



Magpie's Song

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Description: Pretty Magpies please their master. Pretty Magpies never fly faster.

Pretty Magpies have no choice. Pretty Magpies have no voice.

Pretty Magpies bow and submit—or pretty magpies get the whip.

One fateful night, a flock from the Magpie Order is summoned to a supernatural prison to calm the most violent offenders by any means necessary. When imprisoned leviathan alphas Cato, Aedan, and Geralt meet their magpie, a beautiful but naïve human, her song calls to them unlike any other. With her, their world stops. No more apocalypse. No more doom. All that matters now is claiming and marking their new mate... And then rescuing this pretty magpie from an order that will use her until she drops.

Magpie's Song is a short standalone smutvella in the Birds of a Feather universe. The series features darker romance elements and may not be for every reader. Please heed the warnings listed at the front of each book.

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“Okay, kings of the shit heap...” The creak of our cell door had to be intentional—nothing sounded that screechy and obnoxious in this day and age unless the fuckers left it unoled on purpose. “On your feet.”

My eyes peeled open at the rustling around me, and I tipped my head back against the sandstone wall with a sigh, watching Aedan and Geralt shuffle to their feet. Naked and cuffed, same as me, they stretched their muscular limbs, their taut torsos and toned backs, twisting and arching and groaning—but they waited.

Neither made a move for the open door.

As alpha of the alphas, I dictated when we moved and where.

Centuries under our belts together, we might have been blood brothers, sons of the apocalypse and destiny, but the group hierarchy remained intact no matter what miserable realm we found ourselves in.

My gaze cut to the ten humans in black uniforms waiting for us on the other side of the salted iron bars. The shitstain with lifts in his boots—to put him on par with his six-foot-plus cohorts, of course, the sin of pride alive and well here—loitered in the doorway brandishing a cattle prod, demonic and Enochian sigils alike carved into the metal. Too young for his station, too weak to wield the unlimited power gifted by this prison, he tapped his prod at the metal frame with a sneer.

“You wanna fuck a magpie or not?”

My eyes narrowed, and I ground my teeth. We all thought Hell was degrading, but

there was quite literally nothing worse than being controlled and corralled by fucking humans.

Ten days ago, the largest volcano on Ether Island erupted. Not catastrophic, mind you, but the rupture on this Pacific Ocean jewel cracked the hellmouth inside, opening an unsanctioned door between Hell and Earth, and from it spilled the dark legion. A trickle of the thousands upon thousands camped out at hellmouths across the pit clawed through magma and fire, eager to raid Earth, taint it, desperate to satisfy our Lord Lucifer's distaste for humanity.

There were rules, of course, for demons who wished to walk among humans. Lucifer had signed treaties and all that nonsense.

But to the legion—

Human contracts, human laws, meant so little.

Drunk on imported fae wine and high on bloodlust, the boys and I joined the chaos division. We beat demons and other hellions aside to burst through—to taste the human world after a few decades in the pit.

Unfortunately, humanity had gotten its shit together since our last gruesome visit.

Some supernatural species had revealed themselves to the world at large—fucking vampires, spoiling it for everyone—and allies were made.

In short, they were ready for us.

Not expecting us, sure, but Ether Island had been a hub for supernatural elite and human crime lords for centuries. Prisons occupied the southern tip of the forested island, while debauchery of the highest order reigned up north. A paradise on Earth

for all manner of sinful pleasures.

And they didn't need some marauding demonic legion spoiling that for them, apparently. Demons craved dominion. Hellions just wanted to feed on blood and screams and fear.

As sons of leviathans and aristocratic demonesses, we three fit somewhere in the murky middle. There hadn't exactly been a plan. Drunk, high, bored, we saw an opening and took it, stabbing and shoving and fighting our way out.

We barely breached the shoreline with its crystalline blue waters before we were hit with human infantry and air strikes, spells to peel flesh from your bones and mages thirsty to prove themselves. Wolves the size of bears and dragons with eternity in their scales. Salt, holy water, and demon traps in the sand.

Fucking waste of time, this raid.

As our human escort glared on, I fiddled with the golden cuffs snapped around my wrists. Those captured alive had been collared, the insignia and magic in the metal binding our demonic sides—akin to declawing a lion, I suppose—and brought to Ether Island's high-security male supernatural prison. Housed in the old holding cells underground, we waited, on their timeline now, as humans hauled dribs and drabs of the legion back to the volcano and forced them through the hellmouth.

Clawing through the lava had been... something.

Doing it sober would be such a headache.

Another thunderous clang of that silly little cattle prod to the bars of our cell, followed by a purposefully deepened: "Move!"

Tiny man with a tiny cock—had it not been for these cuffs, I'd gut him first.

Instead, I eased off the ground and stretched my stiff limbs, ass asleep, then took a few moments to crack my back and jaw while my blood brothers held their ground. Our human captors recognized us as a package deal from the start, like many in the legion. Sometimes the only way to survive the raw wilderness of Hell was to ally up—and blood bonds were a very permanent means to that end. Fortunately for us, we'd never fallen out.

Escaping a blood bond—nasty business.

While they realized that we needed to be housed together or no one would get any sleep, all eyes initially fell on Geralt to call the shots. I glanced his way as I strolled through the boxy prison cell with a hole in the corner and not much else. With long hair icy white as Lilith's heart, skin black as a suffocating smoke, Geralt was built like a mountain, largest of the lot with his leviathan side's lethal claws locked in place. Many failed to realize, both in the legion and beyond, that it wasn't brawn that made a king.

No, to rule—that power ran so much deeper, and my brothers respected it, sensed it, from the moment we reconnected in Pandemonium's gladiatorial fighting rings eons ago, no longer the wild brats of pampered demonesses, but warriors of doom stuck counting down the days until the real apocalypse began.

Geralt towered over just about everyone at seven feet three inches, but his overt brutishness belied the heart inside, his softness our best-kept secret. Meanwhile, Aedan was the leanest among us, gifted with subtle strength and a sharp tongue. Ivory flesh and eyes like hellfire, his inky black waves were starting to look greasy. Lithe and lethal, he looked mostly human courtesy of the golden cuffs, but his leviathan horns, gnarled and twisted like demented buck antlers, gave him an extra two feet in a place where they all thought size mattered.

Shame, to look so like the guards glowering from the other side of the bars. Cuffed as we were, our demonic sides had been stifled for days, cowed by the runes and magic in the gold. Weakened, instruments of war blunted, some pureblood demons managed to keep their black eyes whenever gen pop was allowed to mingle and stretch our legs, but for the most part, we resembled men.

At a demon's most basic form, after all, they were but men's tormented souls made eternal in the pit. Twisted and ruined, molded into terrors, they could shift and change form on a whim.

No more.

Not until the volcano dissolved these fucking cuffs, anyway.

Some preferred the predatory advantage of beauty. Humans fell willingly into our arms when we were lovely, but where was the fun in that?

For the hybrids, prison guards kept a closer eye. While our demon side surrendered to the sigils, the leviathan in our blood fought the magic. Geralt's claws, Aedan's antlers—all paired with the grace and intrigue of sinfully handsome fallen angels, men who looked like gods. Flesh grey as old ash, straddling the middle ground between Geralt's brawn and Aedan's sleekness, even I kept a piece of my apocalypse self, a shadowy horned crown hovering around my skull that intake had tried to rip away, only to realize it was another part of me, a bone on the outside they couldn't take.

The crown itself caused occasional uproar during gen pop outings, but it was nothing we couldn't handle. Beating the absolute fuck out of each other had always been a way to pass the time, no matter how these guards despised the dark legion's antics. Demons warred for rank, desperate for a crown, for a smattering of Lucifer's attention and praise.

Dull, really.

Life had become so boring down there, and now, up here, it was more of the same.

I strode right up to the fellow in our cage door, his nose barely reaching my chin, and cocked my head, waiting until the height difference forced him to look up.

“You pull some shit, monster,” he sneered, blanching when I bared my sharp canines, “and I’ll shove this poker so far up your ass that we’ll watch the sparks fly at the back of your fucking throat while you scream.”

“Eloquent,” I mused. Aedan and Geralt fell into their usual positions, flanked on either side, Geralt expressionless, sick of incarceration’s tedium, and Aedan snorting—not because he found it funny, but because he loved to make the humans flinch and twitch for their weapons with the slightest sound.

I, meanwhile, kept my eyes on this little rat’s gaze, coppery brown, the amber flecks suggesting fae, maybe even elvish DNA, somewhere in his lineage. Pity their beauty and brains didn’t extend down the family tree. “You know, your soul might just claw out of the pits. Maybe.” I eased closer, forcing him to inch back so that nose didn’t kiss my chin. “And maybe, just maybe, they’ll let you torture once you’ve suffered enough—”

Lightning seared up my chest, the cattle prod jabbed between my pecks. A mercy—and a surprise—that he didn’t go straight for the appendage dangling down my thighs, but maybe he had a gentlemen’s code. While the sizzle stung, it paled compared to all I’d suffered before.

I held my ground.

Endured it.

Then grinned when he backed off, leaving a scorched black burn on my chest, and gestured for us to step out already. I glanced left to Aedan, right to Geralt, then sniffed and gave this lot a dismissive up-and-down sweep. Fine.

They swarmed us in the corridor, a pair of armed guards assigned to each, then a man between us as we marched by cells of hellions and demons. Some alone, the poor fuckers, others in pairs and groups. Some sleeping. Others howling. If only these bloody holding cells had been soundproofed however many centuries ago they were forged; what I wouldn't do for just one night of silence, a quiet we could only dream about in Hell, the dark legion's cacophony of unrelenting noise dragged topside.

"You boys ready to get some of that testosterone out?" one of Aedan's guards asked. The figure to my left snorted while the one to my right rolled his eyes.

"Seriously, fucking animals," he muttered. "Gotta breed 'em like stallions to get some peace in here."

My smirk sharpened; if they thought allowing the biggest, baddest, meanest fighters in gen pop to fuck some poor magpie a few times a week would bring them peace, they were in for a rude awakening.

The prison—nay, the isle as a whole—operated under some deluded theory that if they took the most violent prisoners and allowed them conjugal visits, they might stop fighting. Little did they realize that swinging at other demons, chomping off fingers that would grow back in a day or two, slicing throats that would maybe heal before the fucker bled out—all fun and games. A way to pass the time. Sport. Alphas clashed, sure. Lords and minor princes from the upper echelon of Hell's complex social strata had something to prove—win or lose your title—but it was nothing compared to the savagery we faced below.

Here, in the two hours of mingling outside our cells the warden allowed the legion,

fights erupted constantly. The powers that be learned fast we might ride under the same dark banner, but we weren't brothers in arms. We still had needs. We spilled blood to entertain ourselves. We cracked skulls for a laugh. But most of all, here, waiting to be shunted back to Hell, we were all just fucking bored.

And no one ever wanted a demon or hellion bored.

Kings of the Shit Heap: an affectionate title gifted upon me and the boys because we didn't lose. Not one bout. Seldom did we go looking for fights, our leviathan heritage a completely unfair advantage against even purebred demons, but we sure as shit finished them. When we were through, there were always fewer inmates to escort back to the hellmouth. These fuckers ought to be kissing our feet in gratitude.

They led us up and out of the underground holding area, same as they did during rec time, and while our guards shot the shit, their drawling conversation instant white noise, I hunted for windows. Squaring my shoulders, I peered through the barred panes any chance I got, starved for the untapped coastline beyond the prison walls, the miles of greenery down to white sand and choppy waters. An endless black horizon greeted me tonight, potential in the thick salty air. Eager as we were to end it all, before the apocalypse bells tolled, Earth had a great many possibilities to explore.

We'd never admit it aloud, but Hell had gotten a bit... stale.

My brothers and I, we yearned for more these days. Eternity was just such a long time to suffer stale.

"You should see the bitch they pulled for these three." Having passed the last of the windows in this sandstone corridor, I stared straight ahead, mapping the routes, the landmarks, the security measures.

"I hear she's a volunteer," one of Geralt's guards at the back added, the declaration

followed by waves of low, cruel laughter.

“Man, you know some of these magpies gotta be fucking crazy—like those dumb cunts who come here to marry their prison pen pal.”

My rightmost guard scoffed. “Bitch, he killed his last wife... What makes you so special?”

“For real, though. The delusions these females have.”

I gritted my teeth when the pair jostled me to a halt in front of an enormous metal door loaded with demonic containment sigils, tinted one-way windows on either side. As the fucker with the cattle prod and Napoleon complex sauntered forward to punch in the key code on the digital lock, I swept our newest cell, which, from this vantage point, looked like nothing more than a round empty stone room, perhaps at the base of a sentry tower.

Hardly a fitting place for a creature treated with the same reverence as the old Vestal Virgins.

Unfortunately, from what I’d gleaned over the centuries, information confirmed on this recent trip, Magpies rarely had the respect of ancient Rome’s virginal cult.

Proven now by the fact that they shoved me, Aedan, and Geralt into this pathetic, dusty round room with windows only they could look through, laughing and chatting once more about the failings of the female species. Bitch. Slut. Cunt. Whore. Hardly what a member of the sacred Magpie Order deserved, but here we were.

As soon as the door sealed shut behind us with a symphony of beeps and clicks, the first sign of modern tech this prison had to offer, we launched into inspection mode. I searched for physical weaknesses in the walls, the crevices. Geralt pounded his

enormous black-clawed fists against the door, testing its strength. Aedan tapped along the faux stonework that hid the windows, staring, unblinking, so done with operating on the prison's schedule. All this in silence punctuated only by muffled laughter and muted conversation, the windows also in need of a good soundproofing.

Something about putting caged monsters in a small room for them to fuck their aggression out on a magpie—hilarious, apparently. The only bit of fun these guards had, maybe, their lives just as regimented as that of their prisoners.

Jaw clenched, frustration mounting once again that an easy escape eluded me, I crouched and swept my fingers along the divot where the floor met the wall. Solid—and quite grating, actually. Sandstone swapped for coarse grey stone, the texture was likely to skin knees if you hit it just right. I sat back on my haunches, scowling. Not great for whoever was on the bottom.

My cock twitched at the thought of blood in the air.

How many Magpies had bled on this exact floor before today? How many had screamed and begged and bled before it was our turn?

A scowl darkened my features, Aedan and Geralt going quiet, the pair no doubt sensing the shift in my mood, the way the darkness danced around my horned shadow crown. While most demons had no qualms about raping anyone, either for pleasure or power, punishment and gain, we preferred a female who squealed and mewled and cried because we'd made her come so hard she couldn't stand on her own for a week.

Anything else was just... dull. Disrespectful of the divine feminine. Expected.

Easy, especially when the prey was so very breakable. So human.

Island legend said magpies were game for anything, ready and eager at the drop of a

hat. One look and they'd crash to their knees, mouths open and breasts bared—

Most legends were bullshit, frankly, and all the lore around this Magpie Order smelled especially foul. The organization dated back centuries, present during our past visits to the realm time and time again. Ether Island had a reputation in our world, which meant they had a place in the games we all played.

Women, supernatural and human, trafficked in. Stolen from their childhood homes and raised in the order. Inmates from the local female prison hoping for a reduced sentence. Volunteers, apparently, the thought laughable. All with a single purpose. All anointed and ritualized. All trained to service men.

Here to soothe the foulest beasts of the dark legion with their beauty.

Braced on the stone wall, I pushed back and stood, rolling my shoulders, gnashing my teeth. Ten days in here and I was desperate to fuck something, but not like this. Geralt preferred to woo and spoil. Aedan liked to tease and goad. I craved the hunt, stalking and running my lover down in the dead of night where no one could hear her squeal my name—

Beeps and clicks thundered behind me, and I turned, slow and cautious, as the door unbolted. Aedan and Geralt eased back, falling in line beside me, their arms crossed, the air electrified with our shared displeasure, thickened with skepticism—

Well then.

The door swung open.

And there she was.

Ourmagpie.

My brothers and I—we stiffened, still as panthers in the night, locked on target and waiting to pounce with big murderous claws. I breathed deep, the air suddenly tainted with elderflowers and innocence.

They sent their sacrifices in blindfolded.

Geralt snarled to my right, breaking rank first, stalking away and slamming his clawed fists to the walls, reeling around and snapping his teeth at her. Aedan frowned in the corner of my eye, tracking him, that violent response uncharacteristic of our strongest, steadfast, and usually most even-keeled brother.

Nostrils flared, Geralt pressed himself back to the wall, feet planted, long white mane bunched at his back, claws gritted into the stone—like he had to hold himself back or he'd attack. Teeth bared, cock hard, he stared our magpie down with a low rumble, and then it hit me.

Virgin.

Aedan inhaled sharply to my left, the realization shared.

A volunteer virgin dressed in white, wrapped in strips of cotton fabric that circled from the top of her head to the tip of her nose. Exposed were her ruby-red lips, smeared with ritualistic blood, a thin line dragged from the center of her plump lower lip down to her sharp chin. The fabric snaked around her neck, two strips crisscrossing down and around her breasts, wrapping, wrapping, bandaging her up—

Like a gift for monsters to tear into. The material clung to her curves, bandaged tight around her chest, the dip of her waist, the elegant swell of her hips. It then plunged to the floor in fluttering layers, exposing her legs at random. Milky-white skin like she had never tasted the sun. Bare shoulders and arms, strong, the muscle groups faintly defined all the way down to delicate wrists and regal fingers. Trimmed nails.

Hairless—not a strand on her arms, pits, or even the glimpses of leg I devoured like I'd never seen a woman before.

And perhaps I hadn't.

Never before had such a divine specimen landed in my lap, wrapped and presented so perfectly.

She cradled a ball of red yarn in both hands, a single strand of twine trailing behind her, and I eased back on my heels, snarling at the invisible window, at the hushed voices murmuring beyond the door.

Some Earthbound witches delved into Purgatory, occasionally even Hell, with an enchanted ball of red yarn just like that. If they lost their way home, they'd follow the string.

It seemed cruel to arm magpies with that here—because no matter what hell they found on the other side of that door, they couldn't leave.

That silly bit of twine would never take her home.

But she didn't seem to realize that.

No, with her next hesitant step, she unraveled more red cord, this little lamb toddling deeper into the wolf's den—the monster's lair. Lust cracked and scattered like a volatile lightning strike, illuminating my marrow and sparking wildfire in my soul. My brothers rumbled and growled, the fire spreading, possession rife in the air.

Need to claim her. Mate her. Mark her.

Now.

The sentiment snapped between us, evident in Aedan and Geralt's prowling posture, their clenched fists, their eyes zeroed in on her.

She belonged to us, this magpie, and we didn't even know her name.

Had yet to lose ourselves in her eyes.

Never stroked and fisted her hair—

But it didn't matter.

Nothing mattered anymore but taking her.

For centuries, we'd had our fill of lovers, both together and apart, but the song had never struck before. Sweet soprano, divine chorus, a lure to the apocalyptic hymns in our hearts.

Leviathans craved strong females. Males had the physicality, the world-ending malice, but females, our mates—prophecies spoke only of them, of these vicious beauties who would tear humanity apart, and in the ashes of this scorched earth, they would birth a new generation of monsters.

The world belonged to them. Males, alphas—we hunted and fought, fucked and destroyed, but the divine feminine... She was the way.

And I—we—wanted this one.

I straightened, hackles up and teeth bared when a guard's hand reached in behind her—but only to grab the door and drag it shut. Boom. It slammed and locked into place with an imposing sense of finality. Cock hard as the stone around us, firm and desperate to plunge into her, mouth swimming with saliva at the thought of biting her

right where her neck and shoulder met, I pounced with a snarl that rattled the walls and splintered the one-way glass...

Then charged clear across the room for the mate we had spent centuries hunting for—and grabbed her before they could rip her away.

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Why did I need her like she was my last breath?

It couldn't just be because I was desperate for a fuck.

I liked fucking, sure. Males, females, and everything in between—fucking here, there, and everywhere was life-giving.

But this felt like... more.

I wasn't desperate, per se. We'd faced longer stints in captivity before, down on our luck and due for a glorious comeback, in way shittier places with way shittier company.

This was different.

She was perfect, our magpie, and I hadn't even seen her face yet.

Lust pumped through me, my cock a monster, just a throbbing ivory shaft jutting toward her like a sniffer hound caught on the scent. Cato pounced first, and I followed right at his heels, eyes only for her, the idiots on the other side of the one-way mirror a thing of the past. Close enough to grab her arm and wrench her to me, to plant my violent flag on her full lips and make her squeal, our fearless leader got first dibs—always. Skin the color of fallen ash, Cato owned her by birthright, by the royalty in his damned soul, evidenced forever by the shadowy crown that circled his head like a thorny halo, a big fuck you to those white-winged bastards upstairs.

Strange, to be stuck between two forms.

As demons, we preened like bloody peacocks on Earth, easily transitioning from monster to man, beast to god, lovely and alluring for mortals far and wide. Even some supernatural folks fell for our tricks, smitten with chiseled pecs and cut abs and broad shoulders that rippled while we pounded them into a headboard.

In the pit, we let the leviathan in our blood shine through, monsters of the apocalypse standing heads and shoulders above the rabble. Geralt hooded and cloaked in darkness, a masked assassin even demons feared, his claws haunting, his voice deep as Tartarus and twice as deadly. Cato with a literal skull for a face, empty eye sockets and a round white dome, his crown even more pronounced in that form, the spikes lethal and the message clear. He lacked a mouth as a monster—a visible one, anyway, the lower half of his face pure shadow in the cowl of his regal cloak, leaving his prey to imagine what might eventually devour them alive.

I was the beastliest, with a protruding canine-esque skull, my antlers gnarled and twisted, laced with the dead flayed flesh of my victims. Body like a centaur, brute strength and raw animal instinct, I was our trio's mad dog—one look at me usually had the lesser demons running and the weaker hellions begging.

Stupid fucking gold cuffs with their enchantments and sigils, trapping us between two forms, monsters and men, the shapeshifting demon in our marrow caged. When had humans gotten so crafty? When did the topside supernatural community care if we fucked shit up on our visits? Seriously—just absurd, the way this world was turning.

Shedeserved to see us for the first time in all our brutal glory—

Cato held out his arm, blocking me from her, and while I snarled and gnashed my teeth, I obeyed, holding back from the shrinking violet at the locked door. Geralt, meanwhile, paced back and forth, his rhythm consistent but growing faster, the air hot with his desperation.

Kind of hilarious, actually, for our most even-tempered brother to lose his shit thirty seconds after scenting her.

Never gonna let you live this down.

But then suddenly he was right up my ass, growling, his breath dusting my antlers and his massive erection stabbing into my hip. Scowling, I twisted back with a flash of hellfire in my red eyes, wordlessly demanding he give me some fucking space, but he was too focused on her to give a damn about my personal bubble.

So, I slapped his cock.

Made it bounce.

Geralt reeled back and snapped his teeth.

I blew him a kiss, because, seriously—respect. Like I needed to be jabbed with that massive thing so early in the game.

The gentle movement of ash grey in the corner of my eye forced me back around, watching, enthralled, as Cato peeled the cotton bindings away, first from her eyes, then up to the top of her head, unwinding fast. Hair thick and black as a midnight storm flopped unceremoniously down her back, straight and coarse, and eyes like emeralds flecked with gold bright as some pretentious god's ichor darted around the room. Pair all that with her heart-shaped face, her full mouth painted with blood, the slash of red down her chin, the womanly curves still hidden beneath the rest of her wrapping—

Sublime.

Perfection.

And if anyone but us ever touched her again, I'd rip out their fucking spine and wear it as a necktie.

After blinking little wisps out of her eyes with thick, full lashes, she looked from Cato to me, then Geralt. Cato, me, Geralt, her eyes widening with every loop, until finally she dropped the ball of red yarn clutched in both hands and staggered back into the door, a whimper snagging in her throat, the elegant column just begging for my bite.

"I-I made a mistake!" the magpie shrieked, wheeling around and pounding her fists on the door. "Let me out! I don't want— Please, I made a mistake!"

Voice luxurious and rich, she possessed the gravitas worthy of a leviathan's mate—that voice would radiate across the apocalypse, darling—but her fear sang to the demon in me.

Scowling, Cato gritted his teeth, the muscles along his strong jawline announcing irritation like staticky neon. He then hooked an arm around her waist and hauled her away from the door. Beautiful as I found her cries for help, her pleas to let her go, I hurried after and slammed a hand over her begging mouth, culling the sweetest music I'd ever heard—for her sake, if anything.

She squirmed and wiggled, a feisty magpie indeed, but there was no escaping her gilded cage of flesh and bone, of power and ferocity beyond anything she could ever imagine. As Cato jerked her back into his chest, I squeezed her cheeks, muffling her whimpers with my palm and marking her flesh with my nails.

"Hush, little magpie," Cato urged, breathing in her hair, his words whispered at her temple, "or they'll hear you."

Nostrils flared, her gold-streaked emeralds watered, wide eyes searching for comfort

in this round room of stone and muscle. They eventually landed on me, and I just cocked my head with a grin that told her she'd find no safety here. Slowly, her gaze lifted to the obsidian antlers twisting and twining from my skull, polished and classy as fuck in this realm, not a snarl of dead flesh to be found. No, just shiny, deadly weapons these cuffs couldn't cage.

Her whimper vibrated against my palm, and I pinched her face, almost as a warning, because, fuck's sake, my erection could only get so hard.

A faint possessive tug rippled from Cato and Geralt, our feelings shared, our emotions entwined. Blood oaths centuries ago bound us together until the end of days, but so too did our ancient leviathan lineages. Considered impure by some leviathans, we had each other, birthed from aristocratic demonesses with a penchant for wilder, fiercer, more violent mates. In the eyes of the demonic masses, we were destined to be generals in the future apocalypse, yet our noble demon peers despised us for all we had—for all we could do courtesy of our absent fathers.

We leviathans were prophesized to end this world, but making a mess of it was a hell of a lot more fun.

Usually.

This little venture with the hellmouth splitting, all of us shitfaced and high off our faces, had turned into a tedious miscalculation that I was desperate to escape.

Until now.

Until her.

A shadow loomed over me, Geralt back and using that massive smoky-black mountain of a body, pure muscle and fucking huge, to block her from the one-way

windows near the door.

“If you refuse,” Cato started again as he swept her hair from her face, gathering it and swooping it to one side, exposing her throat and her fluttering pale pulse point, “and we refuse—they’ll punish you.”

Not a trick to knock her to her knees, mind you. Stories spread through the dark legion during free time that some demons had rejected their magpie for whatever reason in the last week—fickle bastards, our lot—and then the magpie was beaten to a bloody pulp right in front of them by the prison guards. Maybe to entice them, blood in the air and screams aplenty. Maybe they did it to punish her for not being alluring enough. Maybe they just needed the flimsiest excuse to get their rocks off.

I didn’t understand it, nor did I give a shit about the logic: all I knew was that magpies were brutalized if they couldn’t perform.

“But say the word,” Cato hissed, the shift of his tone from playful tormentor to earnest lover making me straighten up and take notice. I swiftly set aside the cocksure sadist in my soul, focused on him and her, on what this meant for all of us. “Tell me, little magpie, here and now, that you truly wish to escape this place...”

Cato’s bright blues were accented with black lightning bolts, and they cut from me to Geralt. Without hesitation, we rumbled our support, always up for anything he offered—especially if it was about to get violent, bloody, and awful. Besides, we had a little bird to protect now, one who needed to stretch her wings and soar before she was crowned in the apocalypse.

“Speak your truth, magpie,” Cato murmured as he dragged his lips seductively down her temple to her cheek, the openmouthed kiss a possessive brand on her soul. “Tell me you want out and we’ll leave nothing but ashes.” Fuck yes. “One word, magpie, for you, for the way you sing to us...”

Her black brows furrowed, lips trembling against my palm, her eyes wide and glossy like she couldn't dare blink and allow the tears to fall. Delicious. Do it—let me lick you. Let me sample your fear.

With a snarl, Geralt paced behind us again, his mood stormy and his bloodlust electric, the air rank with both. He was ready, our brother, to both crack skulls and kiss the ground she walked on.

“Or stay and play.” Cato swept a gentle thumb beneath her lower lashes, right eye and then the left, gathering the damp there with a sigh. “Give them what they want, keep the peace, and we will find you when it's over. But if you try to flee now without us by your side, they will hurt you, magpie.”

“Whip you down to the bone,” I added, just to really paint a broad picture in her mind's eye. I loved a good whipping, both as the flogger and the floggee, but this wasn't the time, place, or divine female meant for my usual games.

“And your flesh,” Geralt growled, his accent so much more fucking regal than ours, even in this realm, “is far too lovely to be split by anything but our teeth.”

I rolled my eyes. Poetic twat.

Chest heaving and shuddering with every panicked gasp, our magpie's emerald eyes shot around what could very well become her tomb if she wasn't careful—then sealed shut, tight and clenched, milking out a few stubborn tears that hung on her lashes. When she opened them again, a watery resolve blazed bright, plucking at my heartstrings more than I cared to admit.

So, with an arched eyebrow, a little warning not to say anything fucking stupid that would force our hand, I eased off the pressure on her cheeks, then pulled away completely. A pale pink tongue swept her lips, and she nodded, staring at the ceiling

like it was just so fascinating.

“I-I can do it,” she said thickly, her insistence all shaky and breathy—absolutely delicious. “I can take it. I’m okay.”

I snorted, flashing a sharp smile when she looked to me again. “We’ll see.”

Our magpie blanched, and maybe if Cato hadn’t wrapped both arms around her from behind, caressing her curves, mapping her figure, those wobbly knees might have finally given way. Instead, she found herself trapped in a monster’s embrace, a king with no throne, his hands sweeping over her like we already owned her, mind, body, and soul. I inhaled sharply when he gripped her hips and bucked into what I imagined to be a delectably perky ass, grinding his desire, spelling it out so there was no mistaking what exactly Stay and play meant.

“Give me your name, magpie,” I urged, injecting a bit of velvet into my tone. Usually that alone turned a lover weak and useless, putty in my cruel hand, but she lifted her chin and shook her head.

“No.”

“Why?” Geralt hissed, almost like her response pained him. Defiance sparkled in those golden streaks, and she squared up with me as Cato continued his rough exploration over her bandaged ritual dress.

“Because it’s mine,” she remarked. The challenge stoked the ever-present hellfire in me, searing the last of our recent boredom to dust.

“By the end of this, it’ll be ours,” I fired back, snagging her chin between my thumb and finger, pinching hard enough to make her squirm. “Just like your heart.”

Cato's pale gaze flicked up at me, and he smirked as he delicately grazed his teeth over her bare shoulder. Geralt, meanwhile, unleashed a snarl meant for both of us. Never a fan of the way we tormented lovers before we gave them the world, our brother, but Cato and I barely put up with him waxing romantic lyrical bullshit at them either, so, you know, fair's fair.

As Cato's hands slowly unraveled her dress, exposing her layer by layer, I pressed mine to my chest and did a little bow that was all the rage in this realm's royal courts centuries ago.

"We'll give you our names." She had no idea the gift that was, the power in one's name. Demons and fae especially worked to keep their monikers to themselves, but she didn't strike me as a witch—which meant the likelihood of her using our names to bind us to her bidding hovered around zero. "I offer them freely, with no price."

All she gave me in return was the purse of her full mouth, her skin pebbled and her eyes still defiant—

Until Cato peeled away the cotton strap around her breasts, unveiling dusty pink nipples hard enough to cut diamonds. Geralt's thunderous pacing stopped, and my gaze plummeted to the little darlings crowning her weighted breasts, supple and round, good for binding.

"The monster at your back is Cato," I said, tone light and conversational—a distraction right before I flicked her right nipple. Our magpie squeaked and jerked back into Cato, then gasped and bounced forward, probably when she got an even better feel of his cock between her ass cheeks.

"Say his name."

"C-Cato," she whispered, so quick to give in to my demand. Good. Nothing more

sublime than a lover with just the right amount of courage and defiance when, deep down, they were really just the goodest girl.

Hearing his name on her tongue, Cato flashed his teeth, some of that gentle restraint fading as he pressed closer and licked her shoulder, up her neck, and snapped at her earlobe. He had bared her down to the waist, but apparently that wasn't good enough; Geralt stepped in a moment later, jaw set, eyes narrowed, and yanked at her skirts, tearing the layered cotton stripes, slashing at them with claws more accustomed to peeling flesh from bone.

"This impatient fucker is Geralt," I told her, giddy at the sight of him spiraling faster than the rest of us for once. "Say his name."

"Geralt," she forced out in a terrified whisper. Our magpie shrank away from him, his size intimidating even to seasoned warriors in the pit, while the rest of him looked like a beautiful black titan freshly released from his underworld cage. Frustrated with her attire, he really tucked in, so focused on the task at hand, at ripping and slashing and tearing stubborn cotton, that he didn't catch her eyes drop to his shaft, then rocket back up just as fast, her cheeks on fire.

But I did.

I miss nothing, darling.

"Hasn't he got the biggest cock you've ever seen?"

Her blushes went nuclear, made worse by my smirk, by the way her discomfort so obviously thrilled me. Then, for the cherry on top, I chuckled, willing the sound to swell and bounce off the walls, the laughter echoing long after I'd stopped.

"Oh, that's right," I whispered, bracing my hands on my knees as I dropped into her

eyeline. “Not sure you’ve ever seen a cock before, eh, little virgin?”

Visibly shaken, she looked me dead in the eye as I grinned, always the cat who caught, defeathered, and gutted the canary. Why a virgin would ever volunteer to become an abused member of the ancient Magpie Order was beyond me. Even more curious: Why would the order use a virgin for this—servicing the dark legion, our miserable stay in this realm temporary at best?

Virgins had such value in the supernatural world, from the properties in their blood to the way they tasted when consumed. This... seemed like such a waste, but like fuck I’d complain about finding our virginal queen by chance.

“We can smell it on you, little magpie,” Cato whispered heatedly, teeth flashing at the shell of her ear as he cupped her weighty breasts and squeezed, rolling her nipples between his fingers so that she whined. “Innocence, untouched, unclaimed...”

Until now. I added a second pair of hands to her breasts, infatuated with the dusky rose hue of her nipples, with the way they paled when pinched—the way she shot onto her toes in a panic when I pinched hard.

“Say his name,” I murmured, jutting my chin to the master at her back. Our magpie swallowed hard, her throat bobbing with a knot I wanted to work out with my thumb.

“Cato,” she whispered, finally leaning into him, her shoulders flush to his chest. Possession tightening like a snare, I flicked my gaze toward Geralt, the hulking monster looming over us transfixed by her lips.

“Touch him.” My tone told her where. Not his sculpted chest or his defined torso. Not his pale grey scars from battles long forgotten, his left arm sliced to shit. There. “And say his name.”

She reached for him with a trembling hand, stroking the swollen head of his enormous cock, touching down on the wet pearl at its tip. Then, with a deep breath, she cupped his shaft, her gaze to the ground, submissive enough to make us all snarl.

“Geralt.”

He snatched her hand with a groan, the sentimental fuck, and kissed the top of it. Gentle. No teeth. No fire. No malice. He was the softest leviathan-demon hybrid I’d met—but he could cleave an entire army in half solo. I’d seen it, laughing in the background while he cut down foes left and right like a hot knife through butter. An enigma, our brother. Highly valued in our trio, no matter how mercilessly we took the piss out of him on a daily basis.

The magpie’s gaze snapped up, her mouth parted with a soft gasp as Geralt turned her hand over to kiss her palm, then the tender underside of her wrist. Over her shoulder, Cato met my eyes, and my grin turned feral just as his sharpened. Without warning, I snapped up her throat, collaring her and wrenching her out of that lovesick bubble Geralt always made without even trying.

“Aedan,” I hissed as I closed in on her, lost in her wide, watery eyes, in the way the gold slashed the green like she was so much more than human. “Say it back to me.”

She squirmed, hands flying to my forearm and tugging to no avail. Refusal to obey a direct order resulted in me squeezing, and she winced, tongue swiping across her lips in the most fucking distracting display that I growled.

“A-Aedan.”

“Louder.”

“Aedan,” she offered with a little more gusto, squealing as Cato busied himself with

her nipples, pinching and plucking and twisting. Geralt, meanwhile, stole one of her hands from my arm, back to kissing it, to mapping the pale veins under her flesh.

I, meanwhile, pressed just hard enough to the ones in her throat, highly aware of the pressure needed to make her head spin. “Louder.”

“Aedan!” My name ricocheted around the room like a wayward bullet, pinging and clanging. It made my cock ache and my heart sing, and my cheek twitched, feral smile wavering, because if I didn’t bury this cock in her cunt fucking soon, I’d lose it.

Muffled laughter erupted from the other side of the invisible glass.

We all stilled. Heat flared in splotchy red patches across her cheeks, her eyes darting there, to them, and Cato bared his teeth. Rage raked up my back, and had it not been for these cuffs, for all the supernatural kryptonite embedded everywhere in this bloody prison, I’d rip their heads off and fuck their gaping mouths for sport.

The air crackled and hissed, our raw power pushing back against the sigils, against the spells that bound us, but instead of losing it like I would have before she walked through the door, I thought of someone outside our little group for a change. While Cato snaked his arms around our magpie, hugging her, claiming her with something as simple as one arm cut across her body between her breasts, the other snug around her waist, I shifted my stance so she couldn’t look for them. Those dancing greens eventually settled on me, no longer hunting for the windows, and Geralt quickly fell in beside me, all of us blocking out the howling, nattering guards.

“Little magpie,” Cato purred as he nuzzled her hair, then nipped at her temple, her sharp cheekbone, “those ingrates are inconsequential now. Ignore them.”

No one with a brain would defy Cato, but I’d seen it before, and with this exquisite virgin, a human who clearly had no fucking idea what she was doing with her

precious life, I felt the message needed an extra push to really land.

“And if you don’t,” I informed her as Geralt peeled the last of her dress away, the big lug distracted once again with her body, “I’ll paint your ass raw before we even get started.”

Eyes closed, our magpie nodded, but rather than basking in her surrender, Geralt just snarled, his presence suddenly suffocating.

“I cannot resist much longer,” he seethed, his scowl burning a hole straight through my skull. “Enough of these games.”

“Patience, brother,” Cato insisted before I could pop him in the jaw. “She is worth the wait.”

This time, when our magpie blushed, it wasn’t with humiliation. No, something about the warmth of the red sheen, the flutter of her lashes, and the biting at her lower lip—that flattered her.

Oh, darling, we can make you feel so good.

This was nothing.

A drop in the ocean of the worship male leviathans heaped upon their chosen mates.

“Isn’t he merciful?” I whispered, sweeping some of that thick black away from her face, swooping it behind her ear as I eased closer. “Cato is your judge, jury, and executioner... On your knees, magpie, so he feels your gratitude.”

That word—magpie—came out a sneer, because I craved her actual name and my patience was wearing thin. Still, there were games to be played, and when she slowly

started to fold, I grabbed her and whirled her around.

“Continue.”

Back to me, our magpie sank to the ground and settled on her knees. Without prompting, she fisted the base of Cato’s rock-hard cock, but just as she sat up straighter, lips parted, he caught her chin in one hand. Cradling it, stroking her jaw with his thumb, he locked onto those stunning emeralds, and briefly, they were lost to each other. Connection sparked, hot and wanting, the room suddenly dipped in hellfire.

Longing—yearning—tugged in my gut, the sensation shared so viscerally by Geralt that it seemed to pain him. His features darkened, that long white mane spilling forward as he bowed his head with a growl, tresses just begging for her sweet caress.

It really is her, isn’t it?

Ours.

The one we’d been waiting for, hunting for, since we were young, pampered, spoiled halfbreeds running wild on our mothers’ estates, tormenting servants and searing damned human souls for fun.

Well then.

Nothing else to consider.

Once we were finished here, we sure as shit weren’t going back to that sad holding cell.

And she wasn’t going anywhere without us.

With a slight bend in his knees for her comfort, Cato steered her to his cock, then groaned, head falling back as soon as her lips closed around the tip. Eyes on him like she wanted to read his pleasure, track his response, our magpie took a few inches into her mouth, then retreated. It was a slow dance, tender and intimate—me and Geralt almost forgotten.

And that just wouldn't fly, baby.

Now that Cato had claimed first taste of our new mate, she was fair game. Head foggy with lust, I crouched behind her and really touched her, mapping her figure, tracing the dips and curves. They kept magpies clean-shaven, her former masters, from her pits to her arms to her legs, right down to the cleft of her thighs.

Teeth gritted, control tenuous, I delved low, plunging two fingers between her slick folds, and stroked her swollen clit.

“When we make you come,” I taunted in her ear, “you’ll give us your name.”

She tried to shake her head, but the task proved difficult with a huge cock in her mouth, Cato's shaft glistening with saliva, her mouth working one half and her fist the other. Her core shivered as I parted her lower lips, the air scented with her wet heat, her arousal thick and obvious, so apparent that Geralt nearly lost it, his snarl splintering some of the grey bricks around us. He clapped down on my shoulder, claws slashing my ivory flesh, gripping hard enough that he'd crack my fucking clavicle if he didn't get his shit together soon.

But who could blame him?

She was wet and wanting for us.

The craving was mutual.

And that was always a game changer.

“You have the prettiest cunt I’ve ever seen, magpie, and I’ve barely had a proper look,” I rumbled. Toying with her clit, stroking and massaging no matter how bratty she was with those clenched thighs, I then licked up her spine to the base of her neck. Never had anyone tasted, smelled, felt so fucking good—so life-giving that if we went without her, we’d shrivel up and die.

As she worshipped Cato’s cock, her eyes hooded and heavy, a bit of drool dribbling from the corners of her mouth, I painted the prettiest picture.

“If we were alone,” I told her, glancing between Cato and Geralt, our minds so alike after all these centuries, “I’d have you ass up with your cheek to the ground, thighs spread wide, so we could watch you touch yourself.”

But we weren’t alone.

While we’d ordered her to ignore them, they were there, lurking, watching, reveling in the destruction of a magpie in a way that those fuckers had probably hoped would be more violent than this.

They didn’t deserve a show like the one I had in mind—but next time.

Next time, she wouldn’t escape a single sinful thing.

Her whimper finally pushed Geralt too far, and from the look in his eyes, the demonic roar thundering in his chest, it was either get out of his way or be run the fuck over.

“Here, you surly bastard.” I stood and gestured to her kneeling figure. “Get us her name, then.”

Despite the space given, Geralt still shoved me aside—but I came back swinging with a shove of my own, then a ram of my antlers that gashed his chest wide open. As the inky onyx flesh stitched itself back together, Geralt lunged at me, and then there we were, two snarling idiots pushing and shoving, fighting, all flying fists and bared teeth. He pulled his punches like always, and I did my best not to actually gore him—like always.

“Brothers.” Cato heaved a long, luxurious sigh, his hands woven into our magpie’s thick black hair. “Is this really the time?”

We stumbled apart, chests heaving, muscles clenched and tight, adrenaline spiked and bloodlust piqued. My split lip spread wider with a manic grin, and Geralt brushed the black, bloody smear from his cheek with a roll of his eyes and a smirk shared between brothers. Skirmish over, he folded to his knees, then crawled to our magpie from behind, huge and imposing, and twisted onto his back.

“Open wide, sweet magpie,” he urged as he scooted under her, gently prying apart her calves first, then her knees, his intentions obvious. “Let me in.”

But ever the frightened songbird, she mewled around Cato’s cock and tried to jerk away. The hands in her hair mounted her in place, Cato’s pace slow and kind—but still at his pleasure. Only when he was through with her would she ever escape him, and like fuck that would happen now.

“Do not fear me,” Geralt drawled, inching deeper between her thighs, eyes on the prize and white brows furrowed with die-hard determination. “Fear is for the sheep.” He stroked her legs and the globes of her perky ass, massaging her, coaxing her as I never would. He was a catching more flies with honey sort—I preferred nets and traps, the verbal warfare sometimes even more exciting than the deed itself. “Easy, sweetness... Open for me.”

Tonight, the honey worked, because there she was, shuffling in place, making room for this massive monster as his head scooted beneath her. Geralt lifted her legs and braced her feet over his shoulders, then lurched up, licking her slick sex with a groan that made my cock twitch. He tasted her deeply, face buried, and wrapped clawed hands around her thighs, keeping her right there no matter how she squirmed and squealed. Arched up, he tucked in, his skin littered with telltale goose bumps, nipples as tight as hers, and cock desperate for attention. Pillowed by that long, silky white mane, he feasted on our magpie like she was his first meal, his last, devouring her cunt while she whimpered and gasped around Cato's shaft.

And I refused to sit on the sidelines one fucking second longer.

Shoulders back, erection bobbing with every stride, I marched next to Cato, smirking when her eyes fluttered open and immediately launched to mine. For a few beats, I enjoyed the show, the way Cato's length lazily plundered her mouth, like he had all the time in the world. Then, when his right hand fell away, I replaced it with mine, threading my fingers through her hair, weaving control like a tapestry, and then jerked her back so that he popped out of her mouth with a wet suction noise that made her blush.

"Say his name."

"Cato," she managed, her voice heavy with desire—and maybe a whiff of shame. Maybe she hadn't expected to enjoy this. Maybe she hadn't thought we would consider her pleasure at all.

I tugged her head toward my jutting cock. "Now, say mine."

She fluttered those damp black lashes, and then, out of nowhere, a little bratty expression flashed up at me. Those full, dribble-soaked lips pressed, almost like she was about to say, Mine, but then—

“Aedan,” she whispered. Protectiveness spiked in my gut, the need to guard and treasure this kneeling creature with my life pounding through me out of nowhere. Schooling my features, refusing to let her see that weakness just yet, I arched an eyebrow and fisted her hair harder.

“And now yours.”

She gulped and barely shook her head. “No.”

Excellent. Hungry as I was for it—not yet. Not until we’d ruined her just a little more, spoiled all other lovers for her so she had no choice but to stay.

“Pity.” I then thrust between her slightly parted lips without warning. While Cato had been merciful, allowing for her fist to make up for her shortcomings, I had always been the crueler master. After hitting the back of her throat, assessing just how deep she could realistically take me, I fucked her faster and meaner than he had, no room for her fist with her mouth full of my cock. Her sputters and coughs went ignored, drool on her chin, her chest, her eyes wide and watery again. With Cato’s hand on the one side of her head, mine on the other, and Geralt rooting her to the spot with his admittedly talented mouth assaulting her sex—she was stuck.

Helpless.

Ours.

Only when her eyes rolled back in her head did I stop, pulling out and passing her back to Cato. My crowned shadow brother gave her a few moments to chase her breath, wiping her chin and cheeks with his knuckles, cooing sweet nothings at her in a leviathan tongue few understood anymore. Then, when the tears stopped falling and her chest stopped heaving, he had his way with her again, slow and steady, even taking a moment to wrap her shaky hand around the base of his shaft for her. It had

no rhythm, no consistency, and she almost clung to him for balance, bobbing her head as best she could, struggling under all our attentions.

She whined when he retreated—almost like she knew if it wasn't Cato's cock in her mouth, it was mine, and nothing about me had ever been gentle. This time, he allowed me to twist both hands into her coarse locks, and I fucked her face with earnest, her tits jiggling and core shuddering, her hands slapped to my thighs and blunt nails jabbing in as if that might stop me.

Whenever I felt the urge to spill my seed down her throat, I eased off and passed her to Cato again. Back and forth she went, one to the other as Geralt feasted on her, his groans and growls filling the room, the perfect accompaniment to her strangled cries.

Eventually, I handed her off to Cato for the time being—small mercies and all that shit—and crouched beside her. Geralt had her worked into a writhing, grinding, sweaty mess, his hair no longer that neat silky pillow but a choppy sea of white beneath them.

“Pause,” I muttered, tapping his shoulder and waiting. His eyes snapped open as he lifted our magpie ever so slightly off his arousal-drenched face, and I held up two fingers. Literally two seconds, you pussy-obsessed fuck. Those black eyes rolled, and he hefted her higher, handling her like she was nothing—because, really, her frame was light as air compared to the rest of us.

Tempted as I was to pinch and flick and twist that engorged clit, I eased two fingers into her instead with the knowledge that Geralt would have fucked her with his formidable tongue by now. She tightened around the intrusion, her squeals muffled by Cato, but I ignored her, wetting both fingers to my liking, followed by my thumb. Then, satisfied, I shuffled around, watching, the beast in my soul savage at the sight of Geralt lunging up to reclaim her. His arms coiled tighter around her thighs, and, like he sensed where this was headed, he tilted her forward, really zeroed in on the

crest of her cunt while spreading her perky cheeks for me.

Exposing the puckered hole there.

Thumb and two fingers slick and sticky with her own desire, I slipped a tip in without warning. Her scream made Cato hiss, both his hands in her hair, hips thrusting ever so slightly as he face-fucked her with more gusto this time around.

“Tut, tut, nameless vixen,” I crooned, nudging a good inch in, followed swiftly by another, her ass a tight inferno I knew I wouldn’t have the pleasure of destroying—this time. Cato was just such an ass hog. “Nothing is off-limits to us anymore.”

Much to my surprise, one deep breath and she relaxed just enough for me to plunge knuckle-deep. After some admittedly cautious probing—virgins required much more finesse than I offered seasoned lovers—I went for that second finger, Geralt so deep in her cunt it was a wonder we hadn’t broken her yet. She swatted back at me, arms free but the rest of her caged, and I scoffed, responding with a cheeky smack to one of her cheeks, loving the way it jiggled.

“Oh, stop,” I drawled, swapping fingers for my thumb, prepping her with her own juices, working her as best I could before that cock in her mouth inevitably found its way here. “Stop fighting, magpie. We can smell the want on you.” Dense and heady, it surpassed all our natural scents combined, the stonewalled room drenched in her.

“We see it in your blushes,” Cato added, every word strained, his resolve to be the gentle, merciful king fading by the thrust.

“You love having all three holes filled,” I carried on, keenly aware of the way her muscles tensed and her body shook, the obvious signs of her desire soaring and staining Geralt’s mouth. “And we’ve barely even started with you—”

A staticky whine slammed through unseen speakers, and we all flinched, Cato's hackles up, his crown shivering, his eyes screaming bloody murder.

"You assholes have ten more minutes," came a crackly but familiar male voice from the ceiling, "and then it's back in the cell. Use your time wisely."

Collective rage detonated from us like a bomb, and this time, our magpie genuinely tried to escape, pushing and shoving and flailing, almost like she sensed our wrath and wanted no part in it. Despite the fire in his eyes, the war drums pounding in the pulse point on his neck, Cato dropped down to cradle her head, murmuring sweet nothings to calm her.

No matter how a leviathan raged, his mate was never the target. Never.

The same couldn't be said for demons, naturally, but having been raised by three strong matriarchal demonesses, only a demon with the brain the size of a fruit fly would turn on their females. Most male demons didn't share our opinion—but this gorgeous creature hadn't found herself in the company of those pureblooded dickbags.

She had been chosen by sons of the apocalypse.

And she would be protected and treated as the dark queen she would one day become, no matter her humanity—no matter her physical frailty. We wanted all of her.

But we had ten minutes to finish this charade before things took a turn for the bloody out there.

Still crouched, Cato worked her clit with two fingers, and I left her ass alone—for now. Joining my shadow-crowned brother, I sat back on my heels as Geralt doubled his efforts, his knees up, this a full-body task. As the color dripped from her cheeks to

her chest to her navel, heat rolling off her in invisible waves, a sweaty sheen across her skin and eyes clenched shut like she was fighting her own pleasure with everything she had—I grabbed her throat.

Her eyes snapped open.

I squeezed, my sharp smile making her jerk and shiver in place.

But when she finally shattered, she pressed her lips together, biting down hard on the lower one as a squeal lodged in her throat. Stubborn creature, right to the very end.

“Say it,” I snarled, yanking her forward as Geralt licked and licked and licked, her climax the only scent in the room now. “Give it to us!”

She had made a deal.

Sort of.

An orgasm for her name.

“Now, little magpie,” Cato barked. He then delved between her forcefully parted thighs and pinched her clit. “Your name.”

She finally looked at us—really looked—with stars in her eyes, tears swelling and twinkling like diamonds. “Ileana.”

“Ileana,” I hissed, knowing I’d never taste another lover’s name on my tongue for as long as I lived.

“Ileana,” Cato choked out, his voice demonic and deep, nightmare fuel to the fuckers listening outside.

“Ileana,” Geralt declared, thoughtful and sweet as he kissed our mate’s name along her inner thigh. She grabbed at my arm, my hand still locked around her throat, then shyly peeked over to watch Geralt worship her.

And I—

Fuck.

I was already in love.

Page 3

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Ileana, Ileana, Ileana...

There was no name sweeter.

No taste finer.

No mate brighter...

Mine.

Nay. Ours.

I would end this world for her. Start the apocalypse this moment, eons ahead of prophesized doom and destruction—just to make her smile. Slit throats and tear out spines and crack knees and flay foes just to make her laugh. All this and more I would do for her and only her, now until the end of our days, our fates entwined, our connection eternal.

Did she feel it, too?

Could she sense the bond in the air, the twist of her soul's path down the trail less trodden, dark and prickly and dangerous—yet the danger would never, ever touch her.

Or I'd set it alight and dance in its ashes.

For now, I focused on swallowing the unmitigated rage at some gaggle of human

males daring to tell us how long we had with our mate. This stint in prison had been such a bore, full of hibernation in our cell and quarrels with the rest of the legion, counting down the days until they walked us back to the hellmouth and pitched us headlong into the fire, this invasion a wash and plans for another already underway.

All that changed with her.

Our magpie.

Ileana.

Couldn't go back now.

Couldn't abandon her here.

Never, never, never.

Yet she had much to learn about leviathans and demons, let alone a blend of the two such as her mates were. Our collective anger had startled her, the allotted ten measly minutes nothing, a blink in how my brothers and I preferred our lovemaking. Fucking. To Aedan and Cato, it was always fucking. I'd turned my nose up at the term before, my respect for femalekind enduring and deeply ingrained.

With her, here and now, I realized that was all it was before. Fucking. Mindless rutting, something to pass the time before we found our mate—on Earth of all places, a poor magpie stuck in a cage.

A cage she... volunteered for.

The news still shocked me, but that was a discussion for another time, another place. A better place.

For now, I reined in my wrath—for I never craved her fear. Let her see us, love us, ride into the doom of this world with us, exactly as we are. Embrace us for what we are, every part of it, for we would do the same with her. This mating was nothing; I suspected none of my brothers would even properly bite her here. To do so felt... cheap. I knew nothing about her, but all that would change once they opened the door. Golden cuffs be damned, we would take our mate from this miserable place and never look back.

Her delectable cunt, smeared with her climax, swollen and tender from my attentions—it lifted from my face. Ash-grey hands maneuvered her, Cato with his shadow crown and his focused expression arranging her down my body, settling her at the helm of my aching cock. Urgency slashed the air. No one said a word, but the sentiment echoed between we three bonded brothers, the tension tugging at my navel and twining around my heart like thorns.

We needed to mate her now—or we might lose her to another.

None of us had expected a human-supernatural alliance on Ether Island.

We had expected to flood the coast and spread our darkness to the nearest continent.

And we ended up here.

For all our centuries of experience, mankind found a way to surprise us.

“Gently, brother,” Cato warned, our eyes briefly meeting, his so very blue in the dim lighting, the black of his inner demon slicing across those irises like a bleak horizon. “Be slow.”

“Of course,” I rumbled. It needn’t be said, but let him ease his own fears for her at my expense. For her first time, I would have changed everything. I’d have spent the

day worshipping between her thighs, making her come again and again until she couldn't take it a second longer. As if preparing a sacrifice, I'd have bathed her in ambrosia and milk and honey. Massaged her taut muscles. Kissed her. I would have readied her properly, laid her on a bed of flower petals while Aedan and Cato huffed and rolled their eyes, forever unimpressed with my notion of romance.

Let them scoff.

Finally, they would understand—with her, all my gentle, romantic practice would make sense.

And then they would do it, too. In their own ways, these stubborn fools would worship her.

Our reality was so stark, so bleak, but it softened around the edges somewhat as Ileana braced one hand on my chest, then nudged tentatively back toward my cock. Swollen lower lip snagged between her teeth, she stilled when the tip poked her entrance, inhaling sharply, and looked back to me. Maybe for support. Maybe for permission. I could provide both if she needed it—yet she suddenly lost herself in the wet around my mouth, her juices painting my lips, my cheeks, my chin.

I let them be, for I loved the smell of her right there. My sweetness. My beauty. Food and wine and blood would never taste as it once had now that I'd tasted her.

“Tell me when to slow, Ileana.” My whisper startled her—made her jerk herself back so that my cock slipped just into her slick entrance. She stiffened, eyes wide with panic, and despite the need shredding me apart inside, the clock counting down, I stole a few precious seconds to sweep her thick black hair over her shoulders, to bask in her gold-and-emerald eyes, to pinch her sharp little chin. “Use me. Set yourself free.”

Virginity was a damning chain in this world. Our supernatural cousins hunted for it, paid handsomely for it. Her order used it to their advantage. It mattered not to me if she had never mated once in her life or bedded a thousand lovers before us. She was ours now. Be rid of the damn thing and fly.

Familiar fingers brushed my cock—certainly not hers. No, these were far cooler, far firmer. Confident. Aedan. While I stroked her thighs, Aedan held me aloft and Cato crouched by her side, easing her onto my shaft as time, or the lack thereof, pressed in on this miserable little room like a choking smog. Ileana gasped when I stretched her, and I closed my eyes, pleasure spiking in my core and addling my brain, then fought the violent urge to pound up and scent virgin blood in the air. With all that I possessed, I resisted taking her as I truly wished—because we hadn't spent the day readying her. One orgasm was just unacceptable, truth be told.

A second hand suddenly pressed into my chest, and I glanced down at both of hers, so pale compared to my obsidian flesh, as she steadied herself—then eased down on her own. Brave creature. Strong. Sure of herself, pushing down, pausing briefly whenever she winced, all of us holding our collective breath until she sunk home.

“What a brave little magpie,” Cato praised, our thoughts aligned. Grinning, studying her through a hooded gaze, he stroked her cheek and kissed her shoulder. She didn't know him well enough to ascertain the nuances just yet—but he fancied her. Deeply. If it wasn't a piece of his body, he'd have yanked that horned crown off and placed it on her head.

“How the fuck did you manage that cock on your first try?” Aedan drawled. Despite his usual surface-level sneer, my brother said it as a compliment, and as he popped around her left side to nibble at her neck and cup her breast, he did so to worship—not to pry. Not to tease out information. Not to prolong the agony with my balls on the brink of implosion and the demonic lust in my heart surging and—

“D-do you want to have that conversation,” Ileana murmured, her lashes fluttering, her hands curling over my pecs, “or—”

“Or.” Cato’s hands cascaded down her figure, tracing her lovely curves all the way to her hips. “Very much or, goddess.”

And there it was.

My kingly brother was gone.

Together, he and Aedan rocked her, helping her find a gentle pace that while not as slow as a virgin deserved riding my substantial shaft, it did the trick under the circumstances. I, meanwhile, caressed her thighs and locked onto her eyes, whether she looked at me or not. Every so often our gazes met, and she shivered, dipping a toe into the darkness before leaping back out, uncertain but curious.

I could die happy, here, now, buried deep inside a creature who was beauty unparalleled.

One day soon, she would find her inner lioness and roar, proving once and for all why she had been chosen by the hands of Fate to be our mate.

By the time her blushes returned, her nipples pebbled tight and her eyes clenched shut, Cato left Aedan to maintain our dance. He stood, and when he steered that raging erection to her, Ileana already had her mouth open, ready and waiting for him. They locked eyes—an impressive feat if she sensed he ruled the group with a fair fist. No fear there. No terror. Only want. They surrendered to it as he thrust his cock deep once, twice, three times, then retreated and hurried around behind her. Panic skittered across her features, and as Aedan backed off, I cuddled her to me, bathing her neck in the sweetest kisses, my arm locked around her lower back like a snare.

“We wouldn’t normally rush this,” Cato insisted as he arranged himself between my open thighs, her hips spread even wider now, her back arched in his favor. “But if we don’t mate you fully, there’s room for some other bastard to steal you.”

Ileana bucked and mewled when he smoothed her ass cheeks open, then looked to me. “S-steal me?”

“Never,” I whispered, a vow I’d keep until the end of time. She let out a soft breath, then stilled when Cato licked his fingers and thrust gently into her tightest hole.

“Mates are highly valued in leviathan society,” Aedan told her, suddenly by my head and cupping her chin, stroking her slightly parted lips with his thumb. “Honored. Prized. You’re like no other, Ileana.” I tilted my head back, impressed: never had he sounded so smitten. Never had he handled a lover with such tenderness. Never had affection made his eyes heavy and his voice rich. He was a monster—we all were—but for her, in this moment, he was salvation. “You’re ours, Ileana.”

“And we will claim you thusly,” I added as Cato swapped his fingers for his cock below. “And I swear to you, we will destroy all who stand between us.”

Those prison guards had ceased to exist the second I saw her. Let them hear my declaration. Let them ready themselves for battle if they dared keep her from us when the clock expired.

She blinked down at me, cheeks aflame, then brushed a trembling finger along my jaw—only to reel back and squeal as Cato worked his way into her. While we would never hurt her seriously, not even if she begged, this couldn’t be...

It must have been a lot, two large cocks for her first time.

So, while Cato claimed her there, Aedan and I soothed her here. He stroked her hair

and massaged her shoulders, using that sharp tongue of his for good. I saw to her hips, her quivering thighs, and her frantic glances, easing up every so often to kiss her. No thrusting tongue. No snapping teeth. Just a gentle union of our lips that made her melt and moan, her fingers twisting sweetly into my white tresses, then jerking them with every inch Cato gained.

“Goddess,” he groaned with that final thrust, all of us jolting as he finally sank home, “you are a wonder.”

Well and truly, our mate was extraordinary. She had done so well for her first time—

I blinked a dash of the lovestruck fog away as she cuddled into my chest.

Was it her first time?

To take two demonic leviathan hybrids like this, in so short a time, with no tears save those of protest at the start—

No.

How could she smell so deliciously untouched if she wasn't a virgin? Her purity saturated the air the moment she appeared in the doorway; I'd smell it a mile away. In my profession outside of the dark legion, outside of cavorting with Aedan and Cato—I steered clear of that scent. Those with it didn't deserve my malice, my savagery, no matter how high my client bid to coax my hand.

Instinct had never led me astray before. Not with my blood brothers, my eternal bonds. Not with my work as an assassin. Not in my choice to reject the romantic advances of females who came before her.

And it surely hadn't done me wrong with Ileana.

So, eyes closed, lost in the oblivion of her body, I caressed and cradled what I could, obsessed with her smooth skin and her curves, her muscular tone paired with soft womanhood. As soon as Cato ground down, I bucked up, our magpie caged between us, trapped in a prison of pleasure as we worked her nerves, determined not only to mark her with our scent and seed, our possessive bites destined for another night, but to ensure she plunged into the abyss at least once more before this was over.

An ivory hand suddenly delved between us, and Aedan steered her up. Not jerked or ripped or yanked. Gently, he guided Ileana upright, and Cato eased back to allow her the movement—just enough space for my blood brother to stand over me and thrust into her moaning, whimpering, whining mouth.

There.

Pleasure tightened in my core.

Fully claimed, every hole taken, our scent and our bruises all over her flesh, soon to be filled with our seed—

“Three minutes, inmates,” came the most unwelcome crackly reminder from some hidden speaker. “Don’t nut inside her.”

Fuckers. Snarls filled the room, indignance and rage blazing like an inferno with poor Ileana caught in its flames. We’d heard through the grapevine that no demon from the legion had been permitted to empty himself inside a magpie, these humans so utterly terrified of monstrous hybrids.

Or, perhaps, should a magpie fall pregnant, they lost their worth for nine long months, unable to be traded and used and bought—

I gritted my teeth, driving into her that much harder, determined to make her

mine—ours—so deeply in the next three minutes that no man or beast could contest our mated bond. Cato responded in kind, grinding and grinding, as if mindful that his usual rough thrusts and brutal pumps might be too much for our Ileana. Above, Aedan's hips jerked in sharper bursts, his ass flexed and clenched, until finally he pulled her back by her hair and spilled his seed across her bouncing breasts.

Better this way, actually, to paint her with his most intimate scent right out in the open so the rest of the legion could smell it on her when we strolled out of this place.

As soon as he stepped away, sauntering around behind Cato to block us from the windows, I locked eyes with my shadow-crowned brother. He gripped our magpie by the shoulder, really bucking into her as I rocked up to meet him, cocks sliding over one another inside her, Ileana's eyes rolled back and her mouth hanging open, cheeks flushed and nipples so damn tempting.

But there was a more pressing matter at hand.

Do we follow the rules?

I arched an eyebrow and jutted my chin toward the door. With a gravelly hum, Cato smirked and shook his head.

Nay, then.

My lips matched his, quirked and defiant. It ended today, both our imprisonment in this tedious facility and Ileana's captivity within her order. Rules no longer applied. No one, human nor god nor Lord Lucifer himself, could tell us how we were to mark our mate. When it was done, when we breezed through the moonlight, carrying her exhausted body over the stony paths to the waterfront, we would take her away from all this.

Allow her time to heal from whatever horrors her sad little order had inflicted on her.

Champion her ascension from magpie to queen.

It is decided.

And only a fool with a death wish would stand in our way.

We moved faster and faster, riding our darling until Cato's rhythm faltered, bliss twisting his features and choking her name from his lips. She shuddered and flailed between us, that telltale flush streaking her chest, her cheeks, her cries squeaky and her eyes wide—and that was my undoing. Feeling her come around my cock one final time before the clock expired... Gone.

Body pulsing, I filled her with my seed, with pleasure and promise, the mating bond throttling my heart and leaving a lump the size of Purgatory in my throat.

Shouts and curses erupted from the other side of the one-way glass, muffled but distinctly enraged, and I pushed onto my elbows as Ileana twisted around, all of us heaving, panting, trembling, and weak from our shared climax.

Adrenaline hissed through my veins like a lit match.

Now the fight began.

Time to demonstrate to our mate that we were worthy of her love, that we could protect her from all foes.

Her nails gritted into my chest as the shouts amplified and the door locks clicked and clacked, yet just as I was about to comfort her, to promise she had nothing to fear, Ileana turned back to me with a shockingly dark smile, her emeralds a golden

firestorm, her expression worthy of any apocalyptic queen.

Perhaps...

Perhaps even the apocalyptic queen.

Wait.

Still rather groggy, riding high on bliss, bloodlust, and adrenaline, I frowned up at her.

What?

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Contrary to popular belief in this dismal stone cell, I was not, in fact, a virgin.

Though there was this twisted sense of shock, flattery, and sincerity in the way these beautiful monsters treated me when they thought I was one—something new and intriguing, a pull in my gut I had learned not to ignore since my fall.

As Cato tenderly retreated from my bruised bottom, the door that was once locked and barred came crashing open, the last of the dead bolts clattering free, the metal pounding off stone. A storm of boots followed, guards charging in, and a fist locked around my forearm—steely, powerful, terrifying...

Had I been human.

This felt like the beat of a butterfly's wing, yet I moved as if he had authority over me, flailing back with a squeal, naked and dripping. The scene unfolded like a flash-bang: quiet in the aftermath of a glorious group fuck, then guards and boots and shouts. Peace one moment, war the next. My monsters charged, Geralt lunging off the floor, Cato stampeding from the right, Aedan charging from the left with his antlers set to gore—

Then a hail of gunfire.

Warfare barely affected me anymore, but the sight of my lovely darklings peppered with bullet holes, all ten guards firing like their lives depended on it...

Well, if they hadn't sealed their fate earlier when they failed my test, they certainly did so now.

Knocked down by the sheer unrelenting force of it all, my monsters crawled after me despite being absolutely riddled with holes. Thick black blood oozed from the wounds, the liquid akin to squid's ink but far more viscous—and tinged with gold. I cocked my head as two guards dragged me out, taken with the way that whiff of divinity sparkled beneath the dull overhead lighting.

Just as I thought.

They espoused the softer side of leviathan culture, a race of monsters waiting for the Great War, the war to end all wars between Heaven and Hell—shadows of the apocalypse. For all their terror, they valued their female mates far more than their own lives, hailing them future queens, leaders of their bloody charge that would one day drown this realm in a storm of blood and fire.

But they were part demon, too.

No mistaking the black ooze, the savagery in their twisted souls courtesy of my brother's cruelest followers.

Curious. Demons were easy. Leviathans—far more complex.

I'd never met a creature from both worlds before, never mind three.

No wonder they so intrigued me—

I gritted my teeth as I was dragged none too kindly over the threshold. Before the rest of the guards backed out, guns up and formation laughable, I spied my monsters rising from the ashes, their wounds stitching shut, murder in their eyes and war in their snarls.

But then the last guard ducked out, swiping a slash of cotton along the way and tossing it at me. The door slammed shut, bolted up tight and etched with sigils

designed to contain the darkest of this world.

They meant nothing to me.

Just a silly bit of filigree on a depressing door in a depressing building on depressing, pathetic Ether Island.

Fists and knees and shoulders pounded that door, their roars shuddering underfoot, and as eight of the ten ill-trained guards rearmed their equipment, two hung back with me. Frowning, I dragged what was left of my sacrificial gown across my chest and between my thighs, smearing most of the sticky white away, their collective scent and seed full of ownership and pride. For the sake of this charade, I had coveted my modesty before, shying away from guards, from the prying male gaze that hounded every magpie delivered here tonight.

Now, I stood before them naked and pleasantly sore, my mask breaking apart a piece at a time with the fewer fucks I gave.

Something caught my eye.

Red.

Yarn.

The ball given to each magpie before she stepped into her own private hell for the night. A joke, something no doubt suggested by a higher-up who had some surface-level knowledge of why Hecate and Lilith's witches used red string to guide them into Purgatory in the first place.

I kicked it aside with a sneer.

“So, was it everything you hoped for and more, volunteer?”

I slowly lifted my gaze to the guard who dared address me—who had no idea the land mine he'd just stepped on. So young, this one, barely a legal adult by human law yet so brimming with bravado and false confidence. Disgust flared in my belly, and I cocked my head, eyes boring directly into his until he blinked first.

Volunteer.

A volunteer magpie was a fucking oxymoron if I'd ever heard one.

Volunteers were trafficked and kidnapped, the label slapped on them to make their buyers feel good about themselves. None but me actually wanted to be here tonight. Female inmates from the sister prison received reduced sentences if they joined the Magpie Order, hauled over here for itchy males to rape in the dead of night—perhaps even painted pretty and bussed uptown to the elite at the north end of the island for a little forced debauchery.

“What the fuck are you looking at?”

I stared harder, the blemished divinity in my marrow leeching into the fake green I'd adopted for my performance.

The Magpie Order crafted such a pretty, noble picture for their girls. They provided a service. They were to be respected and worshipped, praised and mollified. Having been through the whole process the last two months, I knew the game better than my sisters tonight. I knew the bullshit they fed their newest victims, the lies they whispered in our ears to make this world seem less terrifying.

Like pampered piglets led to slaughter, these Ether Island magpies.

The illusion shattered the second our sad little bus pulled up to the prison's main entrance. Guards just like these ones hissed venom from the start, leering and laughing. They might not get to fuck magpies—though I imagined some did before

they tossed them back on the bus at sunrise—but they got their own twisted kicks from this, from the vitriol sprinkled on these women before they faced actual monsters.

Yet after my fall, I became an acolyte of Lilith.

Friend to Hera and Frigg and Artemis and the Morrigan.

I flew with Furies and Valkyries.

I raged with Eris and Shiva.

And now, to add to the list, I happily bedded sons of the apocalypse.

These petty humans would have to try much, much harder if they wanted to illicit real fear in me.

“Okay, well, back on the bus you go, bitch.”

I tossed the damp torn cotton aside, feet planted as this child in a guard’s uniform tried to urge me onward. “No.”

His partner slowed a few paces away, while this one gawked like I’d just insulted his mother. We were all told when it was over, we would be escorted back to the bus to wait for the rest of the magpies, then shuttled over to headquarters in the forests of central Ether Island. Some of the girls fretted that from the looks of these guards, the stories they had heard, there might be a pit stop along the way—another breach of conduct, another storm of abuse.

No.

“What did you just say?”

I flashed a toothy smile worthy of Lilith herself, then fluttered my black lashes. “Not until I get what’s mine.”

Earlier in the hour, I had screamed for these ten men. Begged for mercy. Insisted I had made a mistake.

An act.

A test—to see if the lies fed to magpies by the mouthful were true, that if we sacred women rejected a suitor, our handlers would spirit us away to safety. In that instance, it was a failing of the men, not the magpie.

No such luck.

How many magpies before me had rammed their fist on that very door, begging for sanctuary, only to crumble and wail as these men laughed on the other side?

One was too many.

I had offered these ten souls redemption—they sealed their own fate.

“No, seriously, what the fuck just came out of your mouth? No?”

I rolled my shoulders a few times and then cracked my neck in either direction. Strange that the hellions had been the ones to rescue their magpie. They knew the truth, what these amoebas would do should I refuse them. Not only had they spared some poor magpie a severe whipping, but they had offered to... free her. Me. In my name, they offered a choice: stay and play as I had done for two months without any of my three monsters realizing—or put my foot down. Had I done that, they would have lashed out. Fought for me.

Since my fall, I’d suffered the bitterness of many a broken promise—but their

declaration to liberate me wasn't one of them.

That was quite unexpected—but I so loved a monster, a butcher, a lord, a warrior who would set his dark desires aside for the sake of his lover.

Apparently it was one of my many kinks.

A sin before my fall.

Preferences I had no say in.

Kinks. Fetishes. Wants. Needs. Desires.

I had a few more in my arsenal after tonight.

Grin sharpening, I cut the last strings of this mask free and unveiled my wings. Scorched black burst from my back, eyes that could barely restrain the divine bleeding gold. Where once a thoroughly fucked, disheveled, and bruised human magpie stood—a fallen angel took her place.

A soldier of an ancient choir who chose to fall because she was sick of submission.

Who realized after she had the power to give her practiced surrender only to those worthy of it.

In the last five years, lovers came and went.

They were nothing compared to the beasts howling on the other side of that door.

Hellions who smelled innocence on my flesh, Heaven's hold faint but there, fading by the year. In the grand scheme of immortality, I was still new. Freshly reborn. They thought I was a virgin, and perhaps in a metaphorical sense, I was until tonight. Until

them.

But I was no virgin to violence and blood, to battle and pain.

Eyes widened around me.

“Oh, shit—”

I tore the head of the nearest guard clean off, wrenching it from his shoulders as one might twist an apple stem from its crown. Before his partner could level that handgun at me, I’d ripped his arm from its socket and shoved it through his chest.

Bullets bounced off my wings, the corridors an echoey symphony of gunfire.

This world thought the fallen weak.

Yes, our wings burned in the crash, gobbled up by Heaven’s fire—fire that burned thrice as hot as hellfire.

But they grew back eventually. Tainted. Harder. Angrier. Almost as strong as my brethren’s feathers in the holy choirs but far surpassing the gifts of mortal and immortal alike in this petri dish of a world.

Silver pierced my thigh. Iron cut through my calf.

Simple wounds that healed in seconds.

I whirled around and flew, each beat of these black wings unleashing a hurricane, upturning guards and dust and cobwebs and rat droppings alike. Screams serenaded me. Blood streaked the walls, the floors, the ceiling, sandstone stained red. One by one, the gunfire quieted, until it was just me, the flutter of my wings, and ten dead men.

Body parts scattered, eyes burned out by my touch, tongues ripped from their filthy mouths...

A tableau to be repeated across Ether Island tonight, what with Hera and Frigg infiltrating those luxe parties, wrathful goddesses there to slaughter real monsters. The three Furies at the Order's main facility, dismantling it brick by brick, skull by skull, and whisking frightened magpies to Artemis, Freya, and Aphrodite for healing.

Lilith crushing the leaders of the organization under her red-soled heels. Eris ensuring her influence—strife and madness—was felt throughout the island.

Tonight had been a year in the making, a union of the divine feminine to abolish the Magpie Order at its very heart. Tomorrow, the next day, the day after that—we would hunt high rollers across the globe, freeing every last magpie, human and supernatural, until its legacy was but dust.

I had volunteered for this particular position.

The rest of those ladies, love them as I did, could not play a clueless wide-eyed human for long, nor could they suffer the abuse and the lies. Having spent a millennium under an angelic commander, I knew best how to keep my mouth shut and do what I was told. No matter the rage in my heart, I alone could play the part for the duration needed.

A little divine influence here, a few carefully planted questions there, and I found myself at this prison tonight, at the right time and the exact place to watch it all burn.

I faced the door with a frown, a weighted silence now hanging on both sides.

While I could act a blind fool for weeks on end, I hadn't expected anything tonight to touch me. Yes, the plight of the magpies plucked at my heartstrings and stoked my rage. This errand had a deeply personal quality to it for all of us, but I didn't think...

I hadn't expected to feel.

Head cocked, I listened to the soft drag of claws over stone, the muted rumbles of monsters stirring on the other side of the door. Useless carved and painted sigils stared back at me, gibberish to the fallen and our ethereal ilk but damning to my beasts inside.

Ownership had been a sin before the fall.

Possession, want, jealousy—vices worthy of losing a few white feathers over.

Mine were all gone now, reborn black and damned, but I still rebelled against the want in my heart. Just leave them in there. Someone would find them eventually, right? Grimacing, I turned—but the first step away broke my heart.

Shit.

Love that was more than familial, more than brotherly, more than a bond between warriors—it was all so new to the fallen. Others had warned me about it, the battle set to erupt in my own mind, the resistance and the guilt and the shame. They beat it into you in the Silver City that love entwined with lust was a distraction, a sin against our celestial father.

It felt wrong.

But my fallen companions had said it would—and they were so bloody happy with the creatures they loved.

Why not me?

Why did I not deserve that same bond with another?

Sighing, I went for the door, even if my feet dragged the whole way back. After quickly swiping the fresh blood from my cheeks, my lips, my chin, I smoothed my fingers along the seams, then took two steps back and booted the infernal thing off its hinges. One swift kick and the door barreled into that circular stone room, buckling in the middle and crashing hard into the wall on the other side.

For a few beats, there was nothing—and then three monsters ambled into view, each ogling me like I'd sprouted six heads.

Guilt tightened in my core, made me sick and nauseous and unsteady on my own two feet.

But one deep breath and it lessened.

Because there they were, three males in golden cuffs who had made me feel.

Cato in his shadowy horned crown, the piece hovering around his head like a halo that needed correcting. Kingly, stately, he had the loveliest dark grey skin and brilliant blue eyes slashed with demonic black. All three had the muscular definition human women drooled over, yet Cato's wasn't braggy or showy, just raw strength and muscle made for war. Rugged facial features and a confidence in the way he held himself, in the way he felt like a lord and made me feel like his lady, his queen. We fell into each other's eyes more than once tonight. No matter how he fucked me, ruthless or kind, his unflinching gaze said more than words ever could.

Obsidian antlers soared behind him, Aedan edging into view, assessing me with a curious grin. Unlike his brother, his strength was subtle, his body lean, his tongue barbed. The orgy mastermind, as it were, with ivory skin and silky black waves gently dusting the tops of his strong shoulders—I still longed to run my fingers through them, desire spiking the longer we all stared. This one inspired the bratty minx in me, made me playful and defiant.

No one had ever encouraged defiance before.

No one had ever tolerated my challenge without making me suffer.

And he had, in a way, made me suffer, but there was something so delicious about the freefall into sin that had me starving for more.

Geralt stood across from his fellow hellions, tallest and broadest and sweetest of the lot. Skin like the vast depths of space, black-black where not even the bravest stars glowed, he was a wash of contradictions. White hair down to his taut buttocks, thighs like tree trunks, perfectly sculpted and so powerful.

Yet in his arms, I felt safe.

Secure enough to consider for the first time in my existence... falling asleep in the arms of another.

Which was ridiculous.

Who would call a leviathan-demon hybrid safe?

But Geralt harkened my mind back to a simpler time, before I was assigned a fighting choir, before war made my heart so brutally hard. With him, I pictured myself in a field of wildflowers, running, laughing, relishing the sweet florals and dancing beneath the sun—and he'd be there with me, without judgment, without criticism.

Each male called to a want in me, a sin I had repressed until I finally threw down my sword, my shield, and rebelled.

With a heavy heart, my commander had shoved me from the gates of the divine, tears in his eyes, our whole choir morose as they watched me fall. No one said a thing. No one expressed concern for me, but I knew in their heart of hearts, we all ached when

separated.

Because I had been on the other side, once, watching a rebellious angel plummet, their wings on fire, their screams unleashing cataclysmic storms on mankind below.

We all chose our fate. Like Lucifer, we chose not to serve.

And my choices led me here, to them.

Swallowing the lump in my throat, emotion stinging the backs of my eyes, I braced on the doorframe and blocked them inside. Naked, human disguise gone, I stood before them now with golden eyes and black, unbreakable wings, with flesh only faintly marked by their passions and healing by the second.

“Sons of leviathans,” I started, tapping into the warrior who had bellowed across legions and kept back the hordes from worlds far beyond ours—far beyond theirs, too. “Sons of demons.” All three straightened, their cocks rising with them. Need twisted in my core, delving between my thighs like their tongues and fingers had so very recently. Enticing, the look of them, their arousal so plain, so obvious, so very much for me... But there was still much to do, and I needed to be sure before I turned my back on three powerful monsters. “Who do you serve?”

I tensed in the quiet that followed, almost too aware of the way their gazes raked my figure, taking in the golden undertone of my skin, the stronger limbs and brighter eyes.

Had I misjudged them?

A demon’s lie?

A trick?

Would I need to put them down just as I had—

“You,” Geralt rasped. Cato and Aedan snarled, the sound vicious, a wolf pack quarreling over a fresh kill—but their nods, their clenched fists, the way Geralt paced and Aedan rolled his shoulders and Cato bounced on the balls of his feet like he was gearing up for a full-on assault...

They meant it.

Me.

We came to Ether Island to free magpies and make their masters suffer. In theory, I also ought to punish the males who used them, not just the puppeteers. Yet these three brought me to such sublime highs, my orgasms tonight sharper and more vibrant than any I’d experienced since my fall, either by my own hands or at those of a subpar lover. Feeling wove around my rib cage, crafting my heart a cozy nest for the first time in my very long life. Kinship sparked between us, their eyes alight with chaos and darkness and possession.

For me.

A fallen angel of no real importance.

Me.

Before the fall, brute force and cold logic would have been my play. After all, these three were strong, their leviathan ancestry still warring with the demonic binding charms on their cuffs. Intelligent. Capable. An unbreakable team. Obsession. All that had merit.

But at the end of the day, I wanted them for myself.

Never in my life had I believed I could find love—nor did I deserve it.

But the lure between us was undeniable.

So, I took a risk.

I stepped into the cell, just over the threshold, and held out my hand to Cato. While they were bonded, there was still a hierarchy among them that deserved recognition. My crowned beast strode forth without hesitation, offering me his right hand.

And I snapped the golden cuff free, the break paired with a whoosh of red mist, the spell broken.

Next came the left cuff.

Then we waited.

Only when he eased back did I motion for Aedan to take his place. Off came the next two cuffs, followed by two more as Geralt loomed over me. Without their chains, life sparked in their eyes, the hues in their flesh richer, the spring in their step obvious. Such little, petty things, those ridiculous golden cuffs, but the spellwork and the runes had really fucked up my monsters, hadn't they?

Well then.

Here we were, all our masks and chains dropped, and—

I flinched, inhaling sharply when Cato marched right up to me, then dropped to his knees. There were those eyes again, so vibrant, so authoritative, boring deep into mine as I gently cupped his strong jawline and stroked against the grain of his scruffy cheeks. A smirk tugged at his gorgeous mouth, the shadows swelling within his crown, hiding the cropped silvery hair. Faster and faster they whirled, creating a

miniature storm in there, lightning and all, his eyes suddenly pure black.

Beautiful.

“Cato—” I snapped my lips shut as he sank lower, skimming my thighs, the backs of my knees, my toned calves. Down, down, down he went, all the way to my feet.

Where he kissed the tops of both.

Still silent, the gesture bringing a tear to my eye at last, he stood and backed off, leaving room for Aedan to follow in his place, those antlers forcing him to lift my feet to him one at a time, his kisses paired with a snap of much sharper teeth around my ankles. Geralt came last again, but the other two never treated him as lesser. No, they watched on, almost in approval, as this mountain of a man kissed my feet, then my knees, then my thighs, then the crest of my womanhood.

When he rose to his full height, somehow he had grown taller. The others closed in, at least a foot gained each, my monsters snarling, heaving, changing in subtle shifts and slips right before my eyes. Power crackled around us, the air lit like live wire, the ends frayed, the current deadly.

“Burn this place to the ground,” I whispered hoarsely, gaze jumping from one male to the next, forced to tilt my head back just to match them. I then pressed a hand to Cato’s chest, Aedan’s, and then Geralt, really letting them feel my pulse over their hearts, allowing for a whiff of vulnerability on a night that was supposed to be all mischief and deception and blood.

They embraced my simple touch, huge hands sliding over mine, reaching for me as I retreated for the doorway again. Cato followed first, stiffening with a low growl when I grabbed his much-too-solid bicep.

“Fetch my magpies,” I urged, our eyes locked, our hearts whumping in perfect sync.

“Not a feather out of place for my girls.” He acquiesced with a curt nod and a flash of teeth, the storm brewing within his horned black crown spiraling out of control. Then, just as he stalked forth, I gripped harder, our bodies brushing each other in the doorway, the heat palpable. “Free any prisoners you deem worthy of your mercy.”

“As you wish, goddess,” he rumbled, the declaration followed by a kiss that made my wings flutter and my heart soar. A steely arm snaked around my waist, and he crushed me to him, Cato’s kiss deep and passionate and so deliciously different from before. Domineering, yes, but dominance felt like his love language, not cruelty. He kissed me now like he recognized my strength, physical and otherwise, his teeth sharp and his tongue bold—like he knew I could take it.

And then he was gone, striding off and leaving my head in a tizzy, swiftly replaced by a snarling Aedan. He claimed me with a biting kiss and a sharp hair tug, his free hand grazing my wings unchecked, ruffling through the feathers, stroking the joint—taking the chance to meet me again. All the while, I gave as good as I got. He wanted a brat, a challenger, a lover who would hold his feet to the fire? So be it. I had craved that open acceptance for centuries.

From one end of the spectrum to another, Geralt took Aedan’s place in a heartbeat. My mountain monster scooped me off my feet, my wings twitching like they thought we needed to hover to keep up with him—but I sensed Geralt would never let me fall. Never. And if I did, he’d be right there with me, the fires devouring us, our screams pure laughter, hearts entwined and spirits so fucking alive.

For now, he offered a reprieve. Same as before, Geralt was a fleeting moment of tenderness. Even with the metallic tint in the air, blood streaked across my naked body, he kissed me in a way that was so achingly sweet it made my toes curl. In his arms, I could let go—just a little.

He set me back on my own two feet with such lovely care, smoothing my hair after Aedan’s abuse and swiping his thumb across my swollen lips with a smirk. Then,

after pinching my chin and falling deep into my eyes, he marched after his brothers, shadows gathering, darkness clinging to his sculpted form. Flustered, I pressed a hand to my racing heart. How simple it would be to hurry after them—stop them in their tracks and demand they fuck me within an inch of my immortal life again.

Properly.

Like we had all the time in the world.

But the night wasn't over, and my sisters in arms were no doubt accomplishing their tasks with flying colors.

So, I jogged after the trio, ending up in the middle, my wings tucked but ready to go on the defensive.

Ready to stretch in front of my monsters so those bullets back there—those would be the last painful bits to pierce their flesh tonight.

Down the corridor with all its windows facing the dark coastline, a door flew open. Guards charged out, weapons drawn, the shriek of a distant alarm yawning as the door opened and silenced when it slammed shut. Familiar faces glared at me as we slowed; most of this lot had processed a busload of frightened magpies earlier in the evening—and they'd hissed the foulest things in our ears. I cocked my head, daring them to make the first move.

They did.

They fired first, a hailstorm of bullets whizzing down the hallway. Without hesitation, I leapt in front of my monsters and gave the humans my back, black wings flared wide enough to cover the full width of the space, bullets ricocheting and thunking into the sandstone. I scowled at them over my shoulder, daring them to do their worst against a child of the divine.

Snarls and roars and terrifying howls surged, violent and sudden, and when I faced my monsters again, they flourished in their truest forms. Their leviathan ancestry clawed to the surface, shirking the glamored masks of breathtaking men with cut jawlines and sculpted pecs and sturdy shoulders made for raking with my nails.

Hellions from the deepest pits squared off with me. Cato's crown circled a bare skull now, his eyes haunting and hollow, black and lifeless. A mist-shrouded cloak clung to his eight-foot frame, the darkness swallowing him right up to the open nasal cavity. To his left, Aedan proved himself the most beastly of his brothers, looming so tall he had to duck to accommodate his flesh-strewn antlers. With the skeletal head of a wolf and the body of an old-world centaur, he'd give any unlikely survivors of his wrath nightmares for the rest of their short, miserable lives.

Geralt had lost every ounce of tenderness. Blades a little over a foot long, sharpened to deadly points, made up his fingers. Red eyes glowered from beneath his shadowy cowl, his exquisite nudity swapped for an assassin's black armor and hood, those boots made for crushing skulls. He too needed to duck to fit in the corridor, crouched low, his hands deadlier weapons than before, his aura pure predator.

"My, my," I whispered as another round of bullets bounced off my wings. "You three clean up well."

They answered with a primal chorus of savage snarls and gravelly growls, eyeing me like I was a prize gifted by the gods—like they wanted to eat me, fuck me, love me until the end of time.

And after tonight, I was rather inclined to let them.

With a manic grin, I turned on our attackers and charged, the monstrous symphony at my heels accented by Aedan's hooves thundering over the stone, Geralt's daggers dragging along the wall, Cato's well-deserved crown a beacon of strength in the night...

And a delicious dose of love, laughter, screams, blood, and gunfire in the air.

THE END