

The Darkness Inside

By: Lady Jae

Demetri sat on his back porch staring into the hues of orange and magenta that streaked across the evening sky. He pulled on the dark brown Cuban cigar hanging between his fingers and released a dense cloud of smoke into the air. As the smoke dissipated, he clenched his empty fist and closed his eyes. Whispered cries sounded in his head. The murmured voices recited an incantation he couldn't understand. Over and over, it repeated, like a record stuck in time.

He shook his head vigorously, trying to make them stop.

Looking down at his fist, dark blood seeped from between his fingers. His body tensed as he shifted his eyes to the sky. He let out a deep breath and glanced back down. His callused hand, now blood-free, trembled in front of him. His thin lips curled at the corners as he flexed his hand, slowly tapping his fingertips to the base of his palm.

It had become more frequent. The flashes of blood on his hands. The sporadic snapshots of dismantled bodies bludgeoned beyond recognition. Deep in his gut a desire burned. It growled at him like an unquenchable hunger, breaking him slowly from the inside out.

He gazed into the sunset, getting lost in his favorite time of day. There was something about the way the sun surrendered to the darkness that calmed him. It was like protection, covering him

like a cloak, concealing him. He dropped the smoldering cigar in the ashtray and held his head in his hands.

He could smell the sweet lilies and violets of her perfume, as her tiny feet padded against the cold tiles of their back porch. He looked back at his newlywed wife and smiled into her light-brown eyes. Sage's round face, button nose, and flawless brown skin captured his attention like the first time, every time he looked at her. He was smitten, but not just with her looks.

He motioned for her to come closer and pulled her down into his lap. She wrapped her arms around him as he rested his face into the terry cloth of her robe. He could hear the faint thumps of her heartbeat as the voices faded away.

"Dinner is ready," she said softly, as she caressed the side of his head.

He looked up at her and frowned at the sad look on her face. "Are you okay?"

"Yes, babe. I'll be fine. She would want me to be." Sage smiled weakly and stood.

Demetri looked down and sighed as he followed her into the house.

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The moon glowed in their bedroom as he held her in his arms. The shadows of the leaf-less trees danced on the dull painted walls. He rubbed her arm and pulled her closer.

"Sage?"

"Hmm?"

She shifted her body and pressed her back deeper into his frame. He could hear her breathing change and knew he didn't have long before she fell asleep. He looked over at a framed photo of Sage and her late twin sister, Olive, smiling on the bedside table.

Blood slowly dripped down the sides.

Demetri squeezed his eyes shut. His breathing accelerated. He clutched Sage close to his body and nuzzled in the crook of her neck. He peaked back at the photo.

The blood was gone.

Demetri closed his eyes and focused on the steady breathing coming from Sage's lips. Her soft snores hummed like a lullaby in his ears as he allowed himself to drift off into the darkness of sleep.

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He could feel the movement in the room before he opened his eyes. He tried to move, but his limbs were bound, immobilizing him. He fought at the restraints as he looked around, searching the darkness, for Sage.

The light flicked on, and Demetri squinted at the dark figure leaning against the door frame. He studied the thick ropes that were wrapped around his hands and feet. He scowled as he followed the path that secured them to the posts on each corner of the bed.

Sage's whimpers filled the room. Demetri followed the sounds, only to see her tied to a chair, gagged, with blood leaking from her forehead. Her eyes were puffy, and her face was shined from the onslaught of tears.

"Sage!"

Demetri pulled at the ropes and bit down on his lip until he could taste the metallic flavor of blood.

The figure stepped closer. The chrome of the automatic pistol, clutched in his hand, sparkled against the light in the room. As the figure neared the bed, Demetri realized it was a man; dressed in all black with an eyepatch and a scruffy beard. A deep scowl was etched on the man's face as he loomed over Demetri's body while keeping the gun trained on Sage.

Demetri stopped moving and glared at the man. The voices began to chant as he studied the man hovering over him.

The man's jagged breathing filled the room, harmonizing with Sage's whimpers. He leaned close to Demetri's face and smiled sinisterly, revealing a row of rotten teeth. Demetri turned his face, trying to avoid the rancid odors flowing from the man's mouth. The man grabbed Demetri's chin and forced him to look at his battered face.

"Let me go!" Demetri growled as he tried to pull his head away.

The man slapped Demetri's face and released a deep laugh from his gut.

The voices in Demetri's head started to growl as he tugged on the restraints. Sage continued to pull at her own restraints, pleading to be free with her eyes as she watched the man pace the floor.

The man pointed the gun at Demetri. Demetri pulled harder on the ropes, and the voices got louder.

Sage gasped and turned away. The man glanced at Sage briefly then turned back to Demetri. He pressed the barrel of the gun into Demetri's temple and leaned in close to his ear.

"You left me for dead."

Demetri stopped moving and glared at the man. Confusion sat deep in the folds of his brow as he gave the man a once over, ignoring the gun.

"I don't know—"

"Yes, you do!" he screamed, "remember this." The man lifted his eyepatch, revealing a gaping black hole in his face.

Demetri looked away disgusted and continued to pull on the ropes. The man turned and revealed the empty crater in his face making Sage scream under her muzzle. He stalked over to

her and pressed his face close to hers, giving her a direct view. Sage squeezed her eyes closed and whimpered.

"Look at me! Your husband did this!"

Sage shook her head and squeezed her eyes tighter. She fought at the restraints causing the chair to rock back and forth.

The man knelt beside the chair and pushed the gun against her cheek. Sage released a new flow of tears as she stared at Demetri for help.

Demetri kept pulling on the ropes that were slowly loosening on his hands and feet. The voices inside of him growled louder, this time clearer, as they instructed him to pounce.

"What do you want?" Demetri demanded through clenched teeth.

"My life back. You know I haven't been right since you did this to me." The man adjusted the eye patch over the hole and pushed the gun harder into the flesh of Sage's face.

"If I did that you would be dead," said Demetri in a dark voice.

Sage gasped and stopped squirming.

"I thought I was. Until I woke in a hospital bed labeled as a John Doe. No family, no house, nothing to even prove I even exist. I had nothing, but then I found you, out here living your best life. A life I should have. So I followed you for months, just watching you from the shadows, waiting on this moment."

He looked at Sage and crooked his head to the side. "Do you know who your husband really is? Do you know about that evil that lurks inside of him?"

Sage shook her head as tears continued to run down her face. The man stood and walked over to the bedside. Demetri stopped moving as the man leaned close to his face.

"Do you think she'll still love you after I tell her what you do for fun? What if I tell her about the five bodies you left in Houston? Or maybe I'll tell her how you used me and killed your parents, or better yet maybe I'll tell her what you did before you met her."

The man smiled then walked back over to Sage and placed the gun under her chin.

"Or do you want to tell her before I blow her brains on the wall?"

Sage cried out but Demetri remained silent. The voices growled and screamed in his head, but he refused to speak. He could feel the urge growing and burning in his belly. The voices called to the evil deep inside his soul. He closed his eyes desperate to keep the urge at bay, but it was quickly taking over. Spilled blood flashed in his mind. He shook his head vigorously and pulled on the ropes harder.

"If you don't tell her I will." The man cocked the gun and pushed it harder under Sage's chin.

"Don't!" Demetri shouted as he felt the grip on his legs loosen. He bit his lip to stop from smiling and focused on freeing his arms.

The voices chanted kill him, as the evil urge inside of him consumed him.

"Don't what? Don't tell her how you used me as a pawn in your sick murderous game? Made me feel like we were partners, just for you to shoot me in my face!"

Demetri closed his eyes and an image of the man bleeding out in an alley flashed in his mind.

Demetri opened his eyes slowly and let out a deep breath. A devious grin spread across his face as he belted out a dark laugh.

Sage froze and looked at Demetri as if seeing him for the first time. The man turned the gun on Demetri and stepped back with a shocked look on his face. Demetri's dark laughter sounded off the walls as the evil presence filled the room.

"We were never partners. You were supposed to die that night. I don't leave loose ends." Demetri said in a deep voice that wasn't his. He yanked on the ropes, making the bed scrape against the floor.

The man's hand trembled slightly as he wrapped an arm around Sage's neck and kept the gun steady on Demetri.

"So, I was just a loose end? So, what was Olive?"

Sage's body tensed up at the mention of her sister. She looked at Demetri, but he looked away ignoring her gaze.

The man released her neck and pulled the muzzle from her mouth. Sage gasped and caught her breath, before turning her anger to Demetri.

"What is he talking about?" Sage asked, "how does he know Olive? What did you do?"

Demetri yanked on the ropes again making the bed move more.

"Tell her the truth." The man said and pointed the gun at Demetri.

Demetri let out another demented laugh and kept tugging on the ropes.

"Or what?" Demetri laughed.

"Demetri, what the hell did you do to my sister!" Sage shouted, causing all movement to stop.

"You wouldn't understand..." Demetri mumbled and pulled on the ropes.

"Your husband is the one who strangled and killed your sister." The man said smugly, as he crossed his arms across his chest and began pacing again.

Sage glared at Demetri with hatred in her eyes. Her body trembled as she snarled at him, trying her best to get out of the chair.

"She was my sister. My twin. How could you?" Sage sobbed.

"I didn't mean...She was..."

He looked at Sage and dropped his head. The pain in her eyes told him she would never forgive him. He grimaced as the voices whispered what he had to do. He looked at the man and gritted his teeth. He felt the dark sensations coursing through his veins as the evil presence surrounded him.

Kill them, kill them NOW!

Demetri felt the pressure release around his wrist but waited as he contemplated his next move. He only had one shot.

The man continued to pace, holding the gun at his side, eyes trained on Sage's hysterical cries.

"Your husband is an evil man. He kills for pleasure. For the hunt and without reason. Your sister was a conquest to fill that desire. I watched him strangle her, beat her, and then pull her lifeless body—"

"Enough!"

Surrendering to the directions of the voices, Demetri lunged from the bed and tackled the man, catching him off guard. They crashed to the floor, and the gun slid across the room, landing under the bed. Demetri plummeted his fist in the man's face, causing blood to gush out everywhere.

Sage screamed in horror as Demetri beat the man until he was a bloody pulp on the floor. Demetri stood and smiled at his handiwork as blood covered his face and hands. He felt alive again as he played with the blood on his red-stained hands. The rage still coursed through his veins and the voices demanded more.

He stepped over the body and knelt in front of Sage. Sage trembled and remained silent as he slowly untied the knots, not breaking eye contact.

Whap!

The sting from her hand across his face barely registered as he glared at her, nostrils flaring.

“You son of a—” Sage swung again, but Demetri caught her hand in mid-air. The sinister look in his eyes scared her, and she tried to pull away.

“How could you!” She whimpered as he squeezed her wrist, “Ow Demetri, you’re hurting me!”

“You weren’t supposed to find out. I’m sorry Sage,” Demetri mumbled through clenched teeth, “but you won’t understand.”

Demetri tossed her frail body towards the bed. The voices in his head chanted the word kill repeatedly as he stepped towards her. Sage scrambled back until she felt the frame and looked for a way out. She eyed the handle of the gun under the bed and went for it. Demetri dove to stop her and fell on top of her.

Boom!

The single-shot echoed in the room. Demetri rolled off Sage and clutched the red spot rapidly forming in the center of his chest. Sage gripped the gun and watched as Demetri struggled.

“Sage...” Blood pooled from his lips as he took his last breath.

Dark laughter filled the room and surrounded Sage, chilling her to the bone. She dropped the gun and screamed as she felt something enter her, taking her breath away.

She gasped and clawed at her throat as whispers flooded her ears. Flashes of slain bodies played in her mind. A seed of evil planted itself deep in her gut, feeding off her anger and pain.

More, more, we want more!

She stopped fighting and smiled sinisterly, as the demonic evil fully engulfed her, finding a new host.