness is trying to suffocate them.

My heart races, and I take in a small breath, careful not to disturb the little dream flyers.

“Charming little monsters, aren’t they?” A smooth voice echoes around me. The words speak to me like a siren’s call.

A shadowy figure emerges from the darkness, draped in lace and leather. Wielding her power like a sword.

Her body is wrapped tightly in a corset, showing off her curves. Dark hair falls to her shoulders, a similar color to mine. Piercing yellow eyes that look as if they were dipped in gold stare back at me .

“They’re enchanting,” I reply shakily.

My voice gives away how unsure I am of the stranger in front of me.

“Yes, you could say that, my child. I assume you’re going to ask where you are, correct?” She responds sharply, dismissing my comment.

Before I can respond, she raises her hand in front of her, pointing towards me in a come-hither motion. Taking a step forward, the sound of wood scraping across the marble floors reverberates in my ears.

My skin pebbles at the sound, and I bite my teeth together in reaction. The back of my knees are taken out by a cold, hard force, causing me to fall back into a sitting position. My ass hits a chair, hard, as the breath is taken out of my lungs.

“Sit,” the woman says as she takes a few steps toward me.

She looks weightless, like she’s floating rather than walking, maybe gliding? I don’t fucking know, either way it’s weird as shit .

“A long time ago, I was created alongside another, we were made of the same fibers.

One soul split into two, or so they had convinced me.”

Her hands begin to clench at her sides, grabbing and releasing her dress, a nervous tick, from the looks of it.

Her face twists as she continues. “I was under the assumption that because we were born equal, we were meant to be treated equally . But I was so very wrong,” she sighs deeply, her voice drawing me in deeper with every word.

“When I would try to explain my concern to them, I was met with cold nights, alone. They would beat me until I could barely stand. Leaving me in puddles of my own blood and bruised bones.”

Her voice shakes, and her anger shows. Small cracks in her strength are breaking through.

“Yeah, great story. Why should I give a fuck?” I say back.

I don’t know who this lady is, but I can feel my body retracting, like she’s a poison I shouldn’t be messing with.

“Stupid girl!” She spits back at me, taking a step toward me. “You know nothing of the powers that hold your pathetic world together.” Her voice pulsing with power.

“It’s become consumed with nothing but evil and heartache. Not every happy beginning has a happy ending, sometimes its only purpose is to chew you up and spit you out. Leaving you gasping for breath once it’s consumed its fill of you.” Her voice is smooth and smoky, finding its way under my skin.

Is she seriously trying to use some devil powers on me or some shit?

I try to stand, but a heavy weight forces me back down before I make it a couple of inches.

“You are the outcome of their mistakes. I was forced to fill the world with my offspring. To create an army of servants that will do my bidding. However, someone has been removing them from this world one by one. But you are different, my precious little sin. You were created with a being of light, allowing you to hide from this death bringer,” she chuckles mischievously.

I shift uncomfortably in my seat, digesting each word slowly.

“Sooo... you’re saying I’m your daughter?” I let out a pompous laugh. “There’s absolutely no fucking way! You’re batshit crazy!” I screech back at her, straining against my invisible restraints.

She takes another step toward me, not backing down. “Ah, my darling disappointment. What a lovely mess you’re making of my legacy.”

“You need to kill that boy,” she states blandly, as if she’s telling me what she’s having for dinner that night.

“Yep. Absolutely fucking insane,” I affirm, more to myself than to her. “I’m not killing anyone. Sorry, but that’s not really my thing. You got the wrong ‘little sin’ or whatever the fuck you tried to call me,” I fire back, completely exhausted by this conversation.

My brain snaps back into place almost immediately. Fucking sleep..duh .

Closing my eyes, I breathe in deeply, calming my nervous system. I release an exhale and can feel the air around me becoming cooler, a warmth growing on the top of my head.

My body suddenly feels as if it's dropping through the chair, falling through dimensions. And then it all goes black.

Lilith

It seems as if my half-shadow has unlocked her powers. Can't have her figuring that out too quickly, now, can we?

Another flick of my wrist, and my magic surrounds me, tendrils of smoke wrapping around my body. Within seconds, my skin vessel is transported to another sector of the dream realm. I need to find that disgusting human .

"A?" I hear him call out into the void. He's searching for her. How sweet .

"Ronan, is that you?" I respond in a perfect mockery of my daughter's panicked voice .

Too easy.

"Stay right there, gorgeous. I got you." The smell of his panic permeates the room like a delicious perfume.

A quick snap of my wrist and my magic masks my body, modifying my vessel to match that of my insolent offspring.

"I'm right here, baby."

He moves into my peripheral vision. An image of beauty and distress rolled into one.

Dark hair falls messily in front of his concerned eyes. Warm, caramel skin covered in

a black tee, showing off his muscles as he breathes in and out deeply, each movement bringing attention to his structured stomach. A godlike human. No wonder she's enraptured by him.

I fall into him, sobbing, playing my part perfectly.

"She's after me, Ronan! I'm scared!" I cry out through the tears .

"Who's after you, gorgeous? They can't get you, I'm right here."

He scrambles to hold my crumbling form in his arms, supporting my weight as we melt into the floor.

I look up into his eyes, searching. "My mother." I breathe out softly.

Ronan

She's falling apart in my arms, and I have no idea how to help.

Her mother? What does her mother have to do with any of this?

I looked into her life, rather deeply if I do say so myself, and there was not one single mention of her biological family.

Her parents were never in the picture. Why is this happening now?

"Baby girl, I need you to breathe. Words, gorgeous."

She's looking up at me with such vulnerability, it's hard not to fall apart myself. But I hold it together for her.

Reaching up, I wipe a tear from her cheek, and her sniffles begin to slow. She takes a deep breath in and grabs my arm.

"My mom.. Sh-she's not human. She's b-back and she said she needs me to continue her legacy.

She said that she's a dream walker, a goddess, Lilith.

I don't know what any of this means. I'm so confused," she screeches out between sobs.

“The only op-options she gave me were to take the life of someone I care about.” She chokes out, the tears flowing freely now.

Like waterfalls straight from her eyes. “Or to k-kill myself,” she says, breaking down again.

She reaches behind her, grabbing a mess of crumpled foliage.

“She says a handful of these berries will be enough to stop my heart from beating.” She looks up at me blankly as if she’s in some sort of trance.

I grab her face between my palms. She can’t be thinking that she’s going to do this to herself. I won’t fucking allow it.

She’s mine .

“No. A, whatever you’re thinking, you need to stop right now. I’m going to find a way to get you out of this, I don’t care what I have to do, but I’m not. Fucking. Losing you.” The words fall out of my mouth, a promise to her I will not go back on.

I don’t care what I have to do. I would rather lay myself out on a silver platter and be served to the old Gods like their next offering than to let her have to go through one more second of pain. My little nightmare will always be worth so much more than she will ever believe.

I no longer have the time to help her see this. None of this makes sense, but nothing with her has ever been that easy. And I’m just realizing that maybe it’s not supposed to be.

I’m not supposed to understand how someone like her chose someone like me.

How she makes every room light up and darken at the same time, her macabre personality melting into the walls and filling every inch with her presence.

She's indescribable, someone I would lay my life down for without an inch of hesitation.

"I'll take care of you, I promise, baby."

The words float around the room. The weight of my words lay heavy on me as I notice her form dissolve into the darkness. Her body drifts away like candle smoke, too delicate to chase.

My little nightmare.

I spend the next few hours stuck in the dream world, going over my new plan. Aisling's mom can't have her, so I'm going to sacrifice myself. Can't have my little candlelight snuffed out just yet.

I manage to get the weird bundle of black berries and bell-shaped flowers back to the real world.

I spend hours dealing with my body, feeling like I'm waking up from an all-night bender. The nausea, vertigo, and dissociation I feel leave me unsure if I was dreaming or dying, but turns out, it's neither.

I'm able to find more about the mysterious berries, too. They're called belladonna, a plant in the nightshade family historically used for its medicinal properties and, unfortunately, as a poison. A handful of them, and I'll be getting sent straight to death's door .

I decide quickly after that I can't waste another moment before I see my little

nightmare again.

Making my way to the coffee shop, I go over everything that's happened over the last few days. I'm still unsure of whether dream Aisling and real-life her are one and the same, but I won't, even for a second, risk my chances if they are.

The door dings, signaling my arrival at The Potion Press. I'm instantly greeted by the most beautiful deep blue eyes, like staring into the deepest depths of the Mariana Trench. My stomach shifts, and I feel warmth spreading across my body as I match her smile.

Mine.

"Ronan! I'm so happy you're here!" Scrambling, she walks around the counter before straightening her flowy mushroom-patterned skirt.

"I had to come see my favorite girl," I quip back, causing a pinkish red color to blossom across her cheeks.

She pauses and looks around cautiously, as if looking for prying ears.

"I actually had a favor I need to ask of you," she responds sheepishly.

I rub the pad of my thumb against her cheek in a calming motion.

"Whatever you need, little candlelight. I'll take care of it." I respond without hesitation.

I would crack my ribs open, pull my heart out, and gift it to her in my dying hands if she requested it.

“I’ve been having a really hard time sleeping lately. I’m not sure what’s happening but there’s just some weird shit going on that I don’t think I can really explain to you right now. And I just don’t want to be there tonight,” she whispers to me, careful of any customers who might overhear.

I grab her hand and lean down to her ear. “What part of ‘whatever you need, I’ll take care of it did you not understand, my love?’” I growl protectively.

“I’ll pick you up when you get off work, and we can chill at my place tonight. See you at three, gorgeous.”

Shooting her a quick wink and a small smirk, I turn and head for the exit. I can smell her excitement as she watches me leave, waving goodbye shyly.

Aisling

The end of my shift comes quicker than normal. My palms have been sweating, and my body has been buzzing since Ronan left. I swear that man is like a drug to me. When he's not around, my body starts having withdrawals. Seriously, it's not normal.

There's a certain calmness about him. Like he can handle anything this world throws at him, and dear Gods, he is gonna look good while doing it. My thighs tighten, heat curling up to my center. Fuck. Those were just dreams, Aisling.

Here I am, drool pooling out of my mouth for a man that I barely just met because I somehow shared the most intimate moments I've ever shared with anyone.

..in a dream. Yeah, that cloaked bitch's craziness definitely wore off on me.

Someone grab the straitjacket and grippy socks because I'm heading straight to a white-walled castle. Fuck .

The bell to the store tinkles, sending a chill straight through my spine and down to my toes. He's here. I don't even have to turn around to know he is, I can feel him.

I reach under the counter, grabbing my Hydro Flask and coffin purse.

"Hey, gorgeous, you ready?" His voice curls around me, causing my knees to go weak. I try to play it off cool, but trip over every word that tumbles out of my mouth. "Y-yeah, a-all good, Sir,"

Sir . Are you fucking kidding me?!

I kept telling someone to grab the straitjacket, but no one wanted to listen, now we all have to deal with my cringey ass.

A slight chuckle escapes his lips. "Ah, we're going formal?" He shrugs, "I can do that. Your chariot awaits, madam." He bows dramatically, practically hitting the floor when he dips.

A fucking goof ball and he's hot? There's no way he's real.

I link my arm inside his awaiting form, and we step out onto the pavement. A shiver spreads throughout my body, like we're being watched, and I really don't like it. I feel his rough hands slide into mine, and I let out a bated breath. I hope he feels it too.

We walk quietly, hand in hand, as clouds hang overhead, a constant in this town. My skin grows sticky from the condensation floating in the air as I find myself moving into Ronan's side. A desperate plea for warmth as the cold seeps into my bones.

"Cold, little one?" He asks, pulling me into him and tucking me beneath his coat like I belong there, like I've always belonged there.

I squeak, caught off guard, and he chuckles. That sound. I'd search every world to hear it again if I had to .

His building looms in the distance. Older, rough around the edges. Just like him. The brick looms ahead of us, slick with rain. Every step we take echoes through the silent streets like we don't quite belong here.

He unlocks the front door and leads me up the cracked concrete stairs, each step creaking under our weight. The moment we reach his apartment, he pauses, his body

curling into mine, his head dipping low to my ear.

He presses himself into me, and I can feel the heat pulsing between us.

“I don’t care what shadows haunt you,” he murmurs, his voice gravelly. “Let them come. I’ve already made space for your monsters next to mine.”

A whimper escapes my lips as the feeling of safety wraps around me. An undeniable feeling that leaves my heart pounding in my ribs.

He pulls away, too fucking quickly, before sliding the key in the door handle .

“Get inside, little one. You look like you just got fucked.” He lets out a low chuckle as he pushes the door open, letting me go through first.

A true gentleman .

Ronan

A isling shuffles around my apartment like she owns the place. And I think a sick, selfish part of me wants her to. She's like a tornado, all chaos, kicking her shoes off at the door and heading straight for my kitchen like she's done this a thousand times before.

"Hungry?" She asks me as she digs around in my refrigerator, tapping her fingers on the handle as she searches. "Looks like you got onions, tomatoes, beef, chicken..." She starts to trail off, taking a mental inventory like this is her home to care for, to create comfort in.

I watch her, arms crossed, leaning against the doorway with a smirk I can't hold back .

"How about we order pizza tonight," I say firmly, not allowing her any leeway. She pops her head over the top of the door, her eyes sparkling like she just won the lottery.

"I fucking love pizza!"

She starts to do this ridiculous little food dance that takes the breath straight from my lungs. She's burrowing herself into my brain, deeper than I should let her, and I'm not even mad about it.

"Cheese pleaseeeeeee," she singsongs to me as I pull out my phone, grinning despite myself.

“Anything else you want, gorgeous?” I ask as I pull up the order.

“Ohhhhh, can we get some wings too? Boneless, though. I don’t like bones in my meat, just inside me.”

I choke slightly, almost losing grip of my phone. I look up at her, those soft thighs, and a hint of mischief in her eyes.

Gods help me .

The things I would do to bend this girl over the counter ... Stop it, brain. Not right now.

“Mild, medium, or hot?” I ask, trying my best to distract my stupid boy brain from staring right at her tits.

“Medium, please. I don’t like them super spicy. Just spicy enough.” She winks at me, and I swear on my life, my heart skips a beat.

I would crawl on my hands and knees through the underworld's fires if it meant I could get even one taste of her.

“I’m gonna go get changed and set up everything in the living room for us,” she says as she glances down at her bag from work.

“Do you like video games?”

I stare at her, dumbfounded. Of course she fucking plays. She’s fucking perfect.

I let out some sort of uh-huh , a mix of a grunt and a growl. She accepts it as an answer and makes her way toward the back of my apartment, shutting the door softly

behind her.

I finish placing the order for food and look up to see her in a little pair of black velvet shorts, thigh-high black socks, and a big sweatshirt that says something about men with bat wings on it.

A goddess covered in ink and chaos. She catches my gaze and motions for me to sit on the couch with her.

“Call of Duty or Overcooked?” She questions, reaching for some controllers. She grabs a pink one and hands me a black one.

“Hmmm. Let’s go COD for now, then maybe Overcooked later?”

“Eeekkk perfect! I love it!” She takes her place next to me on the couch, sitting so close I can feel the heat coming off of her body.

After loading up the game, we play a few rounds before the pizza arrives. I tip the delivery driver and bring it over to the coffee table before laying out some plates for us.

“Hey,” she says quietly. “I want to thank you for letting me come over. I know it was probably inconvenient for you, but...I really appreciate it.”

I put my slice of pizza down and reach over, squeezing her thigh.

“You better shut that pretty little mouth of yours, A,” I growl. “You’re not an inconvenience . And if I hear you say that one more time, I’m going to bend you over this couch and show you just how inconvenient I can be .”

The words tumble out of my mouth before I can stop them. But fuck it. She needs to

know that nothing about her is a burden.

She's a walking dream, made of softness and sparks, and I'd tear the world apart just to prove it to her.

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Aisling

I look down to where his hand is gripping my thigh, it's not rough like Tyler's, it doesn't hurt like all the boys before. It feels warm and comforting, a touch my body doesn't want to recoil from.

Placing my hand on his, I look up at him. He's smiling at me, like always, that goofy smile breaking his rough exterior. A walking contradiction.

Fuck it.

My lips crash into his, my feral need for him making its presence known. I moan into his mouth, a plea for more .

Guiding his hand up my leg, he gets the message and takes control. My palms move up to clutch the back of his neck, dragging him deeper into the kiss as he uses his other hand to push me down flat on the couch.

The air in the room thickens, and all my focus is right on him. The way his fingers are trailing down my chest, making their way to the hem of my sweatshirt. The way his smell is seeping into my skin, imprinting itself into my memory.

My pulse quickens, and the ache in my center becomes needy... well, more needy if we're being honest.

"Are you gonna take it off or just play with it?" I tease, referring to his fingers playing with the bottom of my shirt.

I don't know what's gotten into me, but this man can literally give me his babies at this point, and I would gladly take them.

“Just because you're a couple minutes from having my mouth worship your pussy, doesn't mean you get to be a brat,” he growls into my neck, nipping into the skin, which causes my body to jerk.

“I think that's exactly what that means,” I groan, throwing my head back as he latches his mouth onto my neck, nibbling and sucking at the area like he's trying to draw blood.

He pulls at the hem of my shirt, releasing his mouth from my neck. I whimper at the loss of touch before lifting my torso to allow him to pull my shirt over my head.

I yank my bra off and throw it across the room, baring myself to him. He looks at me, eyes full of hunger, as he runs his tongue across his upper teeth.

“I'm going to fucking destroy you, gorgeous. And you're going to beg me to do it again and again and again .”

Ronan

She stares back at me, a depraved little slut just begging to be fucked. She wants this as much as I do and fuck me, I'm so happy she does.

"Please fuck me, Ronan," she whimpers.

And that's all it takes.

I drop to my knees in front of the couch, then grab her hips before pulling her to the edge of the cushion.

"Have you ever had your pussy worshipped before, gorgeous?" I ask her, honestly curious, as I have her lift her butt so I can shimmy her bottoms off.

"N-No," she whispers shyly, like she's afraid to admit it.

How fucking cute .

"What a fucking loss for them, princess. I'm going to eat you until there's not a single fucking drop left." I lift my palm to her center, and she starts to grind into me.

"Such a needy little thing," I groan, removing my hand from her core to place it on her ass, pulling her into me. I drop my head to her thighs, trailing kisses and bites along them.

"Exactly how I like you, baby girl. A desperate, dripping wet, little slut."

I let out a deep chuckle, teasing her pussy with my breath. I can smell her tangy sweetness and I'm ready to dive in like it's my last fucking meal.

I place a small kiss on her bare mound, just above her clit, and she lets out the sweetest moan. That sound triggers something deep inside me, and all I can think about is making sure those moans and my name are the only two things to fall from her luscious lips.

I flatten my tongue and lap at her, from bottom to top, savoring every flavor dancing in my mouth. She tastes like sin and sugar .

She bucks her hips into me, unable to control her need.

“Fuck Ronaannn,” she mewls, throwing her head back in ecstasy.

I suck at her clit, grinning to myself that I can make her feel like this, before I begin to flick my tongue against her sensitive nub.

“Oh Gods... I'm gonna–Fuck! Ronannn!”

She screams my name loud enough that I know the dead are turning over in their graves just to see what the commotion is about and that makes my cock twitch.

Those screams are mine .

She looks up at me with hooded eyes, fully blissed out, but I'm not done yet . Rising to my feet, I reach one arm behind my neck, grab my black tee, and yank it off before tossing it to the side. Her eyes widen as she takes in the intricate artwork covering my arms and chest, and I smirk at her.

“Like what you see, baby?” I raise an eyebrow as she reaches out to touch the

patterns on my chest.

I stoop down a little lower, and her delicate fingers trace along the markings like she's trying to memorize their path.

"Your tattoos, they're breathtaking," she whispers, motioning to my shoulders, so low that I can barely hear.

"I'm glad you think so. Let me show you how much better they look when your legs are thrown over them."

She sucks in a breath the moment she hears my belt whip out from my pants. Hmm, my girl likes that sound. Noted .

"Put your hands out," I order, and she obeys as I double it in my hand. I hold it there for a second, watching as her anticipation builds.

"Good girl," I praise.

The sweet little whimpers she lets out, those are mine too.

I bend down to her ear, my voice low and commanding. "Stay still."

She freezes instantly, and her breathing even stops. My little nightmare is such a good sub for me.

I reach down and wrap the belt around her wrists, pulling at the end. This isn't a restraint, it's a reminder of what I promised her.

She's mine, whether in my dreams or my waking life. And when she looks up with her eyes full of wonder and excitement, that's when I know she sees it too.

Aisling

My pussy throbs as he steps back, admiring his work, admiring me. He never asked, but he didn't have to.

In the couple of days I have known this man, he has completely turned my world upside down. And let's be honest, he had me tasting colors a couple minutes ago so at this point I'd be down to do abso-fucking-lutely whatever he wanted.

"Lie down flat."

His voice brings me back to the scene laid out in front of me. Dimmed LED lights and the way his black couch feels so soft on my naked body.

I follow his commands, my heart racing at the thoughts of what he plans to do next. He places one knee on the couch, leaning his weight into it. His fingers brush my center, causing bolts of electricity to climb up my spine.

His thick cock stands at attention, the tip glistening with precum. He's bigger than any of the men I've fucked before and my mouth waters in anticipation.

My eyes catch something else glimmering in the light, a piercing. It lies vertically, right through the head's ridge. My eyes widen, and I can feel my pussy pulsating in excitement.

"Still so wet for me, baby. I don't even need to get you ready." He smiles down at me, and my heart skips a beat.

I need his approval like I need air, and no matter how toxic that may sound, I would do anything to have it.

I spread my legs wider, allowing him more room, an invitation.

He stalks forward, his

“Fucking perfect,” he mutters so low I can barely hear it. “You ready, gorgeous?”

I hold my breath.

He places his hand on my ankle, guiding it up toward his shoulder, and my mouth goes dry. A pool of desire spreads through my center, and every nerve in my body is on fire.

Waiting for him.

“I need to hear you say it for me, baby girl. Tell me you want it,” he says as he lines himself up at my entrance.

Well, fuck me.

Insert that meme of ‘the girl was too stunned to speak’ here, please, because I’m no longer thinking I’m going to make it out of this in one piece.

Focus, A. He’s literally about to fuck you until you can’t move. Say something!

My internal dialogue is screaming at me, but my mouth refuses to listen .

Fuck it.

“Please...”

The word slips from my lips, soft and sinful, exactly how he wanted to hear it. My body shifts as I raise my tied arms above my head, allowing him an even better view of my breasts.

My voice doesn't sound like mine; it's lower, silkier, touched with something I don't understand. Despite the chaos erupting in my mind, I hold his gaze, heat blooming in my cheeks, my stomach, everywhere.

“Such a good little slut for me,” he growls, voice dripping with desire as he plunges into me, completely burying himself.

After the initial shock wears off, my body adjusts to accommodate his length. Pain starts to melt into pleasure after each stroke he gives me.

“Yes, please, sir,” I let out in a breathy, low moan.

Narrowing his eyes, he smirks at me before reaching around the outside of my thighs, lifting me to allow himself even more access before he drives himself into me again and again.

Our gazes lock, and in that moment, it's just us, the musky smell of sex in the air, our sweat-coated skin, and each other. Nothing else exists, and it doesn't need to.

I'm his and he is mine .

I scream out into the ether as he coaxes every bit of release from me. Waves of pleasure crash over me like a ship at sea during a tidal wave.

I feel him twitch inside me as he releases a grunt.

“Fuckk... Aisling,” he whimpers roughly, a soft moan following not far behind.

Did he just...? Fuck yeah !

I mentally reward myself with a gold star sticker because damn that was the hottest thing I think I’ve ever heard.

He pulls out of me and grabs my hips, flipping me over so I’m doggy style over the back of the couch, my back arching at the perfect angle.

His hands slide up the back of my thighs, rough and controlling, squeezing tightly just under my ass cheeks, making them jiggle just the smallest bit.

Throwing my head over my shoulders, I catch a glimpse of him, eyes full of hunger, biting his lip like he’s debating where he should begin. I watch as he leans down, disappearing from my sight.

His hands glide up the back of my legs slowly, dangerously, before spreading me apart. I suck in a short breath, my heart pounding in my chest as I feel his warm, hot tongue press against my tight ring.

“Breathe, baby,” he mumbles into me, and my body relaxes into the feel of his mouth.

Pressing his tongue flat against my back entrance, he strokes and sucks with expert precision. Heat pools in my stomach, spreading through my body like lava as he dips his tongue deeper. My voice breaks, strangled cries and moans escaping with each wet lick.

Without warning, he moves his hand between my thighs, positioning it against my clit, rubbing in circles, coaxing every ounce of pleasure from my body. My breath

hitches as pressure begins to build somewhere deep in me.

“Come for me, nightmare.”

And I do.

Shockwaves burst through my body as I tumble over the edge, completely weightless. My vision blurs, eyes rolling back, and my mouth opens to the Gods.

“That’s it, baby. You’re doing so good for me.”

His words wrap around me, but I’m so lost in ecstasy, I can’t tell where I end and he begins.

“Give me everything.”

Arching my back, the final bursts of pleasure shoot through me, turning into pulsating tremors. I feel the last bit of release about to spill out of me, but Ronan’s hot, wet mouth latches on, sucking out every drop of our combined cum.

My body collapses onto his couch, completely exhausted and blissed out.

“Thank you,” I whisper, unsure if it even reached his ears.

My eyes flutter, the darkness around me blurring, and then it all goes black.

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Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 8:09 am

Ronan

She passed out so quickly. My gorgeous girl looks cute when she's sleeping. Her soft snores fill the room as she snuggles into herself.

I smile to myself, turning to head toward the bathroom. Grabbing the fluffiest bath towel I can find, I make my way to the laundry room. A quick stop to toss it in the dryer, before I head to the kitchen.

Once there, I gather all the necessary items for top-tier aftercare, including a bottle of water, Capri-Sun, and a variety of snacks.

Turning, I head back down the hall to run a warm bath, filled to the brim with soapy bubbles. The steaming water fills the room with the scents of patchouli and rose water.

Perfect.

I set out a couple of candles when I remembered the special one I have, the one blessed by her. I move to my bedroom and grab the makeshift holder before moving it to the bathroom to place with the others. Once it's lit, I turn toward the doorway, proud of the ambiance I created for her.

I feel a pinch.

My hands fly up to the back of my neck, it's the same spot as last week when I lit the candle. The first time that happened, it was just weird. Now I'm convinced it's

something more. Whatever.

Making my way to the couch, I wrap her sleeping form in my arms, careful not to wake her. It doesn't work. Her eyes flutter, barely opening. "Mmmm... what are you doing, Ronan?" she mumbles sleepily.

"I gotta get you cleaned up, nightmare." She wraps her arms around my neck as I lift her bridal-style .

"Mmmpffff" is the only response I receive from her lips as I carry her to the bathroom.

Once I pass through the threshold, I look down at my girl, her mouth open and eyes closed. She's asleep. Again. And I'm reminded why I love her.

"Baby girrrll," I coo to her softly.

She rustles in my arms, mumbling softly, something about chicken nuggets and weed. Once she's somewhat coherent, I place her on her feet. She stumbles like she's drunk, and I throw my arm out to keep her standing straight.

"Whoa there, you gonna be okay in here?" She looks up at me, eyes squinting and bottom lip pouty.

"No," she says shortly, her voice a little high-pitched and whiny.

She's seriously bratting right now?

"Well, alright then. Let's get you in the tub."

I offer my other hand, and she looks down at it, biting her lip slightly, as if allowing

me this has even more meaning than the shit we did twenty minutes ago.

And I know it does.

After everything this woman has been through, she still allows me to be the one to see her at her most vulnerable.

I promise myself that I'll never take moments like these for granted, ever. She's literally handing me the key to her heart, and I would be stupid not to protect it with everything I am.

I take time washing her hair, running my fingers through it slowly, massaging her head. Her head drops to the side, almost falling into the water.

"You know, this would be a lot easier if you didn't keep almost falling asleep," I say softly, picking her head up gently .

She responds with a mmpff, and I let out a light laugh.

Her head drops forward again, and I catch her under the chin just in time, keeping her from face-planting straight into the tub.

"Baby girl," I groan as I try my best to steady her.

She replies with sleepy mumbles in return.

I rinse her off slowly as I drag the soft sponge down the curve of her arms, tracing her tattoos, engraving her into my memory. Every touch is deliberate, a silent reminder to her body that she's safe. That she's mine.

When I'm finished, I pull the plug on the drain, the soapy water swirling away. She

makes a faint noise of protest, but I hush it with a kiss to her temple.

“Baby, you need to rest.”

I grab a thick, warm towel, one I’d thrown in the dryer earlier, hoping she would appreciate the warmth. Wrapping her up carefully, I lift her out of the tub, her body boneless and trusting against mine.

She mumbles something under her breath again, something about a Caprisun and world domination, and I can’t help the smile that curves my lips.

“We can take over the world tomorrow, little nightmare. For now, you’re staying right here with me.”

I carry her to my bedroom, slow and steady, like every step is part of some sacred ritual. And maybe it is.

Maybe this is worship, the only way I know how to give it, protecting her when she can’t protect herself.

I place her on the bed, then gently tuck her in. And when she finally looks up at me, dazed and trusting, I know without a shred of doubt.

She’s given me more than her body.

She’s given me her soul.

And Gods help me, I will break the world apart before I ever let it hurt her again.

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Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 8:09 am

Aisling

Something's wrong.

I can feel it before I've even fully opened my eyes. The space between us is too still. Too quiet.

I blink rapidly, willing my eyes to adjust to the darkness as I reach out my hand, searching for him.

"Ronan?" I whisper, barely breathing.

Nothing.

My hand finds his chest and holy shit.

He feels like he's on fire.

"Ronan," I say, louder this time, panic seeping into me. His body is slick with sweat, his breath coming out in shallow bursts.

Panic hits me like a freight train, so hard it leaves me dizzy.

I sit up, gripping the sheets around me like they will protect me against the fear clawing its way to me.

As if.

Ronan stirs next to me, and my head snaps to the side, his eyes fluttering softly.

“Hey, hey,” I soothe, running my fingers through his damp hair. “You’re burning up.”

Sitting up abruptly, he leans over the edge of the bed, nearly toppling out of it.

The sound of retching fills the air, and I peek over to find Ronan bent over with his face deep in a trash can.

My poor, sweet boy .

Rubbing my hands in calming circles on his back, I stay with him until nothing else comes back up.

He glances up at me, “M’fine.” The words come out broken and slurred.

He’s lying so bad it pisses me off.

“The fuck you are!” I snap back, harsher than I meant.

Because I’m scared.

Because it’s easier to be mad than terrified.

He tries to stand up, because why wouldn’t he? His ass makes it a couple inches off the mattress before he’s falling back into it with a groan.

“Stay here,” I say, but hesitate.

This isn’t my place.

I'm not his girlfriend.

I'm not whatever it is he deserves.

But I'm the only thing he's got right now.

So I shove the fear deep down and force myself to move.

Ronan

I fucking hate this.

She's perched at the edge of my bed, lacing up her chunky black boots. She has an early shift tomorrow. I can't blame her for wanting clean clothes and some sleep. Honestly, not being next to a half-dead human might be in her best interest.

So I lie.

It's easier than having her worry about me.

"I'm fine, baby," I say, voice low and rough.

I know I'm not, though. Something changed when I lit that candle last night. There's this heavy weight suffocating me. Like something dark has its claws in me and doesn't want to let go.

But I don't mention it.

She glances back at me, eyes wary and guarded, like she doesn't know whether she should believe me or slap me.

Smart girl.

"You look like shit," she says, so softly I barely catch it.

Brat.

But she's not wrong.

"Better than this morning, I swear."

She responds with the mmff, like she can see through every layer of bullshit I'm throwing at her. I smile at her-or at least I think I do. It might pass as one if she squints hard enough.

"It's probably just something I ate. In a couple of hours I'll be fine," I lie. "But you have that early shift tomorrow morning, so you need to get going now, or you're gonna be up too late tonight and be running on nothing but coffee and a bad temper tomorrow."

Her lips press into a tight line, thinking it over.

"Fine. But I'm coming over as soon as I'm off work tomorrow," she says. "And you better be alive."

I let out a soft chuckle. "You can't get rid of me that easily, baby girl."

She lingers for a second longer before reaching down and placing her hand on my cheek. I can feel it. She wants to stay but knows she can't.

She places a soft kiss on my forehead before waving goodbye.

Then she's gone.

I hear the front door click shut behind her, leaving me with nothing except the silence.

The sound of my phone buzzing drags me out of sleep.

Fuck. I didn't mean to sleep this long.

I drag myself out of bed, my muscles stiff and protesting.

I still feel like shit but it's not as bad now. It feels like the back of my neck is on fire, like something is holding it there and won't let go. But, hey, I can move without wanting to throw up, so I'd call that a win.

I grab my black hoodie, keys, and combat boots before heading for the door.

I need to see her.

I have to make sure she's okay.

The Potion Press isn't far, I remind myself. It only takes me about ten minutes before I'm hauling myself through the door, like another one of their coffee addicted zombie customers.

The bell chimes overhead, signaling my arrival .

I look around the cafe. All the normal things catch my eye. Display cases full of pastries, an assortment of crystals, tinctures, candles lining the wall, and the half-crooked sign that says We Serve Potions & Coffee, Pick Your Poison.

Except she's not here.

She should be here.

She had the early shift.

She's supposed to be here .

My hands curl into fists at my side.

Where the fuck is she?

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 8:09 am

Aisling

Everything hurts.

My head, my body—every part of me feels like it's on fire. And I just want the ringing in my ears to stop.

Fuck.

I open my eyes and am immediately blinded by the harsh fluorescent lights hanging above me. The walls are smooth, concrete painted over in that hospital white color. Not a stain or crack in sight, it all looks too perfect, too pristine. Too intentional.

I take a deep breath in, and my stomach turns.

It smells like bleach .

So fucking much of it that I swear I'm losing my sense of smell.

It's the kind of clean that doesn't feel safe.

One side of the room is blocked off by those sliding curtains like they have in the hospitals, hiding something.

Cabinets line the far wall, filled with who-knows-what, and a stainless steel table near it. Clamps, knives, scalpels. Torture instruments of all kinds line the cold metal, glaring back at me.

I try to stand, but my body doesn't respond. It's heavy, unattached—there's probably some kind of drug running through my veins right now.

Not to mention the fucking chair that I'm strapped down to, bound so tight that it's creating a hot irritation around my wrists and ankles.

Looking around once more, I spot a small camera blinking in the corner.

Watching .

Remembering isn't easy right now, like trying to find a needle in a haystack. The last thing I recalled was walking to my apartment, I was about to step onto my street when someone came up behind me.

I tried to scream, but their hand covered my mouth, a rag coated in what I think was chloroform. And then it all goes dark.

Now I'm here.

Where is here ?

No fucking clue. But I'm going to find out.

“Let me fucking out of here!” I screech towards the camera, pulling at my restraints.

Nothing.

My fingernails dig into my cuticles, a nervous tick that I thought I had lost. But under the circumstances I'm currently in, I think I'll give myself a pass .

Silence.

Letting out a small sigh, I sink into myself and feel the cold biting at my skin.

I wait.

For what? I'm not sure.

But I know nothing good ever waits behind doors like that, so I guess it's time for me to face my nightmare.

Hours pass, maybe days. I spend every moment hoping something will happen.

Anything.

At this point, I'm begging the darkness to devour me.

I haven't eaten or drunk anything for who knows how long, but that didn't stop my body from having to relieve itself.

I've never felt more disgusting.

More exhausted.

More hopeless.

A lock clicks, filling the silence, and my fingers begin to tremble.

Don't let them see your fear.

Don't let them see you .

The only door in the room creaks open slowly, every inch louder than it should be,

each sound a countdown to something I'm not going to escape.

I ignore it.

A couple of tall masked figures enter the room, covered in black from head to toe. The only part of them showing is a small area around their eyes peeking out from their balaclava.

They don't speak.

Just move in silence, working to undo my ties.

I don't move

I don't protest .

It's not until their touches turn painful that my voice starts to make itself known.

Their hands grab at me, clawing at my soiled clothes, stripping my body of its only armor.

Tears well in my eyes. I know what's coming.

I just don't want to believe it.

Once I'm bare, the larger one stands behind me, locking his arms between my elbows, holding me open like a doll on display.

I don't watch as the man in front of me undoes his zipper, the sound causing every alarm bell in my head to go off.

Searching the room for some sort of escape plan, I come up short, but that doesn't mean I won't try.

Moving quickly, I throw my head back. The back of my skull connects with the guard behind me, and I hear a soft crack before he releases me.

He scrambles to grab his nose, blood pouring out everywhere like a macabre waterfall .

“My fucking nose! Fucking bitch,” he shouts, as the other guard reaches for me.

I slip away quickly, but don't get far before I feel fingers entangling in my hair.

Feral screams rip from my throat as I'm dragged back so hard I can feel pieces of my hair being ripped out.

I scramble backwards, both guards stalking toward me like they're hunting prey.

“You're gonna pay for that,” the taller one growls, eyes narrowing on me as he stalks closer.

My body tries to bring me to my feet, but I'm not quick enough.

He pushes me back to the ground, stepping on my face with his boots as he starts to undo his belt.

“Bad girls get fucking punished,” he chuckles. “And fuck am I going to enjoy making you bleed.”

His dick springs free from his pants as the other guard drops to his knees between my legs, forcing them open with his rough hands.

“Flip her over,” the one above me orders as he lifts his boot from my face. I choke on my breath, the tears forming quickly.

I don’t want this.

But it doesn’t matter what I want.

I’m theirs to use now.

They roll me over, forcing me onto my hands and knees. The one behind me grips my hips, dragging them back towards him as the one in front of me drops to his knees, lining my mouth up with his dick.

A single tear trails down my cheek, but before it can fall, a gloved hand reaches up, wiping it from my face.

“Yes slut, cry for me,” he says before lifting his mask just above his jawline, placing the tear soaked glove to his tongue. “Fucking delicious. You aren’t gonna have any of these left by the time we’re done with you, dollface. ”

Without warning, they both breach me, like they've practiced this before. No lube, no stretching. I cry into the emptiness, the only reply is the soft hum from the fluorescent lights.

“Take it, bitch,” the one in front of me growls.

My vision goes white as they pound into me, a relentless battle of them versus my body.

And I’m fucking loosing.

It feels like hours have passed by the time they've had their fill of me.

My body is bruised and bleeding thanks to the knife and scalpel they found in the room. At least they didn't break anything... at least not that I can feel.

Not that I can feel much right now other than the dull ache of being used like a fuck toy over and over again.

They drag me into the corner, pulling back the curtain to reveal a toilet and a shower-like hose extending from the wall like a snake.

"Boss wants you cleaned up before he comes to see you," he states flatly, like it's just another job for him.

"Hope he likes sloppy seconds," I say before spitting at them.

That earns me a hard slap across the face. He throws me into the corner as the other guard grabs the hose sticking out of the wall.

"This is gonna hurt, bitch."

It doesn't register at first. What he's talking about.

But then, I hear it.

A hiss.

Like steam escaping a pipe.

Then, I feel it.

Pressure.

So fucking much of it.

My body screams, crumpling on instinct. My knees hit the floor first, elbows scraping against the cold concrete before I feel pain radiate through my body from my shoulder, crunching under me.

And the stream keeps coming.

I try to move, but everything is slippery.

Wrong.

Every time I raise my arm, it's knocked back down.

Every time I try to breathe, it's like my lungs are caving in on themselves.

Every movement I make offers a new spot to hit. My stomach, my arms, the bruised mess between my legs.

The water isn't just cold.

It's violent.

Pinning me. Flattening me. Drowning me without even entering my lungs.

I think I scream, but I can't hear the sound of my voice over the shrill roar of the pressure washer.

It's drowning everything.

My vision goes white around the edges. There's a bright, blinding light, and I know I'm going to pass out if they don't stop.

They don't.

This isn't about cleaning me, it never was.

This is about pain.

Punishment.

Helplessness.

This is power .

And I hate that they have it.

Because this thing, whatever it is or whoever's behind it, has already won.

I close my eyes.

Stop thinking.

Stop fighting.

I try to go somewhere else— anywhere else.

But it finds me there too.

My body folds in on itself like it's trying to disappear.

And at this moment, I let it.

The water finally stops.

I barely notice until one of the men kicks my foot.

“Yep, still alive,” he confirms.

Yeah...barely... no thanks to you.

I respond in my head, but my voice is too weak to form words.

My body is trembling, the shock still running through my veins like a bad trip.

They don't offer me clothes or a towel. Just watch as I try, and fail, to get to my feet.

I hate this fucking feeling.

They don't care that I'm naked and soaking wet. That my skin is raw or that my body is carved open with small, stinging cuts.

I'm just broken, damaged goods.

“We'll let the boss know you're ready,” the taller one says, giving me a wink as they walk out.

The sound of the door clanging shut behind them echoes like a bad omen.

I close my eyes tightly and try to ignore the dampness. The pain.

I think of him...his strong arms and warm scent. The way he made me feel safe, even

when my world was falling apart.

I know he's out there, burning down everything in his path to get to me.

I smile to myself because pretending helps.

At least a little bit.

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Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 8:09 am

Unknown

She whispers before I'm even fully awake.

Pretty girl's ready for you now... go see what they've done to her.

My feet move before my thoughts register what's happening, dragging me through the doorway toward the basement.

The guards say nothing as I pass. They know better. This power I've been gifted comes from something beyond their understanding, and they aren't ready to face it.

I reach the door they left her behind.

Reaching out, I place my palm on the door handle .

Go ahead, open it.

Giving it a push, the door creaks open, and there she is.

Aisling.

She's curled up on the floor, soaking wet with raw, dark bruises blooming across her body and fresh cuts peppering her skin.

She doesn't look up at me.

Doesn't move.

Doesn't speak.

The door shuts behind me, its metallic thud filling the quiet space. She flinches.

Good.

She should.

I stalk towards her slowly, watching as her eyes flicker up to my masked face and back down again.

"It's impressive that you're still alive," I snicker, eyeing her. "Most people break before this part. "

I crouch down, brushing my fingertips along her face, pushing a wet strand from her face.

Her body recoils instantly. "Don't fucking touch me!"

I grin. "You'll get used to it."

"You all break eventually. Girls like you act like surviving makes you untouchable. Like biting back makes you different from the others."

My hand grips her jaw, forcing her to look up at me. She winces, trying to pull away.

"Funny thing about that, though...you all break the same."

I reach into my back pocket, my fingers wrapping around cold metal. I smile to

myself as I bring my hand towards her face.

She draws in a sharp breath, her skin turning white as she takes in the object in front of her.

A knife with a curved handle and intricate details glints in the fluorescent lighting.

It's familiar.

She knows it.

Scrambling backwards, her spine hits the wall as I walk forward, dropping down to her level. I reach out my arm, placing it on the wall above her, boxing her in.

"H-how do you have that?" she stammers, and I can feel her heart rate increasing. The fear drips off her body in waves so thick you can taste it.

Delicious .

"It's cute that you believe in your dreams, it really is. But your world isn't a dream, Aisling. It's a fucking nightmare that you'll never escape."

I drag the knife along her cheek, soft enough not to cut, but hard enough to let her know who's in control right now.

She shudders under the knife's blade as it inches its way down her body, but her face remains straight, giving no emotions away .

"P-please don't do this..." She stumbles over her words, trying to come up with reasons.

Cute.

“Shhhh,” I hush her.

“It’ll hurt so much less if you stay fucking quiet,” I say, digging the blade in her sternum, a trail of red beads forming. “Or maybe not, either way, I’m going to fucking enjoy this.”

She whimpers as I go deeper, her body stiffening under the pressure.

Under the pain.

But she still doesn’t scream.

I lean in close, my lips brushing her ear as I whisper, “You’ll scream for me soon enough, hellspawn.”

A silent tear falls down her cheek, and I catch it with my tongue like it's holy water.

“Now, let’s begin.”

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 8:09 am

Ronan

TWELVE HOURS AND FORTY-THREE MINUTES SINCE THEY TOOK HER.

She never even made it back to her apartment. They scooped her up right before turning on Auburn, minutes from her apartment.

I've spent every minute scouring security footage to track the van they took her in. When I lost them because there weren't any more cameras towards the north end of the city, I had to get creative.

THIRTEEN HOURS AND TWENTY-SIX MINUTES SINCE THEY TOOK HER.

I ended up reaching out to Kassius and Cade, who dropped everything to come over and have been sitting here with me, scouring everything to find out about these masked fuckers that took my girl.

EIGHTEEN HOURS AND THIRTY-TWO MINUTES SINCE THEY TOOK HER.

Cade's brother, Lex, was a vital component to us being able to figure out exactly where she was. He works downtown as a data entry specialist for the registration department with an after-hours hobby of hacking anything and everything on the internet.

He stopped by our makeshift home base, I set up in the living room, screens glowing with satellite images, surveillance feeds, and digital maps.

He logged into a couple of government databases, and after a few hours, we had it all.

TWENTY-TWO HOURS AND SIXTEEN MINUTES SINCE THEY TOOK HER.

He ended up finding all the information needed by using the license plate number. We now have the owner's name, address, and know that the car was recently re-registered in the state.

"Nathan Cross, a 36-year-old white male from Grand Lakes," Lex says, as he continues to type away at the keyboard in front of him. "It's an alias, though. I can't find any public records with that name."

"The car was registered somewhere in the outskirts of the town, about an hour away from what I can guess. I can't find its actual location on any maps, so I think it's been abandoned for quite some time. This place is meant to stay hidden, Ronan."

"Pull up surveillance from the area. I want every fucking camera scrubbed." I slam my hand on my desk, frustration rising.

"On it. We're gonna find her, bro," Kassius tries to calm me as he turns back to the screen in front of him.

There's another pinch at the back of my neck. At this point, I'm so used to it that I barely even notice. I sigh as I run my hand through my tangled hair, my emotions are bleeding out of me like an open wound-on display for everyone to see .

This isn't working.

I need to fucking find her.

TWENTY-THREE HOURS AND FIFTY-FIVE MINUTES SINCE THEY TOOK

HER.

The room is silent except for the frantic clicking of keys and the low hum coming from the computers. The place smells like burnt coffee and desperation.

Lex's chair squeaks as he turns to me.

"Got something, Rone."

He shows me a video clip from a traffic camera on the outskirts of Grand Lakes. The image is a little grainy and skipping, but I see that van rolling past at 1:14 am.

It has no lights, but the driver's side window is down, and there's a silhouette inside. The same build and masked up face as the fucker that yanked her away on her walk home not even a day ago.

"Zoom in," I say, voice cold .

He does his best, but it doesn't help much. Sighing, he flips the screen to a different window.

"It's not gonna get any clearer, but I did cross-reference the route with some older maps I found in the stored records with the city.

It looks like there was a compound of some kind there.

Long gone by now, but it was big enough that I'm betting there's still enough structure to hide someone there. "

Cade is the first to stand, his jaw set. "It's settled then, we need to go there."

I nod once. “Let’s move.”

Kassius is already on his feet before the words leave my mouth, reaching over to grab the duffel bag he brought. He opens it, allowing us to go through the gear. There are some flashbangs, a mini sledgehammer, some knives, a few different guns, brass knuckles, and Lex’s lucky, rusty, cut-off pipe.

I never said we were professionals, okay?

Lex rises to his feet, gathering a couple of earpieces and his laptop .

“We gotta stay focused, we don’t know what kind of numbers we’re working against here.”

“I can take at least four of them,” Cade says, swinging the leather-wrapped bat like he’s practicing killing zombies for the apocalypse.

“He’s gonna get us killed,” Kassius groans, shoving some gummies in the bag.

“Awwweeee thanks, Dad. You’re bringing me snacks,” Cade jokes, smiling like an idiot.

“Low blood sugar is no joke. You know that Cade, especially after what happened last time.”

I roll my eyes at the two of them as we head out the door to Cade’s blacked-out Chevy Tahoe.

“We don’t talk about last time, bro. That was an oopsie. Won’t happen again, sir.” He salutes Kassius like a soldier.

Lex laughs from behind us. “Come on, guys, no time for jokes. We gotta get Ronan’s girl back.”

“Oh, come on! If we’re breaking into an abandoned building to save his girl from masked psychos, at least let me cope with humor.” He bats his eyes at Lex, and I stifle a laugh as we all load into the SUV and head out.

TWENTY-FIVE HOURS AND TWO MINUTES SINCE THEY TOOK HER.

We hit a dirt turnoff onto an old gravel road that leads into the woods. The building barely shows up on satellite, hidden by nature.

“This is it,” Lex says, killing the headlights and adjusting his glasses.

Kassius hops out of the car, adjusting his bulletproof vest, and we follow behind.

Cade tightens his boots before slipping a combat knife in as I check the pistol at my side, and we all slide our comms in.

We don’t say anything. We don’t need to.

We already know what the plan is.

Bring Aisling home.

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 8:09 am

Aisling

Pain.

So much fucking pain.

It's all my brain can focus on as I lie on the cold, hard tile, trying to breathe through broken ribs and bruised lungs.

Every inch of my body is screaming, begging for any kind of release. Anything to stop my suffering. But nothing is coming to save me.

No one is coming to save me.

The sound of boots hitting the floor echoes around me, and a tear slides down my cheek .

He's coming back for me.

Slow. Steady. Like he's savoring each step. I don't look up. I don't need to. The chill running down my spine tells me everything.

He doesn't say a word, just crouches down next to me, knife glimmering in the fluorescent lights. He reaches down to my hips, running his fingers across my chilled skin before he lands on my stomach. It flexes in on itself reflexively as he presses his fingertips into the cut from earlier.

“Ever seen a raven die?” he asks, his voice deep and final. “They scream. They don’t caw. They fucking scream.”

My breath hitches in my chest as he presses harder, tears silently streaming down my face.

He holds something between two fingers, dangling it in front of me like an offering. A skull, small with blackened bone and a pointed beak.

A raven .

It looks wrong. Glinting in the light like it’s wet, even though I know it’s not.

It looks like it doesn’t belong in this world.

“This one belonged to your mother,” he states, tilting his masked face at me. “Her favorite messenger. I killed it myself.”

My lips part, but no sound comes out.

He places it on the wound. I let out a sharp inhale. It’s so fucking cold like ice but still warm, like it’s alive.

“You should feel fucking honored,” he hisses at me as he uses his weight to press down on my hips, pinning me in place.

The beak pierces the deepest layers of my skin. I choke on my screams, thrashing, but he’s stronger. The skull goes deeper, embedding itself into me, like it was always meant to live there.

My skin bursts out into sweats, and my vision goes static.

But it's not just pain. It's like a memory.

Flashes of fire burning rampant, thousands of wings slicing through the sky, and a woman screaming.

"Now she'll always know where you are. She can see through it, you know." He breathes against my ear, causing my skin to prick. "Maybe she's watching us right now."

He pulls away, releasing the pressure from my stomach, and I look down through tear-filled eyes. The skull is gone, vanished beneath my skin. But I can still feel it there.

Pulsing. Waiting.

The sound of the man's belt unbuckling echoes through the room, and I close my eyes.

I brace for the worst, swallowing my screams.

Then-

BOOM!

A scream of metal and a hollow thud .

Smoke fills the room like water.

A shadow makes its way through the fog.

Then another. And another.

“Get your fucking hands off of her.” A low growl cuts through the room, as lethal as a knife.

And my body instantly relaxes, a tear sliding down my cheek, not from fear, but comfort.

Ronan’s here.

For me.

And everything inside me starts to unravel as chaos erupts around me.

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Ronan

The instant I see her my soul fucking shatters.

She's curled up against the wall, naked and bruised, and that bastard? That fucking bastard is standing over her with his belt halfway undone.

He turns. A black balaclava covers the majority of his face, but I can still see him smile behind it.

Cruel and uncaring.

He's enjoying this.

"Motherfucker!" I snarl, aiming my Glock at him. My teeth grind together, so hard I can feel my jaw cracking.

"How sweet, you actually came," the masked man says, his voice calm. "It took you long enough."

"Drop the hard guy act you fucking coward," I growl, baring my teeth at him. "Take off the mask."

I feel the boys flanking behind me and glance over my shoulder to see Kassius to my left and Cade to my right, both covered in blood from the bodies we had to get through. Lex steps towards Aisling, rushing to her side now that there's a distraction.

The masked man sighs. “I was hoping you’d be able to figure it out quicker.”

“Take. It. Off.” I snarl, stepping closer now, rage fueling me like a wildfire.

His smile widens as he steps fully into the light, pulling the mask down.

My world tilts, stomach plummeting like I’m on some fucked up fair ride.

“Tyler?” I rasp, my voice cracking.

“Miss me?” He grins, cruel and unusual .

Memories flood back to the times he sat with us at the skatepark. The times he ate at the same table as us. Laughed at our jokes.

“You’re fucking sick!” I growl.

“And you have no idea what she is,” he says, eyes gleaming like he won a prize.

“She was never yours to save, Ronan,” he says finally, before lunging toward Lex with a knife drawn.

I intercept him mid-air, the shots from my gun ringing through the air. The bullets graze his shoulder, causing him to spin.

He staggers toward me, roaring like a feral beast. “She’s mine!”

He reaches for me, taking a step forward, but doesn’t make it far.

Beyond him, Aisling rises to her feet, looking like a bloodied goddess.

She's barely standing, eyes red from the pain, but the words fall from her lips like a promise.

"I belong to no one."

She drives some blunt object into his neck with every ounce of strength she has left, probably the old rusted pipe Lex insisted on bringing.

Blood sprays everywhere like a macabre fountain. Tyler gurgles and chokes on the red liquid as it falls from his mouth before his limbs give out, causing his body to tumble to the floor before landing in a pool of crimson.

My jaw drops. Aisling takes a step toward me but instantly collapses. I catch her before she can hit the ground, cushioning her head as she fades in and out of consciousness.

"You're okay, gorgeous. I have you," I say, choking on my own words. I scramble to get her in my arms as the boys rush to the door, clearing the way for us.

I look down at her, passed out from exhaustion and broken. And yet, I still couldn't be the one to save her .

TWENTY-FIVE HOURS AND SEVENTEEN MINUTES.

That's how long it took me to find her.

Too fucking long.

And I still wasn't fast enough.

She saved herself.

She ended it. Not me.

And I'll never forgive myself for that.

My little nightmare, after everything she has been through, still found enough power to save herself, even when I couldn't.

The shame burns hotter than the rage now. But I bury it deep beneath my ribs, forcing it back behind the walls I've spent my lifetime building.

I can't let her see me like this.

Not right now.

We make it to the Tahoe, and Cade rushes in front of us to open the back of the SUV. Lex moves to support Aisling on the other side as we slide her in, careful not to hurt her any worse.

"We gotta go," I snap, my sanity barely hanging on. "Get us back to my place, Ash is waiting for us."

I slide in next to her, pulling her into my chest as Kassius moves to shut the door. The boys rush around the SUV and hop in the front. The sound of the doors slamming is loud enough to jostle Aisling awake.

Her eyelids flutter as she looks up at me and smiles.

She fucking smiles.

Even after everything. Even after all the pain, the torture. Even with blood drying on her skin, she still manages to find her spark.

And I realize— fuck .

Being in love with her...

It was never supposed to be comfortable. Never safe, or easy.

It's not about fixing her, proving something, or some fucked up idea of saving her.

It's about her, in all her broken rage.

How she bleeds quietly and still fights.

She's not a prize to be won .

She's a goddess who never asked for worship, but I bowed anyway.

I'm not the center of this story.

I'm just the fool who couldn't stay away.

Ronan

Ash is waiting in my apartment when we arrive. She turned the living room into some apothecary slash emergency medic room. A mixture of old apothecary tools, gauze, antiseptic, and tinctures in all kinds of bottles. It smells like incense and bleach. Witchy and clinical.

Lex and I move to place her down on the couch. She groans in protest as the pain finally starts to catch up to her.

The boys make their way out of the room, giving us space. I hover over my girl, holding my breath as Ash moves quickly to dress her wounds and wash away the dried blood from her skin .

She works quietly, not flinching at the blood and gore as she mumbles something ancient under her breath. I notice her pause as she makes her way to Aisling's stomach, her brows furrowing in confusion.

“Do you know if he did anything to her, placed anything in her?” She questions.

“I, uh, I don’t know honestly. He only had her for twenty-five hours, so I don’t think that would be enough time for her body to heal from something like that.”

She huffs, frowning to herself. “There’s something here. I can feel it. It’s something ancient, but I don’t think it’s necessarily bad.”

She pauses, trying to think it out in her head. “It feels like it’s reacting to her body,

with it. Like it belongs there. Like something is waking up. I know this sounds crazy, but I can feel it, Ronan.”

Ash continues to work on her for a while longer before turning to me.

“She’s stable for now, but whatever that thing is inside of her, we need to keep an eye on it.

Take her to bed and let her rest, she’ll need a dose of this every three hours,” she says before handing me a small bottle of some oil and herb concoction.

“One dropper full under her tongue for as long as she can stand, and that,” she points to a small container filled with a light green balmy mixture, “will help treat the bruises.”

“Whenever her pain acts up, use a thick layer and rub it in until it’s completely dissolved. I’ll work on making more tonight, so don’t worry about using it all,” she urges, pushing a stray strand of hair behind her ear.

“I’m going to be here, at least until morning. I want to be close in case anything starts to go south, so just yell if you need anything.”

I nod and move to scoop Aisling into my arms. She stirs but doesn’t wake.

“Thank you... for everything.” I look at Ash, and I can see the pain in her face, the pain she’s trying so hard to hide.

“She’s my best friend, my twin flame. I’d do anything to make sure she’s okay,” she says softly, smiling to herself.

I don’t say anything in response, I don’t need to. Instead, I just give a small smile.

She's alive, and that's all we could ask for.

I carry her to my room and place her in my bed before tucking her in gently.

I move around the room, lighting a couple of candles and turning off the big light, just like my girl likes it.

My gaze glances around the room, landing on a candle. Her candle . The one that was blessed by her body, the one that has her scent woven into it.

I reach it in a couple of strides, examining the way it shines in the dark like there's something magical infused in it.

Grabbing a lighter, I spark its flame.

The energy in the room shifts, and the air thickens. A cold rush of air washes over me as shadows curl along the wall .

The pinch on the back of my neck is stronger this time. Almost unbearable. It feels like someone is right behind me, digging their clawed nails into my spine.

Then she appears.

A woman built from darkness.

I realize then that none of this was ever just a dream. Aisling was never making any of this up. Shit .

"You should've been faster," she says, head tilted.

"I know," I whisper, the feeling of regret wrapping around me like a blanket.

Why do I respond? No idea. It's like my body is doing it on instinct. It's like she already has a hold on me.

"You can still save her, Ronan." Her voice radiates through me like it's in my head and in front of me at the same time.

"I'll do it, whatever it takes. For her." I say finally.

"Such a good boy. Now unlock yourself."

"Okay," I whisper, my voice not sounding like my own.

She leans forward and places two fingers on my forehead. The heat from my neck burns like lava, taking over everything as my vision turns white.

And just like a dream...

I fall back into the darkness.

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Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 8:09 am

Aisling

I wake up gasping for breath as pain shoots through my limbs like daggers.

I reach my arm out, expecting to feel Ronan's warm body next to me, but all I'm met with is cold sheets and a dimly lit candle.

My heart rate spikes as I scramble out of bed.

"Ro-Ronan!" I beg.

"Ronan, where are you?" My voice comes out more desperate, like I'm pleading to the darkness.

Stumbling around the room, I come across a letter, folded neatly with my name handwritten across the front.

No.

I open it with shaky hands, barely able to hold it still enough to read the smooth writing across the page.

I breathe in deeply, feeling like my sanity is going to slip with each word I read. I prepare myself for the worst.

My Gorgeous Nightmare,

There's a version of me that only existed in your arms.

You were the only light I ever let into my darkness. The only little spark I wanted to keep.

And I did... for a little while.

Looking back, this last week has been the happiest time of my life. A time when the darkness didn't feel so overwhelming.

It was like I could finally breathe.

And you were the air that filled my lungs .

I told myself I was protecting you, but we both knew the truth.

You were always the stronger one.

You're everything I never thought I could have. Everything I didn't know I needed. And I'm so fucking sorry for not getting to you sooner.

For not being enough when you needed me.

But I can be enough for you now.

My soul for yours.

If she keeps her word, you'll be free. No more nightmares. No more looming shadows or demons haunting your sleep.

You'll wake up to cold sheets and quiet nights, but I hope you still feel me there

anyway.

In the way the rain flows from the sky and gathers in puddles at your feet. I'll be there.

When the wind howls and the moths flutter by.

When candles flicker without reason.

When the dark feels a little warmer than it should.

That will be me.

I didn't know how to say it then, but I'll say it now, carved in ink so you'll always have it to look back at.

Aisling,

I loved you.

I love you.

In the kind of way that breaks timelines and every law of reason.

You weren't just a girl I loved.

You were the woman of my nightmares.

So I ask one last thing of you.

Remember that when the darkness starts to feel empty without me, know that I never

truly left.

I'll be in the shadows.

Protecting you like I wasn't able to before.

You were never mine to keep, but Gods, I loved pretending.

Always and forever your shadow,

Ronan .

I sink to the floor, the letter clutched against my chest. The scent of him, lavender and rain water on burned wood, floods my senses.

He smells like protection and ruin.

I let out a wail loud enough to wake the dead. The tears streaming down my face like waterfalls.

He's gone.

My sweet boy is gone.

My lungs seize up, my breaths coming out in ragged bursts as the panic permeates my chest.

He left me.

He walked straight into the devil's arms for me, and now I'm just supposed to sit back and enjoy life.

No. No. No. No .

My curled body moves back and forth, trying anything to stop the onslaught of bad thoughts and panic running through my system .

I'm shaking.

The door creaks open slowly as Ash peeks her head in, scanning the room slowly.

We lock eyes.

“Get me the fuck in there,” I rasp, my voice shaking.

“Aisling-”

“He sacrificed himself to Lilith. My mother. I know it's her, I can feel it,” I growl, pointing to my stomach where the raven skull is radiating with energy.

She doesn't ask again. She already knows my answer.

“Alright then, let's go kill a god.”

I hold the letter in my hands, grasping it like it will bring him back.

But I know it won't .

I breathe out deeply, trying to muster any kind of strength I can as I prepare myself for her .

I know my mother took him. I can feel it in my bones. I sigh silently, praying to whatever Gods are listening to help me get him out of this... even if it's only him.

I watch Ash closely as she sets up the ritual. She starts by laying out bones in a circle with salt, herbs, and a raven skull at the top, pointing north. Its hollow eyes stare back at me like it's watching.

And the fact that it probably is sends a wave of nausea through my body.

Ash hands me a dead luna moth, and I grab it gently, trying not to damage its frail wings.

“Take this into the circle. You're going to pin it to the skull, then pour the moon water over it.

That's going to activate it. Once the jar is empty you're going to pick up that blade,” she glances over to the blade that Tyler was holding when everything went to shit.

“And you are going to offer your blood. While you're making your sacrifice, chant this three times. Then voila. You should be in the Dreamworld. ”

She hands me a worn piece of paper, and I run my eyes across the dark and swirling letters.

I am the vessel, sealed and whole.

Through every shadow, I keep control.

No force may bind, no will may bend.

I pass untouched until the end.

I look up at her and nod, a single tear sliding down my cheek.

“In case I don’t see you again, I just wanted to say I love you, babes. Thank you for always being here for me.”

“Shut up! You’re gonna make me cry.” She snuffles before pulling me in for a hug. “I love you too, you crazy bitch,” she chuckles as she releases me, grabbing my hand to guide me into the circle.

I step in and stand before the skull, gripping the moth like it’s my lifeline.

“I’m sorry,” I whisper to the little night butterfly before pressing the pin through its body, fastening it to the skull .

The moon water glistens in the candlelight as I pour it over the delicate wings. I swear I catch them fluttering for just a split second.

Maybe I really am going crazy .

My gaze shifts to the blade. The one that was there at the beginning of this fucked up nightmare. The one I killed Tyler with... or at least it felt like I really did.

Until I actually had to.

Reaching out, my fingers graze the cool metal, wrapping around it methodically.

I press the blade against my palm, burning like it's on fire. My blood spills, dark and hot, onto the offering.

I can feel a rush of pain, or maybe it’s power, curl through my body.

I close my eyes, whispering the chant, the words falling from my lips like a spell I was born to say.

The circle hums with energy, pulsing through my veins like a wildfire before everything blurs.

And then it all turns black.

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Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 8:09 am

Aisling

I open my eyes and I immediately know I'm somewhere else.

The ground breathes beneath me. Trees twist above me in impossible shapes, reaching toward the sky in swirling patterns. The sky is a vibrant swirl of deep violet and black, sprinkled with twinkling stars.

Again. Great fucking interior designer... or I guess... exterior designer? Whatever. Either way it's fucking breathtaking.

And the air? The air tastes like him.

Ronan .

Like smoke and fresh lavender after an autumn rain.

The raven skull in my abdomen pulses. Its energy no longer scares me, but rather, makes me feel a kind of power I've never held before. It vibrates through me with more energy than ever, like it knows she's close.

My mother.

Lilith .

The Queen of the Succubi, the one ruling the Dreamworld.

This may be her world.

But I'm her blood, and I came to burn everything she loves to the ground.

I reach my palm out, placing my fingertips to the ground in front of my sitting form.

The ground breaths beneath me, pulsing like a steady heartbeat synced with the raven's skull inside of me .

"You sense her, too, don't you?" I whisper to her, feeling this world's power coursing through me.

I can't explain this pull, but my body knows better than my brain right now, and I'm listening.

Whatever is making me feel this energy begins to work quickly as silver veins bloom from where my fingers rest, leading me forward like the Dreamworld itself wants to deliver me to her.

I rise to my feet and walk forward, following the spiraled, glowing path ahead of me.

Massive trees twist at every step I take as my shoes sink slightly into the soft moss below, the earth meeting my feet like it's breathing below me.

Watching me.

Guiding me.

I keep pushing forward, the raven skull pulsing beneath my skin increasing its rhythm, matching the pounding in my chest.

Every part of this world is breathing with me.

The air grows cold, trees shifting to open into a break, revealing a clearing lined with dead trees covered in black bark and glowing thorns. And there, wrapped in the darkness, Lilith awaits.

She smiles like she's been expecting me.

Good.

She should be.

"Welcome home, my dear Aisling. I wondered how long it would take you."

"You knew I was coming?"

"Why wouldn't I?" She smirks, examining her fingernails in front of her, like she's already bored.

"Every move you made, every choice you felt like you had no other option but to submit to... that was all me, darling." Her smile grows more sadistic, her teeth glowing in the dark.

"Every time Ronan was sick, every time you felt something watching. Even down to your undoing with Tyler. Now, losing that one was a shame. I had really grown fond of that pet... I guess that's why I ended up taking yours," she snickers to herself, like this is all some kind of game created for her amusement. "Soul for a soul, as they say."

She snaps her fingers, gesturing to the shadows as the dark mist swirls and parts, revealing a shadow.

Ronan steps from the shadows, taking a place beside her. He meets my gaze, but it's as if he doesn't recognize me anymore. He just stands there, silent and still, jaw twitching like he's fighting some invisible force.

Tears threaten to spill onto my cheeks, but I stuff them back down.

I'm not even a memory to him anymore .

I turn to my mother, trying to ignore the ghost of my past.

"You don't even know what I did for you," she spits, her voice shaking from fury or sorrow, I can't tell. "I built this world from pain. Built this empire out of spite. I created a place where women like us would never have to kneel again. "

I stay still and watch her fall apart, unravel thread by thread.

"I was the first woman to say no, and they treated me like a monster for it."

She takes a breath, and I swear I catch the glimmer of a tear in the corner of her eye.

"They said I was unworthy because I wanted to rule beside them. Not beneath them. They said I was too loud. That I was only worthy if I was quiet and on my knees."

A cruel laugh escapes her lips, her voice turning dark.

"So I took everything from them. I made them worship me, then bleed for it. I fed on their lust, their shame. And I built a world where I was a God."

She looks at me again, her eyes searing into my own.

"You're part of me, Aisling. You have my blood and my power. I know that rage

lives in you, you can't pretend it doesn't. ”

“No,” I say coldly. “I will never fucking be like you.”

She sighs, annoyed by my refusal.

“Such a pretty little failure,” she breathes, glancing over her shoulder at Ronan.

“Kill her,” she says before handing Ronan a blade.

I can see him grab it, wrapping his fingers around it slowly. Within seconds, he's in front of me with a feral look in his eyes.

I don't flinch as he pushes the knife to my throat, beads of crimson pooling under the blade.

If this is how I die, by his hands, I'll give my life a thousand times over. The moments I shared with him were few, but I wouldn't trade the memories we made for anything. He'll always be my sweet boy.

I hold my breath, eyes closed. There's no question in my mind. This is okay.

Silence.

I release a breath and tense my body, ready, but the seconds drag on.

“No.” His voice cuts through the stillness, and a smile creeps onto my face. He's still here.

Releasing the blade from my neck, he turns on Lilith before plunging it deep into her chest, pinning her to the tree behind her like some sort of sick offering.

She wails in agony, causing the birds to burst from the dark tree tops. Black flames burst from the wound, lighting the tree and her body on fire.

I watch as her face twists. And I now see her for what she really is.

Not a goddess.

Not a queen.

Just a devil that became the same monster she tried to destroy.

She lets out a final howl, reaching for me just before her body bursts into a glittering ash.

Ronan collapses next to me, and that's when I notice the deep, ruby-coated wound on his chest. Fuck. She must have gotten him when he was facing her.

I fall to my knees next to him, pulling him onto my lap.

“Ronan! Ronan, baby.” My voice comes out panicked, a shell of the strength it wielded only moments ago.

He looks up at me, the goofiest look spreading across his bloodied face.

And he smiles.

My sweet boy smiles.

“Guess I finally saved you, huh?”

One breath, one smirk.

And then his eyes close.

A tear falls from mine.

I breathe in and look up, smiling to myself.

He's not gone. Not really.

Not here.

This is the Dreamworld, after all.

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 8:09 am

Aisling

THREE MONTHS LATER

Lilith is gone.

My mother is gone.

I guess in some ways, it hurts. I had a mother I never even knew about, and when the time came, she stole everything I loved.

Karma's a bitch though.

I look around the Dreamworld. What was once a broken and dark place is becoming something beautiful and cared for.

I didn't ask to be the Queen of the Dreamworld. To be honest, I never even wanted it .

But someone had to save it from crumbling.

And I was here.

I brought Ash with me and she has stayed by my side since, following me on our new adventure.

She's convinced she can bring health and magic to the world that lies somewhere

between imagination and darkness.

I just smile and watch as she does what she's best at. Creating something from nothing.

I see Ronan sometimes, every so often.

Like a ghost that lingers in the shadows.

I like to believe he's there when the nights feel lighter and the stars shine just a bit brighter. When my heart feels a little lighter and my laugh rings a little louder.

I got a raven skull tattooed just below the luna moth on my sternum, my forever reminder of him. He was always my safe place, and I know in my heart he never actually left me .

I've been searching for answers, trying to find a way to bring him back. Hoping that something will lead me closer to him. It may take some time, but I'm determined to bring him out of the shadows again.

And as for me?

I will do what I always do.

Survive.

Even when I want to give up.

Even when it feels like I can't keep going.

Because there's a world that relies on me.

People who rely on me.

And I'm not ready to give up on myself.

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 8:09 am

Ronan

ONE YEAR LATER

I stand beside my Queen.

Not alive. Not dead.

Just not quite human anymore.

A shadow tethered to this world by something stronger than flesh and bone. A whisper of what once was.

I watch her, not from a distance, but close enough that I can feel her heartbeat in the air. I could, in theory, leave at any point, but something keeps bringing me back here. It's like a tether that only gets heavy when I'm not near her.

I can only assume that it's that oracle. The raven skull that hums beneath her skin, drawing me closer to her like a silent call.

Besides, I wouldn't want to miss a single second of watching her continue to build her empire, hoping that I'll be able to come back to her fully one day.

Her eyes find me sometimes. They don't fear me. They see me for what I am, her ghost, and her protector. The one shadow she never asked for but now commands.

She didn't stay alone either. She brought her best friend with her to live in the dark.

And Ash has stayed busy.

Tending to forgotten souls, the lost spirits no one else noticed. Moving through the dream villages with potions brewed from moonwater and whispered spells.

A healer, she calls herself.

And the Dreamworld has healed beneath her touch.

And Aisling... She is Queen now. That spark in her soul lights this darkened realm, bringing balance where there was once only pitch black.

She's everything Lilith couldn't be.

A ruler of shadow and light.

And me, you ask?

I'm here to watch. To protect.

I will guard her kingdom with this broken shell until she calls me home.

Until then, I'll watch.

I'll wait.

I'll endure.

Because I am hers.

And even in death, I am her shadow.