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Chapter 1

"Now and forever, Evelyn," Quentin's words were spoken hauntingly, softly into her ear. "Do you know what those two words mean?" Hungrily he pulled her closer.

"Umm." Evelyn molded her body tighter against his firm masculinity. She loved the feel of this man.

"They mean what they say. Now and forever. For you they mean you will never escape."

Never escape. The words hung in the air menacingly. Something was very wrong.

The rain splashed over them. The wind blew her hair. It was the most sensual moment of her life, until the whispered words of a madman sounded in her ear. Their vibe and meaning slowly seeped through to her brain.

The night was soft, black and velvety. A torrential downpour soaked the streets of Newark, New Jersey cleansing the

gutters of the city's very soul. Ridding it of some of the trash but not all.

The street was deserted. Quentin and Evelyn stood in the park, in romantic isolation, a block away from Evelyn's house.

They had taken a walk after a great dinner. Suddenly the sky had let loose with a fury and so had Quentin. Evelyn was totally confused.

She had been enjoying his company. He had elegant manners as well as sophistication. She thought she might come to care deeply for him. She had spent some quality, deeply moving time with him. Then he flipped on her. Like a light switch that someone had flicked off, just like that.

She stood on tiptoe in her bare feet. She had removed her sandals in the heat of smoldering rainy sexuality. As she pressed her body against Quentin's, a subtle change took place without a hint of warning.

Quentin was crazy. He was threatening her. What did he mean she was never going to escape? Warning signals ignited in her head. A cold fear seized her body clashing with the hot, sexy heat rising from her womanhood.

Her thoughts skipped over themselves in total chaos. She tried to simulate them into something that made sense. It was no use. Her thoughts were running rampant.

One thing she did know. She couldn't have anything more to do with him. His personality was like Jekyll and Hide.

Evelyn pulled back. She stared at Quentin Curry as though he'd lost his mind. "Let go of me." A clammy foreboding crawled up and down her skin. She shivered. Goose bumps sprout on her arms.

Quentin gripped her tighter. The force of his fingers left imprints in her skin. "Can't do that, Evelyn. Didn't you hear me? I said now and forever." He laughed at her utter lack of comprehension and bewilderment.

A sense of unreality dug its clutches into Evelyn. Quentin's once expressive eyes were now only twin holes of black. Black nothingness. Gone were any traces of the warmth and compassion that had embraced her earlier.

"You're crazy," she stuttered. "I want you out of my life. Let go of me."

Quentin shook his head. "What you want and what you get are two different things, Evelyn. You're never going to leave me. And, I'm never going to leave you. Don't you get it? I said there will never be an escape for you. I always say what I mean. And, I always, *always*, mean what I say."

"No. You're a maniac. Let go of me!" she screamed. Her words blew away on the fury of the winds of the rain.

Looking into his face a wave of senselessness rushed over her. "I changed my mind about being with you. You're not who I thought you were." She spat the words in his face.

"You changed your mind." Quentin looked up at the stormy skies. "Did you say you changed your mind? You don't change your mind Evelyn, unless I change it for you understood?" Quentin words were cold and precise. His voice didn't raise an octave. Now, Evelyn knew two things: real fear and the fact that she needed to get away from him.

A surge of strength rose up in her. It was a strength born out of desperation. She wrenched her body free from Quentin's hold and ran wildly down the street. Her legs and feet were bare. Her sandals were long forgotten. Long wet strands of hair clung to her head and face.

The echo of her bare feet striking the wet pavement provided her with rhythmic chaos that spurred her on. Evelyn blew the hair out of her eyes. She willed her legs to pump harder, faster as a numbness clawed at her body. No way could she stop. She looked briefly behind her. She panted as she picked up her pace, sprinting toward safety, which loomed not far in the distance.

Quentin Curry was a powerful, arrogant, and magnetic man. He was the height of physicality. His limbs were long and

lithe. His very carriage was tall and erect. He possessed a demeanor that indicated fierce pride.

He watched Evelyn run down the street. He was not at all concerned about her temporary escape. Quentin was a man of many layers with a sadistic streak a mile long. His extreme confidence bordered on a God-like level. He was a man who knew his own power and one who had come into power, by refusing to obey any boundaries but his own. Accustomed to getting his own way, he knew he had time.

Lazily, a sardonic smile crept across his face. His was a face that could have been sculpted by one of the masters. His face was masterful in the pure architecture of it, in the chiseled lines that outlined his features. It was a face with many textures and layers that he used at will.

Quentin wondered why people didn't realize they couldn't run from their fate?

He studied the picture that was Evelyn. He knew he had chosen carefully, oh, ever so carefully. Evelyn was the only child of deceased parents who left her with enough money that she would never have to worry about it in her lifetime.

She was a loner. Very isolated for one so young, always preferring her own company to that of others. She spent most of her time rummaging in bookstores and in the dusty corners of

various libraries. The single link that connected her to the world was her writing. Ah yes her writing, a most useful tool.

She didn't have any friends. All of her relationships resided between the pages of books. Her friends were in the notes of the music she loved so much.

While Quentin reviewed her profile, Evelyn stumbled in the wet street. She threw her hands out in front of her body to help regain her balance. Her legs ached, throbbed actually with pain. Or was it with fear? She didn't know. "Legs, please don't fail me now," she whispered desperately. She had never been so scared in her life.

A stray cat ran out from its shelter into the rain. He caused Evelyn to practically jump out of her skin. She turned to look behind her, finding no sign of Quentin. She took a deep breath to quell her quivering body and kept running. She looked around the deserted street. There was no sign of life on the street, just her. "Somebody help," she whispered, "Somebody. Please help." There was no one to hear her.

Quentin lounged in the park contemplating his plan. He knew Evelyn thought he was behind her, chasing her. That was enough to keep her where he wanted her. He was a chaser, though not in the way she would expect. He could chase her without moving a muscle, just as effectively, more in fact, as if he had ran after her.

Anyway he knew there would be no prying into the changes she was about to undergo. He thought about the Reverend Erwin Jackson, but quickly dismissed the thought as being of little consequence.

Reverend Erwin Jackson was Evelyn's minister. His was the one relationship she seemed to foster. The reverend's presence might lend a bit of an edge to the game.

Breeding was important and Evelyn's lineage showed good breeding. He'd done his checklist centuries in advance. He'd been waiting for her, for her arrival, for her birth. Now it was time. He'd been watching. Watching was what he did. Watching and observing were part of his highly honed and sharpened skills.

He knew her womb was young and untouched. She was pure. This was very necessary to his plan. He could not funnel through tainted goods.

He smiled. He was satisfied with the wisdom of his choice. One had to create their own opportunities. And, he had certainly created his. In his supreme arrogance, he settled on a single thought: The girl is in for the treat of her life and she's running from me. Quentin shook his head in amazement.

He dropped his cigarette lighter. He reached to pick it up. Branded on the back of his right hand was an "X." He lit a cigarette as the mist of the rainy night shrouded him.

The predator in him inched its way to the forefront. The pull of it tingled through his body. The sleek black panther of spirit he possessed was now on the prowl. It was lurking just beneath the surface.

Evelyn heaved air in great gulps as she raced up the steps of the Victorian house she had inherited from her parents. It was one of the last few of its kind left in the Newark neighborhood.

The house carried a certain presence. It had an ominous, yet old elegant air about it. It was wrapped in an air of quiet dignity. In the dark of this night, it was possessed with a spirit of stillness.

Evelyn fumbled with her keys looking wildly behind her. She jammed the key in the lock. She fumbled again and the wet keys slipped from her shaking fingers. They dropped to the porch floor. She picked them up. She worked at steadying herself. She tried again. The lock clicked. She bolted through the front door. She slammed it shut and locked it behind her.

Evelyn raced into the bathroom. She locked that door too. She stood trembling as little pools of water formed on the floor from her bare wet feet.

She was completely unaware of the youth, sensual beauty and vitality that radiated from her. Evelyn was a petite young woman with yards of dark, thick black locks of hair. She had

beautiful translucent brown eyes. And, flawless coffee colored skin with dimpled cheeks. She ran her hands up and down her arms, grappling with a terror the likes of which she had never known.

Quentin lay splayed on the glass roof of the bathroom. His gaze was hypnotic as it devoured the sensual Evelyn Jordan-Wells. He reveled in her image enjoying the feel of the hunt.

His loins ached with the thought of having her, possessing her. A groan of pleasure escaped his lips. Evelyn's fear was a tangible thing to him. He breathed it in.

Quentin's eyes were liquid pools of midnight black as he stared through the glass at Evelyn.

Evelyn, sensing his presence, looked up. Her gaze was riveted on Quentin. She shook like a leaf on a tree.

Abruptly, torrential rain, wind and shattering glass engulfed her as Quentin crashed through the glass-enclosed roof.

Evelyn hyperventilated in her fear. But, Quentin's hypnotic stare changed the very rhythm of her breathing. Slowly her labored breathing broke into an even pattern.

Seductively sweet and with a hint of red-hot passion, Quentin touched Evelyn, ever so lightly. "Evelyn Jordan-Wells," he said. Her name rolled off his tongue like sweet licorice candy.

“Hide and seek. You think you can hide from me? Umm, a game. I like games, Evelyn. I created them you know.” Evelyn shrank back from him. Quentin allowed it for the time being.

He continued speaking as though there had been no physical interruption. “I especially like games that change the course of history. Games that upset the balance of power. Sensual, sexual and exquisite games, Evelyn. You and I will play. You do want to play with me. Don’t you?” His voice had a languid purr to it. It held the promise of a lullaby.

He grabbed her. He pulled her next to him. He put his lips close to her ear. A deep rage settled over him. He turned his head. It twisted around like rubber. His eyes produced a glow of radar that destroyed everything in its path.

“Come on, dance with me, Evelyn.”

The sink, toilet and antique claw bathtub ripped right out of the tiled floor at the force of Quentin’s gaze.

His gaze swept around the bathroom. The walls exploded. The windows blew out. Evelyn broke loose. She backed away from Quentin. A scream erupted from her throat like a volcano bursting forth.

She crouched and cowered in the face of an evil that was so tangible she could reach out and touch it. Nothing in her sheltered life had prepared her for the darkness that had breached her world. In its face she was completely helpless.

Evelyn briefly looked up. She stared at Quentin as though she had never seen him before. In truth she hadn't. Shock controlled every limb in her body.

The monster in Quentin had unleashed before her eyes. It had replaced the man that she thought she might love. Standing in front of her was a total stranger. It was a stranger who was in possession of a dark and lethal power. He was not of this world. She recoiled.

Searing white-hot shock, glittering flashes of light exploded in her brain. She searched the crevices of her mind desperately for a place to hide. There was no refuge. There was nothing for her to cling to.

A chord of deep fear struck within her. She babbled out loud, "Jesus Lord, Jesus Lord, Jesus Lord."

The sound of her babbling added fuel to Quentin's fire. He burned a flaming "X" into the wall. "I AM THE LORD! I am your Lord, Evelyn!" Softly switching gears he said, "Though my name is not Jesus." His eyes burned a hole through her shirt. It sizzled but didn't burn her skin.

Returning to his former state he said, "Don't you ever forget that I AM THE LORD!" I am Lord over both life and death. I will not be forgotten. Do you hear me? No one will ever forget me. Everyone will know I was here." Quentin fixed his

twin holes of blackness on Evelyn. Writhing behind their depths were legions of slimy reptile tails.

Evelyn sobbed. She gulped air. Raw fear held her in its grip. Astonishment was her new companion. She could feel Quentin crawling around in her mind, poking, feeling. He found it all. Every secret. Her mind lay spread-eagles naked before him.

His presence was a live wire as he insinuated himself into her thoughts. "My Lord." The words rushed from her lips as if they belonged to someone else. She was barely aware of speaking them.

Quentin laughed. "You're coming along, Evelyn. You're coming along nicely. It pleases me when people use my title."

Evelyn went mute. She was struck dumb by the supreme arrogance emanating from the creature.

"I am a Prince, Evelyn. The Prince. You've heard of me. You've read about me. Yet, you don't believe in me. Few people do. It's what makes me powerful. You're a perfect specimen of the stupidest species to inhabit earth. I know animals smarter than you."

Quentin threw his head back and roared, "I am what I am! Can't you see me?! You don't believe your own eyes?! Well, here I am! In the flesh! I am my own MAKER! I am also YOURS!"

He pointed to the masterpiece he had seared into the wall. The flaming "X" glowed with a light of its own.

"This is my legacy, Evelyn. It is my mark. It will travel through the generations of my seed to come. It is a life force. It is what makes me eternal. Didn't they teach you all about that in Sunday school?"

He stooped down so he could be at eye level with Evelyn. "Take a look around. Because you will spend a great deal of time on these very premises, Evelyn. You will never leave this house again. Oh, no. You will not ever leave. Because if you do. . ." he reached for a handful of her wet hair. He forced her face up to his.

His gaze bore into her. "If you ever try to leave you will die! You will die a death more vicious than the wildest imagination can conjure up. Painfully and slowly, I will release life from your body. Until you beg for death. Until you seek its face. I will kill you and anything you love. Understood? Look at the mark."

His voice now held the musical tempo of soothing waters. "Look at it I said."

Evelyn struggled to rip her gaze from him. She looked at the flaming, spirited "X" seared into the wall. My God! He's insane! The mark swam like a watery illusion before her eyes.

"You've been chosen to be the carrier of my legend. In your womb the seed of the "X" will be implanted for generations to come. You, Evelyn, will raise a warrior. Remember the number six. Don't forget it because it's a very important part of your future." His words echoed through the chambers of her being.

Venom rose from the depths of her belly. Hatred swelled inside her. Refusal bubbled from the depths of her soul at the despicable evil. It spewed forth from her lips. She warred with him in a single word. "No!" She pushed him so hard he stumbled backwards.

The tail of the reptile leaped from his eyes. It lashed around her neck chocking her. It left a trail of a red welt on her skin. As quickly as it emerged it withdrew. Evelyn gagged. She wet herself.

Quentin was unperturbed. He got up and in her face just a little bit closer. Calmly he told her, "Yes."

He turned his attention to the "X." It burned brighter under the heat of his satanic gaze. Radar-like light streamed from his eyes.

He looked at her. Hot sensuality replaced the radar streaming from his eyes. An animal scent of musk rose from the heat of his body.

Quentin slowly licked the outer parameters of Evelyn's lips. He was all lithe sensuality as he gently stroked her wet hair. He kissed the tears from her cheeks.

Evelyn rebuffed his very touch. Her skin crawled from the touch of the beast. Her insides heaved. Then something inside her cracked. It broke down. It disconnected. She lost the last of the tentative hold. She couldn't handle it.

Once again she reached out seeking solace in a corner of her mind she never knew was there. This time the corner embraced her with warm and welcoming arms. It was a place of peace, quietness and refuge.

She floated away as the beast mauled and devoured her body.