

# Chapter 1:

His inhales were loud, heavy and produced a tiny wheezing, ring clamor upon the full depth of respire. His exhales, however, he could somehow keep quiet.

Placing his hand to his mouth to try curb the noise, he found this was not an option. He was simply, completely out of breath and incapable of any control.

He'd never felt this level of hyperventilation before either. Not when he had a knife drawn on him. Not when he collided head on with another car going 40. Not when he had to tell his family he lost in excess of \$50k due to bad stock investments....

Never!

It was pure, unimaginable horror.

This all was easily understandable considering the man was sprinting, literally, to try and save his life.

He had witnessed things he thought not possible. Things that did not make any sense of comprehension. Things that were not of this world!

Managing to get away, only just, he found himself crammed beneath a chefs kitchen storage compartment beneath the pearl, white marble top counter, doing whatever he could possibly do to get his breathing under control.

It was his number one priority.

He mustn't be heard...

His life depended on it!

In pitch blackness, within the chefs storage cabinet, he began reminiscing about better times to aid in curbing the loud breathing. With such great memories of his puppy Ziggy and the time he tried black cherry ice cream for the first time, it proved to still be futile.

What finally managed to get him success with complete silence was the echo of a giggle.

Those fucking giggles.

The type of giggles that penetrated ones soul.

Now finding he had his hand clasped to his mouth, he also found that he was involuntarily biting it too, to keep from making a peep.

He could taste blood.

The giggling was getting closer.

Shutting his eyes and mentally reciting a prayer of sort... He was in no way a religious man, though knew a prayer verse, or two... He also briefly wondered if shouting 'the power of Christ compels you' would provide any relief from the pursuant of these creatures.

And that's what they were... Fucking creatures!

For now though, he would remain within his cramped chefs storage compartment and continue to pray. Pray that they'd pass on by him and leave him be.

Pray!

Futile, however, as the giggling sounded like the fucking creatures were standing directly on the other side of his closed cabinet door.

One seemed to be humming the sound of a speedy, rapid heartbeat.

'Dum-Dummm-Dum-Dummm-Dum-Dummm-Dum-Dummm!'

"You do know we can smell you... Right?" The man heard, signifying that they were indeed standing on the other side of the closed cabinet door.

He also felt a wet sensation careening down his leg.

He had peed himself.

"I mean, we can totally hear you too, despite your stifling efforts. And even the drawn blood aside, we could still smell you from a mile away," the voice continued as the one humming those speedy heartbeat sounds stopped and joined in on the giggles.

"That's right, darling," another propounded. "Once we latch onto a scent, there is no escaping."

"So, how about you behave and make things simple," a third spoke. "Just come on out and avoid the difficulty."

The man remained still, with his eyes closed, continuing to recite whatever prayers he could come up with.

There was no way he was leaving the cramped chefs storage cabinet.

No fucking way!

"Oh, come on, Rooney, don't be like this," it was the first. "Just come on out."

"Yeh, Rooney," now the third. "Pretty please with a dollop of black cherry ice cream on top," the giggles were rampant. "We all know how much you love black cherry ice cream."

"JUST LEAVE ME ALONE!" He roared.

It could not be helped.

"Oh-my, my, my" they were all now cackling. A cackle that also penetrated ones soul. "He still has so much fire and vigor."

"Yes! He is such a fierce one. Makes sense that he is the last to remain alive."

"I love him, I really do."

"LEAVE ME THE FUCK ALONE!" He shouted once more and was met once again with those cackles.

"OK, play time is over!" A new voice had informed.

It was Rochelle. Her... It... That creatures voice would never be leaving his memory banks.

How could it!

Rooney was next met with blinding light within the cabinet as the cabinet door had been swung open. He must have re-opened his eyes, without realizing, when propounding his prior proclamations.

Closing them shut again, Rooney knew that it was Rochelle that had opened the door and it was Rochelle that he would be greeted with if and when he opened his eyes again and adjusted to the new lighting.

"Rooney... Darling... Come out... Now," it was the second. "You know how fiery Rochelle can be. Don't make her yank you out by your ankles."

Slowly opening his eyes once more and blinking several times to indeed adjust to the newly entered light, as he'd expected, he was met face to face with Rochelle.

Only... It wasn't the face that he was used to seeing. It was a face that could only be described as monstrous entity.

A face of a Harpy.

He also noticed that Rochelle had extended her... Its hand to his. He wasn't going to get started on the claws that jutted. The claws he had seen Rochelle rip the intestines, in one swooping motion, from one of his close companions, Stevenson.

Allowing himself to be 'escorted' from the chefs storage cabinet, he immediately shrugged off their hold and backed up a short distance.

"THE POWER OF CHRIST! COMPELS YOU!" He would shout. "THE POWER OF CHRIST COMPELS YOU! THE POWER OF CHRIST COMPELS YOU! THE POWER OF CHRIST COMPELS YOU!" He could see that the four Harpy's in front of him had shrunk in frame and were hissing.

It was working... It was fucking working!

Feeling a sense of new found power, he advanced on them and continued, "THE POWER OF CHRIST COMPELS YOU! THE POWER OF CHRIST COMPELS YOU!" They were reverting back from their Harpy state into the beautiful women he'd known.

"THE POWER OF CHRIST COMPELS YOU! THE POWER OF CHR..."

"Ok, enough," Rochelle had ended the charade, bluntly cutting off Rooney's hymns.

Realizing that the four, now, women in front of him were completely fine and those enchanting words had provided no sanctuary, Rooney collapsed to his knees and began to cry uncontrollably.

"There, there," he could feel the piercing claws of Rochelle lightly scalping the back of his head, though they also felt like they were retracting. "You have nothing to be afraid of."

"Yeh, Rooney," it was the first. "You are the last to remain... That means you survive. You get to live. YAY!"

Glancing up to the four women, he could see that they were fully transformed back into whatever gorgeous, bombacious form they showcased on their day-to-day basis. The monstrous face, the claws... To mention only one of the many abnormalities ... Were no longer existent.

"Come with us, darling," the second held out her normal, beautiful hand.

Clasping onto it, Rooney found that he was not capable of remaining conscious. Allowing the peaceful feeling of slumber to fully take over, he felt somewhat bliss.

Somewhat.

...

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Chanting...

Chanting is what re-awoke Rooney.

Loud, heavy chanting.

Realizing that he was incapable of movement, he quickly grasped that he had been tied up and that his head was the only thing free of restraint; thus allowing him to look around.

Doing so, he could comprehend that he was strung upside down, his arms had been spread outward and his legs were also bound together.

Glancing directly ahead, he could see his reflection within the elevated hallway mirror. The mirror with all the strange, intricate hand carved markings.

What he saw within the reflection brought him instant tears and he could once more feel the urine that had involuntarily been released from his bladder. The urine, this time, settled in his chest region and beneath his chin; thanks to gravity.

Rooney was strung upside down on a huge upturned cross. A cross that he could see was made out of skulls and bones.

Witnessing what he had witnessed, he knew the skulls and bones were real.

Human!

Making to scream, he was hushed by Rochelle. She was seated next to him on the left, albeit floating, and was swaying side to side to the chants.

"You have nothing to fear, Rooney," she began. "You will not be dying tonight."

Glancing to his right, he could see that Cindy, another vixen who Rooney thought he had gotten congenial with, was also seated, albeit floating, and swaying side to side to the chants.

That left 11 more women... Things... Creatures!

Looking directly ahead and ignoring the reflection from the mirror, he could see the other 11 were chanting within the hallway and dancing a form of dance he wished he'd never seen.

Limbs were contorted, necks were spun a full 180 and twists and bends that weren't humanly possible were convulsing with vitality.

Suddenly, the chanting and all other noise within the hallway stopped. Rooney could see, and feel, that all eyes were on him.

A low chant next broke out as the 11 began to form a lineup.

"It would be best for you to go back to sleep, Rooney," Cindy made mention.

The 11 were getting closer.

"No need to fight it," Rochelle added. "Allow the sleep to take over."

The 11 had reached him and were beginning to now form a side-by-side lineup.

"That's it, Rooney, that's it... Go back to sleep... No need to worry..."

The 11 were now fully lined up side-by-side.

"We will see you again in near 5 years, Rooney, when the Hoary Moon ravishes once more."

The final image Rooney was made privy to, before he fell back into his, somewhat, peaceful slumber, was that of 13 pairs of teeth lined up side-by-side, smiling at him.

It was not a pretty sight.

He was sure to have nightmares.