

VICTIMS

Written by

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INT. POKER ROOM - NIGHT

A CROWD gathers around a poker table.

CHRISTOPHER LEE RUBY, 30s, well groomed, decent suit, sits at one end of the poker table. He smirks and pushes his stacks of poker chips into the large mound already at center table.

RUBY

All in.

The crowd titters with energy. Ruby's FEMALE OPPONENT, 30s, red power suit, glossy red lipstick, sits opposite him. She sighs and flicks her cards away.

FEMALE OPPONENT

I fold.

The crowd cheers. Hands pat Ruby's shoulders. Ruby smiles wryly at his Female Opponent.

RUBY

Hey, what's another name for a steep cliff?

Ruby throws his cards face up on the table.

RUBY (CONT'D)

A bluff.

The crowd erupts. Ruby smirks as he hoops his arms around the large mound of poker chips and pulls it to him.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Ruby waits at a red light in his four-door sedan. He primps his eyebrows with a pinky in the rear view mirror.

A female DRIFTER, 20s, doe-eyed, short shorts, sturdy backpack, passes in front of the car.

Ruby perks up. He rolls down the window.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The Drifter crosses in front of Ruby's car. Her face expressionless. Her doe-eyed gaze a thousand yards away.

Ruby's voice breaks her reverie.

RUBY

Excuse me, Miss, fancy a ride?

She faces the car and gives Ruby a disarming smile.

DRIFTER

That depends on what you're asking
for this fancy ride.

RUBY

Me? I'm asking for nothing.

Ruby eyes her from head to toe.

RUBY (CONT'D)

I am, however, willing to pay.

DRIFTER

You a cop?

RUBY

God, no. Are you?

She laughs and shakes her head.

RUBY (CONT'D)

Oh come on, let me hear you say it,
please. Are you a cop?

She approaches the car with a smile.

DRIFTER

I'm not a cop, okay? My name's
Beleth. And, yes...

Beleth puts an arm on the car door and leans down. She comes
face to face with Ruby.

BELETH

... I would love to make you pay
for giving me a ride.

The stoplight turns green.

Ruby gives her a wry smile.

RUBY

Hop in.

INT. A SEEDY MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Darkness except for a beam of light that shines through a
thin gap in the heavy curtain.

The room door opens.

The light outside spills into the room as Ruby carries Beleth over the threshold.

They share a laugh as Ruby closes the door with his butt.

The room returns to darkness. Beleth giggles. Ruby grunts.

RUBY
Did you find it?

BELETH
No. Wait. Yes.

The light turns on and shows the room's meager furnishings: a queen sized bed and an end table with a lamp.

Ruby tosses Beleth onto the bed. She squeals with delight.

Ruby scowls and brushes dusty marks off his suit sleeve.

RUBY
What is this? Soot? When's the last time you had a goddamn shower?

BELETH
What's the matter? Don't you like a dirty girl?

Ruby brushes his sleeve faster.

RUBY
No, I don't. Could you get off the fucking bed, please? I'm serious, go take a shower.

Beleth rolls off on the bed and crashes to the floor.

BELETH
Are you going to join me?

RUBY
No.

BELETH
Are you going to watch?

RUBY
Look, just go shower! I'm not paying five hundred dollars to fuck a chimney sweep.

Beleth pouts.

BELETH
But I want you now.

RUBY
I'll get the water going for you.

Ruby walks away.

INT. A SEEDY MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

The sound of the shower filters through the bathroom door. From the bathroom, Beleth sings a tune in a strange language.

Ruby sits on the end of the bed, hands clasped, eyes aimed at the floor. He let's out a deep sigh. He leaves the room.

EXT. A SEEDY MOTEL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Ruby opens the trunk of his car. Inside the trunk: a garment bag, dress shoes, a clear plastic painter's coverall, and a black leather satchel with cracked and worn handles.

Ruby unfurls the coverall. He puts it on over his suit and zips it up. He leans back into the trunk.

Over the trunk lid, the light in Ruby's motel room goes dark.

Ruby closes the trunk. He carries the black leather satchel.

A hacking cough draws his attention.

A low-class AMERICAN HUSBAND, 50s, and AMERICAN WIFE, 50s, lean on a jalopy. Both smoke cigarettes and gawk at Ruby.

Sheepish, Ruby smiles and gestures to his plastic coverall.

RUBY
Makes me feel safe.

The American Wife clicks her tongue and shakes her head. The American Husband mutters to his wife.

AMERICAN HUSBAND
What a fucking pussy.

Ruby walks away, black leather satchel in hand.

INT. A SEEDY MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Darkness. No singing, but the shower continues to run.

Ruby pushes the door open. The outside light spills in.

RUBY

The hell?

He props the door open with a foot. Using the outside light, he finds the room's light switch. He turns it on and lets the door close.

Behind the door, Beleth--fully dressed, but now her skin's a glossy red and covered in inky demonic sigils. Her eyes are solid black, with vicious claws for hands. She compresses herself like a panther set to pounce and growls.

Startled, Ruby spins. He fumbles the satchel. It hits the floor with a clatter and spills a variety of items that scream premeditated murder, including a carving knife and a twelve inch bone saw.

Ruby grabs the door knob. The deadbolt locks by itself with a click. Ruby presses his back to the door.

Beleth's all-black eyes narrow. She pounces.

Ruby ducks Beleth's claw. He scurries along the floor and picks up the bone saw. He rises and brandishes the weapon.

Beleth hesitates.

Ruby chuckles. He gestures at Beleth.

RUBY (CONT'D)

Was the shower too hot?

Ruby grins at his own joke.

Beleth frowns. She tilts her head.

The bone saw gleams in the light.

Beleth glances at the spilled contents of the satchel. With one sneaker, she toes a roll of duct tape. She looks at Ruby.

He gives her a wry smile and shrugs.

She speaks--voice deep and guttural.

BELETH

Were you planning to kill me?

Ruby smirks. He lunges at Beleth and swings the bone saw.

Beleth slaps the saw out of his hand. She catches him by the throat and slams him against the wall.

Ruby's eyes bulge. Sharp claws press deep into his neck. His fingers pull at her powerful grip.

BELETH (CONT'D)
 Are you some kind of demon hunter?
 If so, you forgot your holy water.

He shakes his head and mouths words but only croaks come out.

BELETH (CONT'D)
 No? Don't tell me I've found my
 very own serial killer?

Ruby nods and croaks.

BELETH (CONT'D)
 How exciting! Your kind are
 notoriously hard to spot, even for
 demons.

Beleth smiles and beams with pride. She loosens her grip on Ruby's throat a little. She leans in real close.

BELETH (CONT'D)
 No bluffing, human. How many
 victims?

She licks her ruby red lips.

RUBY
 Ninety-nine. All women. You were
 supposed to be one hundred.

Beleth sucks in her breath and lets out a low purr.

BELETH
 That's so wonderful to hear.

RUBY
 Oh yeah, why's that? Demons love
 killing women, too?

Beleth laughs in Ruby's face.

BELETH
 Wow. You're so pathetic, it's
 almost endearing. To put it simply,
 meat-sack, their souls cling to
 yours, like barnacles on the hull
 of a ship. With your one soul, I'll
 get promoted to a deal making
 demon!

Ruby perks up at that last part. He softens his tone.

RUBY
Look, we both know you aren't going
to show me mercy.

BELETH
Correct.

RUBY
So, what about a deal?

Beleth studies Ruby. He lowers his voice, conspiratorially.

RUBY (CONT'D)
Let me live to do my work and I'll
pledge my soul to you.

She continues to study him. He attempts a charming smile but her chokehold screws it up.

Beleth shifts into human form. She releases Ruby's throat.

BELETH
Your offer intrigues me.

Ruby fixes his disheveled hair with one hand as he rubs his tender neck with the other. His voice is hoarse.

RUBY
It's a good deal. I think you
should take it.

She ignores Ruby and paces in front of him.

BELETH
If each is worth three, then he'd
only have to kill...

Ruby leans against the wall and scowls as he watches her.

BELETH (CONT'D)
... to the third power. And then
carry the six...

She stops pacing, her back turned to Ruby.

BELETH (CONT'D)
Just twelve more and I'll have
enough to join Lilith's legion.

Ruby spies the carving knife on the floor in front of him.

BELETH (CONT'D)
Then, I won't have to deal with any
of Pazuzu's bullshit.

Ruby slides, smooth and slow, down the wall.

RUBY

Yeah, Pazuzu always was an asshole.

Beleth takes a deep breath and puts her hands on her hips.

BELETH

You know what? I think I'll accept your deal, human.

Ruby appears behind Beleth, carving knife in hand.

RUBY

I was bluffing, bitch.

He drags the knife edge across her throat.

She stumbles, hands on neck, and makes wet choking noises.

Ruby relishes the sounds.

She turns and shows him her uninjured neck. Beleth laughs.

Ruby's eyes narrow. He plunges the knife into her stomach.

The blade snaps in half. Ruby examines the broken knife.

Beleth, unscathed, shakes her head and smirks.

Ruby shrugs.

RUBY (CONT'D)

Worth a try.

BELETH

Was it?

Beleth's hands dart out and grab Ruby.

EXT. A SEEDY MOTEL PARKING LOT - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Ruby's yell travels from left to right and ends with a thud.

INT. A SEEDY MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Ruby slams face down onto the floor. Small chunks of dusty sheet rock bounce off of his back. He groans loudly.

Beleth strolls over to where Ruby writhes in pain.

BELETH

You're very confident, I'll give you that. But, like most meat sacks, you're also very foolish.

Ruby pushes himself to his knees. He spots the broken carving knife inches away. His hand trembles as he reaches for it.

Beleth's foot stops next to the knife.

He freezes.

Beleth towers over him and nods toward the knife. She grins.

Ruby narrows his eyes. His body tenses up. He hesitates.

He sighs and pulls his hand back. He bows his head.

RUBY

I'm sorry. Please, don't kill me.

Beleth crouches next to him.

BELETH

I'm not going to kill you. Not yet.
But...

She grabs his hair in one hand and pulls his head back hard.

BELETH (CONT'D)

... I am going to make you cry.

Beleth raises the half-broken carving knife into Ruby's view.

EXT. STREET CORNER - NIGHT

A MALE PROSTITUTE, 20's, pulls a glossy red lollipop out of his mouth with a pop. He dances as he points and beckons to an approaching vehicle.

Ruby's car pulls up to the curb.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

From the driver seat, Beleth rolls down the passenger window.

Ruby slumps in the passenger seat and sulks. Fresh stitches runs down the right side of his face. He wears a pirate eye patch over his right eye.

The Male Prostitute approaches the car window. He leans down.

BELETH

Hi there! Aren't you gorgeous? Do you do couples?

MALE PROSTITUTE

Honey, I'd do everyone all at once--

He glances at Ruby's face and flinches away.

MALE PROSTITUTE (CONT'D)

Jesus! Maybe not everyone. Can he wear a mask or something? He's pretty gross. No offense.

BELETH

Oh, don't worry. He just watches from our closet. Is that okay?

MALE PROSTITUTE

It's a deal! Imma go grab my weed.

Beleth rolls the passenger window back up. She smiles.

BELETH

"It's a deal." I do love those words. But enough about me, aren't you excited? You're finally going to hit one hundred victims.

Ruby grunts.

Beleth pouts and uses two fingers to pop the strap of the eye patch against his head.

BELETH (CONT'D)

Don't feel bad. You're not that gross. I think you look delicious.

RUBY

I told you I prefer women.

Beleth shushes him and pats his knee.

BELETH

Oh sweetie, that's only important to you. Not me.

Beleth gives Ruby a wry smile. Ruby scowls. He smacks her hand off of his knee.

The rear door opens.

The Male Prostitute slides into the backseat with a smile and closes the door.