

Is it true love for Kayin Frost, a wandering mercenary with a secret, and Figgy, a recently-unemployed succubus with skin as blue as her verbiage? It could be, and as we all know, no love story is complete without zombies, dragons, shenanigans, and saving the world.

Creatures of Darkness and Assorted Naughtiness

A Love Story

By Joshua Olsen

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Joshua Olsen

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Chapter 1

“Of Blue Girls and Buggery”

Kayin Frost was a man of action, an adventuring mercenary who feared nothing as he trekked across the country of Alterys, seeking his fortune. Like all great heroes, he was a man with a secret, a secret that could well decide the fate of the world. Yeah, his secret was a biggun...

But we're not going to talk about that now.

Across the world he strode, his chiseled features, black leather armor, and mane of blonde hair cutting an imposing figure for all who would behold him. Indeed, he laughed in the face of danger, chortled at the visage of drakes, snickered at the bumbling of goblins, he...

“Ye gods, why must all wizard lairs smell like goblin farts and chronic masturbation?”

Okay. The first part may have been a bit of an embellishment.

Yes, he was tall, blonde, and occasionally called “hot”. He didn't do much imposing striding (wandering and frequent meandering was his niche) and some things scared the Five Hells right out of him and drove him to what *may* have been described as ‘pants-pissing terror’. *Still*, he was a mercenary. And he liked adventures. That part was true. Sometimes that meant being an escort to an errant merchant (not the prostitute kind, though circumstances would vary when money was *really* tight...), sometimes it

meant tracking a werebeast through a seemingly endless swamp that reeked of sodden decay, or seeking out a damsel in distress, or a distressing damsel...

Today, he was an assassin.

This wasn't his first assassination contract, either. His first had been the corrupt master of a merchants' guild who was so fat he died of a coronary the second Kayin came at him with his dagger; the bugger dropped stone dead at his feet. As far as Kayin could tell, his last words were "Blehhhh". Kayin had been upset that he didn't get to unleash what he was certain would have been an impressive war cry. He'd practiced it many times. The trick was to up the ante with the scream as you charged, and that got you the maximum effect. Everybody knew that. Some guilds of mercenaries wouldn't even *hire* you if you hadn't practiced your war cry. Putting "Fearsome War Cry" on your resume was kind of a necessity, these days. Long gone were the days of "Scary Face" demanding bullet points.

Today, he wasn't after a corpulent merchant with a penchant for prostitutes, pastries, and poultry.

Today's contract was a wizard.

Wizards and mages in the country of Alterys were as varied as they were ineffably bizarre. Sure, just about anyone you might encounter could learn rudimentary magics, given enough practice. Even Kayin knew a spell or two, but those who delved deeper into the multifarious mysteries of the arcane seemed to ineluctably go just a bit...sideways. Wizards were as unpredictable as they were eccentric, as well. One could never tell if a wizard was

merely wizened or actually a century old, life extended temporarily by their magics, nor could one be certain that a wizard was even still alive and it wasn't his ghost performing oddities through an act of necromancy. Kayin *hated* necromancers. He particularly hated their lairs (a lair is a must for a wizard inasmuch as a coffin is a must for a vampire; not required so much as necessary to maintain the ubiquitous image). Well, hating them was easy, as necromancers tended to make their décor as demented as humanly possible.

“Why, yes! Of course! These ropes of intestine will match the drapes famously and these infant eyeballs would make a lovely coffee table piece!”

Who *does* that?

Necromancers. Necromancers do that.

The darkness deepened as Kayin walked slowly into the gloom of the abandoned tower. Clearing his wild, just-past-the-shoulder-length hair from his eyes, he sought to ignore the smell as much as he could. He was uncertain as to whether he smelled the decay of the vines and creepers that had seemingly engulfed the crumbling structure, or something else. If indeed it was the aforementioned *something else*, it would likely mean demented décor. Up to and including infant eyeballs.

“This Edward the Buggerer better not be a gods-damned necromancer,” he sighed.

Edward the Buggerer. Wizard. This guy evidently not only had a talent for magics and scaring the jabbering hells out of the locals, but was an ass man. Humanized him a

little, Kayin thought, but when villagers went missing and the livestock turned up bugged, dead, or both, the locals had decided enough was enough. They pooled their funds and when Kayin wandered into town with a huge sword strapped to his back, they decided it was time for some buggery to be visited upon Edward.

Kayin lowered his head and walked into what may have once been a sewage tunnel a century or two before.

“You’re too tall to be a thief, Kayin,” he said in a nasally voice, parroting a teacher he had some years ago when he’d been entertaining the idea of professional thievery, “How will you cut a purse with that sword? Compensating for something?” No. I’m not. I wasn’t. Everything dies if you poke it enough times. I just don’t like poking it more than once or twice, especially if it has lots of teeth. Ass.”

The gloom suddenly fell over him like a black, viscous liquid. Dark, warding magic began to emanate from the depths of the crumbling fort, pulsing as though it were a living thing. Kayin reached for his blade instinctively, then lowering his hand when he realized it would be no good in such tight quarters. The darkness seethed around him, seemingly hungry. He drew in a breath, steadying himself. He raised his upturned hand in front of him, letting the air out of his lungs, and concentrated.

“*Illuminatus*,” he intoned. If he’d been born a true mage, inherently connected to the magics because he won the ovarian lottery (being a born mage *always* depended on mom’s bloodline), he wouldn’t need to babble in dead languages. Oh well. He made do.

There was a faint crackle, a waft of air, and particles of light coalesced in his palm, forming a glittering, guttering sphere of pallid blue. The sphere rose from his palm, affixing itself to an area just above his head.

Witchlight.

The gathering, shifting dark shrank away from the glowing orb and retreated into the depths of the tower. Kayin grinned.

“Yeah, that might scare the locals, but *I’m* made of sterner stuff.”

There was a scream from the depths of the tower and Kayin nearly knocked himself out on the roof of the passage when he started at it.

The voice of a woman.

He crossed his internal fingers and hoped she was beautiful. The heroing gig was always more fun if beautiful women were involved and, in all honesty, the same can likely be said about virtually everything. Even bird-watching.

“Okay, *that’s* not in any way scary. Not at all. Not even a little.”

He drew his sword, bracing the great blade against his side, took a deep breath, and charged into the gloom.

“Time to do my hero thing.”

On his third, *truly* heroic step, the ground gave way beneath his feet, the ancient stonework finally conceding the point that gravity outlived stonemasonry.

“Well, shit...” Kayin managed as he plunged into darkness.

Kayin crashed through two floors of crumbling stone before he emerged into a room bathed in flickering bale light. He landed on his back as porous, ancient slabs of stone showered the area around him. One of these pieces of stone, wretched little shit that it was, described its terminus directly onto his testicles.

He wheezed in a way that would *totally* instill fear in his foes.

“EEEEEE!! Who are thooooou?!” Screeched a voice that would assuredly be cackling menacingly in a matter of moments.

Edward the Buggerer.

Glancing at the walls, Kayin saw spattered, dried blood. And intestines. There just *had* to be intestines.

“Oh, godsdammit...”

“Reveal thy name!” Edward the Soon to be Buggered shrieked, pointing a gnarled, clawed hand at Kayin.

Kayin clutched his blade and climbed to his feet, meaning to meet Edward’s gaze with all the menace he could muster.

He screwed it up. Why?

Well, there was a naked woman.

Upon reflection, Kayin had happily screwed up a lot of things for similar reasons. But this time, oh, *this* time was gonna be very, very different.

In the center of the room that was clearly a wizard's laboratory, full of bubbling alchemical mixtures, this, that, and the other thing, was an altar carved of glittering, green stone that seemed self-luminescent in the glimmering of the eldritch powers that flickered in the air. Upon that altar a woman was chained, a woman unlike any Kayin had ever laid eyes on before.

She turned to him and across her rosebud-full lips spread a grin that utterly deadened anything resembling intellect in him. Her grin was massive and radiant, showcasing her perfect teeth and her impossibly kissable lips. It was a grin full of mirth, warmth, and positively bereft of anything resembling guile. She smiled as if from the core of her being, a smile that was an arcane melding of blazing sexuality, joy, the comfort of coming home, and the promise of an infinity of depthless passion.

The pupils *and* irises of her eyes were both so black they seemed to drink the light around them, glittering like shards of polished onyx. Her thick hair, flowing to the middle of her back, was white; not the white that comes with age, but white that comes with the winter and the gentle snowfall, the white that comes when one retreats to the hearth for warmth and to watch the cold from a safe distance. Her ears, like those of an elf, were pointed at the tips and rather long, majestically framing her snowy mane.

Though her arms were affixed above her head, her full breasts retained a teardrop shape that seemed all too perfect, as though she'd been carved from marble. Her gently-sloping waist ended in a generous curve of hips that mirrored the width of her broad shoulders. Her legs were quite long and she was considerably too tall for the altar upon which she'd been bound. Gods, even her *feet* were pretty.

Her skin was blue.

Strange that he didn't notice until that moment.

She was *blue*.

Upon her unblemished, *blue* skin, there glittered strange, spiraling runes Kayin did not recognize and that only shown with the right flickering of the magical light of whatever spell was being cast on her.

"Hi!" She said, "The scream worked, huh? I'm awesome."

"Huh..?" He said, utterly awestruck by the sheer *impossibility* of her. How was she *real*?

Don't get a boner, don't get a boner, please don't get the most awkward boner you'll ever have, Kayin. His internal dialogue ran to strange places.

"Reveal thy name!!" Edward screeched at Kayin.

"Hey, shut up, Eddie!" The woman said, "I'm talking to the cute guy. Don't kill my game with your yodeling."

"Do not call me Eddieeeee!!"

“Ugh, seriously, shut *up*,” she said, exasperated, shrugging in her shackles.

“I’m Kayin Frost,” he said, effectively forgetting about the wizened, balding, bearded, screeching Buggerer as he moved towards this otherworldly, *blue*, brain-meltingly attractive woman.

“Good to meetcha, blondie. So, here to help a girl out? I’m all damsel-like and everything.”

“I was hired to kill Eddie by the village west of here. Helmsrot. Great name, isn’t it?”

“Don’t call me Eddieeeeeee!!”

He’d effectively ceased to exist for the moment, despite his raving, jabbering, and waving his arms around.

She grinned again and *again*, Kayin felt several different variations, gradations, and categories of stupid.

“I *know*, right? Seriously, who thought that up? Some weirdo, I imagine.”

Eddie was flapping around the laboratory like a lunatic, yodeling in a dialect Kayin couldn’t place.

“I should probably kill this guy before he gets any crazier, huh?” He asked.

“That *would* be pretty cool. Just poke him with that ridiculous sword. He’s really skinny. Seems like one poke would do the trick. Or just whack him with it if he manages to stand still. He’s a flailer.”

Kayin only broke the strange trance he found himself under by gathering his will much the same way he did when he would cast rudimentary magics. Gods, it was like willing oneself to sobriety, struggling to the surface of thick, syrupy waters. Ooh, but a drink would be nice, though...oh, wait. Gotta murder a necromancer with a penchant for buggery. And intestines. *Always* with the intestines.

“The ritual has been interrupted! How dare thee! I require power! *Powah!* Powah in pursuit of powah! In pursuit of *truth!*” Eddie jabbered, adding the ineluctable, maniacal cackle.

Kayin raised his greatsword, a giant, double-edged blade as long as he was and nearly as thick. Forged of prized, dwarven mythril, it was virtually unbreakable and deceptively light; the blade was wide enough it didn't merit much of a crossguard and showy enough that it *did* merit a great deal of dwarven engravings on the broad side; light for a strong man though unwieldy for a weak one, it issued a gleam like moonlight in the presence of magic. The coloring of the blade couldn't be called 'light' but it wasn't the silverish tint of steel, either. Somewhere in between.

Winter, he had named it.

Sounded cool and was reasonably dramatic. Given that his surname was Frost, he liked the wordplay and definitely fit the merc image he had worked so hard to cultivate. Plus, a *small* word. No hyphen. Hyphenated blades sounded a bit pretentious. Brevity was the thing.

“Think thee a hero, boy?!” Eddie the Buggerer screamed, waving his arms, clothed in moldering rags,

“What are thou to me?! I have lived a century! I have seen the truth behind the lies of this world! The lies thy parents told thee even as thou were in thy crib, even as thou hung from thy mother’s teat! I know the truth of it! There are other worlds than these and ones such as I shall tear *asundah* the veil of...”

“Oh, for fuck’s sake, must wizards *always* do this?” Kayin leveled Winter in front of him in a battle stance. “And *boy?* I’m, um...*thirtysomething*. I *think*.”

Eddie rushed Kayin, his hands describing a manic weaving of magic that crackled and shimmered, giving off an acrid scent of raw energy.

Shit.

This could turn very bad, very quickly. Eddie, for all his innate freakishness, jabbering and insensate *weirdness*, was *powerful*.

None of the rudimentary magics Kayin knew would be of much use here; might as well try to empty the sea with a spork. Sword against sorcery it was and that meant he would need to close quickly and not allow Eddie to finish charging a spell that would turn him into a fine, red mist. Get close, mind your footwork, let the sword do its job, survive another day, get paid, get drunk. Lather, rinse, repeat. Hopefully.

Eddie the Buggerer, reputed sheep shagger and ostensible necromancer, focused on his would-be prey, didn’t notice the slick rope of decorative intestine on the floor. It was on this necromantic equivalent of throw pillow that he slipped and he plunged forward, flailing as he was

wont... and summarily impaled himself on the edge of Winter.

“Bleh...” he sighed as he slid down the blade.

“That was both anticlimactic and somehow familiar,” Kayin said.

“Ha!” The perfect, naked, blue woman said, “Like I said, one poke! Pretty good poke too, even if you weren’t exactly the poker.”

“I was totally instrumental in the poking,” he said, kicking the sheep shagger’s lifeless body off the edge of his blade. Excellent. A big payday was coming.

The flickering, eldritch light was beginning to fade, the magics failing as the caster’s life force departed this section of reality.

“You just stood in the right place.”

“Don’t diminish my poking role. I was readying my battle cry. It’s fearsome. I’ve practiced.”

“Yeah? I didn’t practice my damsel-like scream. That was a bit of improv, but I heard you doing a nasally voice and needed you to hurry along. Eddie was gonna start with the evil after he finished his monologue.”

“He did a monologue?” Kayin asked, “I miss anything important?”

“No, not really, just a lot of ‘moo hoo ha ha’. You know evil wizards. They simply *have* to monologue. That’s totally a rule, or something. So, you gonna unchain me?”

“Oh, right.” Kayin went to the tables of alchemical concoctions to search for the key to her shackles.

“Just so you know,” the woman said as Kayin poked around, “I had him right where I wanted him.”

“Of course you did.”

Success. Key found. Kayin began the unlocking process, steeling himself mentally as to not look at her girly bits. Aaaaaaaaand he saw it, in all its blue glory, though a somewhat lighter blue than the rest of her, almost aquamarine and not quite the near-turquoise her small nipples appeared to be... Nope. Don't think about that. Unlock. Unlock stuff.

Unchained, the woman stretched, her back issuing a satisfying crackle, and sat cross-legged on the altar, regarding Kayin with a smile.

“So, miss...I hope you don't mind me being a bit blunt here.”

She shook her head. “Nope, I don't mind. You've already seen me nekkid and it appears you have about half a boner. Your leather pants betray you. I take it as a compliment.” She pointed, grinning, at his crotch.

He hid his half-mast behind Winter. “Thanks for noticing. What's your name?”

“Iphigenia.” Even her name was like music.

“Iphigenia,” he repeated, “A beautiful name.”

“Thank you,” she smiled, “Call me Figgy. Pretty much everyone does.”

“Figgy?”

“Figgy.”

They regarded each other silently for a time.

“So, Figgy, in the spirit of being blunt, I have to ask... What are you?”

She did it again with that grin; that huge, goofy, utterly disarming grin. It was like being hit in the head with a sack of uncooked potatoes. Pleasant potatoes, but potatoes nonetheless.

“35’, 23’, 35’,” she said, “None too shabby if I do say so myself.”

No. No, it *really* wasn’t. Gods. “Wow. Um, no, I mean, you know, you’re blue and with the shiny runes...”

“Oh, gotcha. I’m a demon,” she stated, grin unbroken.

Kayin had heard the myths and the stories of the gods doing battle with demons. He’d fought beasts that seemed demonic but, at the end of the day, were simply animals. He’d seen the shimmering eyes peering out of dense canopies of trees when he walked through the forests at night. Dragons and their smaller, dumb cousins, drakes roosted in the northern mountains, higher than most dared to venture, but they weren’t demons, just large lizards who occasionally acted as sages, keepers of a treasure trove, or ate the odd cow or profoundly stupid would-be adventurer

who thought fighting a dragon was a good way to make a name for himself.

The warrens of goblins he'd cleared out sometimes seemed otherworldly, but at the end of the day were merely the fart-smelling dwellings of half-bright beasts that liked to collect shiny things and the assorted bauble. But never had he encountered a demon. Sure, other mercs spun stories about fighting demons, all muscle and fangs and drool and red skin. Helped inflate the reputation and subsequently the value of the aforementioned merc. When asked to furnish evidence of the fight though, they always came up short. No proof of the demon, of course.

They weren't real, just stories to frighten the children into obedience, much, he suspected, like the gods in whom he didn't exactly believe. This wasn't happening. It couldn't be. But here she was. An impossibly, *irritatingly* beautiful, blue-skinned, white-haired demon.

A demon named Figgy.

“Huh.”

Chapter 2

“Figgy Speaks, Payday, and the Rise of Cuddle Monkey”

It took Kayin a few minutes to process this information. He wasn't dumb by any means; he was actually quite clever, though under certain circumstances, he may have been adequately classified as a bit of a doofus.

“So... You're a demon.”

“Yep.”

“A *demon* demon?”

“I don't know what breed that is.”

“This really fosters a lot more questions than it answers.”

“Not sure I follow,” Figgy said, “And technically, I'm a succubus.”

“Oh, a *sex* demon?” He asked. Well, *that* explained her stupefying, inopportune-boner inspiring appearance. “Seduce and devour alive or something? I'm okay with the seduction part, but I ask that you please don't eat me.”

She frowned. “I'm not going to eat you and it isn't that simple, dummy. Succubi draw power from sexual energy, true, but it isn't like I'd eat your soul if you honked my boob. We're more like, um, symbiotic muses. Most succubi are manipulators and don't kill, but might leave people in a

position to die easy, depending on the circumstances. Influence brokers, basically. Very few people will ever see us, but we're *there*. Because *magic*. Still, there are a few of us do snack on the odd soul here and there and it's usually a soul that has given in to despair and summoned us as a better alternative to normal suicide. Going out with a bang and all."

"Sounds about right." Kayin's head was positively spinning. Not literally. Not yet, anyway.

"We become temporarily more powerful with the absorption of sexual energy, but like I said, the majority of us aren't killers like other castes. The big, red, drooly, and powerfully stupid buggers give us all a bad rap."

"So there *are* big red ones... Okay, so what other powers do you have?"

Figgy lowered her gaze. "I...I don't remember."

"How's that?"

"What Eddie did. The ritual, it...knocked things loose in my head. I remember who I am and what, but I don't remember what my powers are, exactly. All the magics in me and even the memories connected to them are unscrewed and rattling around. Kayin, I feel weird."

"Well, you *are* kinda weird."

"Shut up. I can give you crabs just by thinking it."

"*Really?*" He drew back.

"Itchy yet?"

“No.”

“Damn it,” she said dejectedly.

“What *was* Eddie doing, exactly?” Kayin asked, regarding the crumpled form of the sheep shagger.

“He was basically trying to gut me of the magics. Demons are inherently connected to the currents of magic, even more so than mages. We’re born from them. Ugh. It felt like he was trying to dig out my soul with an ice cream scoop. Almost succeeded too.”

“Didn’t you have him right where you wanted him?”

“Abracadabra,” she said with a dismissive wave of her hand, her chin resting in the palm of her other, “I just gave you cooties. And I *tried* to use my feminine wiles on him, but apparently I wasn’t fuzzy enough. Maybe I should have gone ‘baaaa’ in a sexy fashion.”

“A wizard trying to harvest power by stripping a demon of the magics holding her together... He couldn’t have been the only one to figure *that* out. Oh, this smells like the start of something that can’t be good.”

“It isn’t,” Figgy said, looking up at him, “Something weird is happening in the nether realms. Demons are going missing or coming back stupid, crazy, or stupidly crazy. They’re getting hollowed out of the magics left and right and it’s happening more frequently all the time. At least, it was when I was still allowed there.”

“Okay, insidious and unsettling harvesting of magics aside for the moment, you got kicked out of the nether realms? Oh, I *must* know this story.”

She crossed her arms under her apocalyptic breasts. Kayin felt the need to hide behind Winter again.

“Well, yeah,” she said, looking at the floor, “If you *must* know, I wasn’t measuring up to the Mission Statement of Evil.”

“There’s a mission statement?”

“Yep. Bullet points and everything. It’s on a big slab of marble in front of the elevators.”

“The what?”

“Never mind. In any case, I wasn’t...evil enough. I was supposed to be an underhanded, conniving, manipulative seductress and I *sucked* at it.”

Kayin laughed. “You’re a succubus and you said that you suck... It’s funny because wordplay.”

Figgy glared at him. “Cooties,” she hissed, “Anyway, my boss was this really high-ranking devil and totally up his own ass. *Worst* taste in ties and his aftershave smelled like cheap dudebro. He may have called me ‘a strange, graceless, and sorry excuse for a seductress who only stays on the payroll because she can fix the printers’.”

“Ooh. That’s a bit harsh.” Kayin pretended to know what a ‘printer’ was.

“And I *may* have retaliated by peeing in his coffee.”

“Wait, you *peed* in the coffee of a devil?”

“*Allegedly*. Circumstantial evidence. Nobody can prove I did that.”

Kayin marveled at her. “You might be the most dyed-in-the-wool badass I have ever met, Figgy. And I once knew a merc who beat a guy to death with a sock. It took several days.”

She grinned at him. “I *am* pretty cool. And seriously? A *sock*?”

Kayin grabbed a cloth from the alchemical table and proceeded to wipe the blood off of Winter before he reattached it to the hook on the back of his cuirass.

“Well,” he sighed, “the weirdness that’s happening in the nether realms is definitely a sign of strange and terrible fuckery brewing and I’m starting to think that maybe I’m already in over my head. I *do*, however, have a powerful need to eat before I even think about investigating further. Time to get out of here and collect on the bounty.”

As if on cue, Figgy’s stomach issued what could only be described as a petulant howl.

“Food,” she lamented softly, touching her smooth-as-marble belly, “I *remember* food.”

“Oh,” he said, “Uh, should we make out a bit? Restore your energy and stuff?”

She rolled her eyes at him. “Maybe later. I would prefer a steak that’s still mooing and a glorious potato the size of my fucking head. I need *food* food.”

She leapt off the altar and stood before him, nearly as tall as Kayin. Again, he was awestruck by how *annoyingly* beautiful Figgy was. As if reading his thoughts, she hit him with that grin again and thrust her weaponized breasts forward. He wasn't unconvinced she wasn't putting the whammy on him. He noticed the unobtrusive runes scattered across her body shine with a strange light that left glimmering afterimages in the air when she moved. Had to be a whammy or something. Screw it. Why not? What's the worst that could happen?

The end of the world?

The sundering of reality?

Dragons and shenanigans?

The revealing of his secret?!

“And because you saved my life, I'm naturally indebted to you for eternity. Thus, you being in my care from here on out, I think you'll be all gentlemanly and feed me. Plus, I'm naked so, you know, no pockets and with no pockets comes no money.”

“You're going to be my demon sidekick?”

“Bitch, please. Figgy the Dread Succubus is nobody's sidekick. You should be groveling before me in gratitude. A demon is gonna be watching your mortal back. And your mortal ass. It's a cute ass and it would be a shame were anything bad to befall it.”

“A demon who sucked at being evil, doesn't remember what her powers are, and has no pockets.”

“Ooh, I feel a bout of uncharacteristic evil coming on...”

“Well, we’re going to have to find you some clothes before we head back to Helmsrot. You stand out enough as it is, but walking in there boobs in the breeze will draw a *lot* more attention.”

“I’m not wearing a dress. *Ever*. Put me in a dress and I’ll use your spleen as a hairnet. Also, no pants.”

“No pants?” He asked.

“Pants are leg prisons. Look how they’ve betrayed *you*.”

“Kinda limits our options, Figgy.”

“We’ll figure something out.”

After pawing through Edward the Recently Bugged’s possessions a bit, Kayin found that not only was the Buggerer a fan of buggery (obviously), but an underwear thief as well. Had quite a collection of women’s undies hidden in a box behind a shrine of evil knickknacks. Figgy donned a pair that could be described as ‘black butt floss’ and a white, v-cut, man’s shirt that fit her like a sail while still exposing a prodigious amount of devastating cleavage.

“Don’t you need shoes or boots?”

“My toes are staunch nonconformists. Wearing clothing is bad enough, but you insisted. Remember my many sacrifices for you.”

Kayin Frost and Figgy the Barefoot Succubus thus set off through the forest for Helmsrot as the dying sun bled its last across the western sky. As they approached the village, seeing the flickering light of interior lanterns, Kayin pulled her aside.

“Alright, Figgy. Now, when we go into the village, you’re an elf, okay?”

“An elf? *Really*, Kayin?”

“Yes, really. You’re an elf. A tall, pretty elf.”

“And blue.”

“Yes, and also blue. That’s a side-effect of the magic Eddie worked on you, *right*?”

“Hmm, so you’re *not* entirely dumb and cute. Are there spells that can turn somebody blue?”

Kayin shrugged. “I have no idea. *Probably*? Anyway, let’s go collect the bounty and see about food and a room for the night. I’m not crazy about the idea of setting off on the back roads out of Helmsrot, at night, with a huge bounty in my pocket.”

Figgy laid her hand on her chest and affected a falsetto, thrusting her left hip out. “Why, Kayin Frost, my savior, my mighty hero of the pokey, ridiculous sword, art thou attempting to get in my *pants*?”

“You aren’t *wearing* any pants.”

“You have a point.”

The inn was the effective hub of Helmsrot in terms of commerce, beer, socialization, gossip, more beer, and the odd strangling. It was also the location of the bounty board from which Kayin had accepted the contract on Edward the Now Quite Bugged. Kayin turned to Figgy before opening the door.

“Remember. You’re an elf.”

“Yes, an elf. But taller and bluer than usual. Also shinier.” She gestured to the spiraling runes decorating her legs as they caught the light.

“Remind me to ask you about those later.”

“My legs? Apart from my mighty brain and truly legendary rack, I think they’re one of my best features.”

“The runes, dummy. Now seriously, remember. *Elf*.”

Kayin opened the door to the inn and entered, Figgy in tow. The raucous chatter of the inn-slash-bar-slash-ostensible pigsty immediately ceased and all eyes fixed on Figgy.

Shit.

Kayin heard the rush of air as the collective guts of the room were sucked in and felt the place grow several degrees colder as every woman simultaneously wished gruesome death, numerous parasites, and overpowering underarm odor upon his companion. Figgy glanced about her, grinning her stupefying grin, and waved.

“Hi, everybody! I’m Figgy the elf! Rescued this night by a truly noble hero from the perilous clutches of an evil mage, I...”

Kayin slapped his forehead with his palm, the report nearly echoing, and made for the bartop, grabbing Figgy’s hand and pulling her with him.

“Gotta go!” Figgy said.

Kayin could have sworn he heard “Is that blue elf wearing my *thong*” from somewhere in the room.

Kayin sat at the bar and waved the innkeeper over. Figgy sat next to him, clutching his arm and burying it in her mountainous cleavage.

“See? Completely inconspicuous. Nobody suspects a thing. I’m *totally* not a creature of darkness and assorted naughtiness.”

“Of course you aren’t,” he whispered, “If they get wind that you’re a demon, they’ll likely assume I’m your bug-eating manbitch and we’ll both end up burned alive. So, you know, *blend*.”

“You *are* my manbitch and I will *never* make you eat bugs,” she said with a dazzling smile.

“I’m thankful for the little things.”

The innkeeper approached, a mountain of meat, more barrel chest and beard than human, and smiled at Kayin. At least it appeared to be a smile. With that much beard, it may have been a sneer for all he knew.

“Young master Frost, was it?” He said.

Kayin nodded. “I completed the bounty on Edward the Buggerer,” he said, reaching into his satchel and extracting Edward’s purloined diary. He deposited it on the bar where the innkeeper began leafing through it.

“Evil, evil, more evil... There’s a whole section here on women’s underwear. It’s even color-coded. What’s *that* about?”

“Don’t ask. Let’s just say that the ladies of the village won’t have wash go missing anymore.”

“Huh,” the innkeeper snorted, “Thought we might have to issue a separate bounty for that. Assumed it was a goblin or a boggart of sorts. Though we are also missing socks...”

He trailed off for a moment and his eyes fell on Figgy, who was marveling at his beard and the way his gleaming, shaven pate caught the light. It was shiny, thus distracting.

“And you, dear elf lass, did master Frost rescue you?”

Figgy nodded enthusiastically. “It was a battle for the ages! Kayin unleashed his war cry in a heroic fashion and, Eddie the Buggerer’s sorcery flashing about him (he turned me blue, you know), Kayin the Courageous raised his great sword to...”

“All true!” Kayin said, “A glorious battle. My *finest* hour. Now, about my payment...”

The innkeeper winced a bit. Evidently there was going to be trouble. The promised purse *had* been considerable. He should have expected this. He *hated* this part of the job.

Now the question became whether the trouble would call for fists or Winter. Gods, he was huge. Kayin wasn't terribly enthused by the idea of a fistfight with Beard Mountain.

As if sensing this, Figgy lifted her shirt and unleashed her boobs on the bartop with an audible thud. The innkeeper ceased breathing for a moment at the presentation of such monolithic mammories sung of only in legends. Then, as if his entire cognitive process had been reset, he smiled widely at Kayin and from a hidden panel beneath the bar, produced a heavy sack of coin.

“For a job well done, master Frost,” he said jovially, “You must be hungry. Allow me to fetch you both supper... on the house.” And with that he plodded off to the kitchens.

Kayin turned, wide-eyed, to Figgy.

“I...” he stammered, “I think I love you.”

“Of course you do, my loyal manbitch! Now *feed* me!”

The first rays of sunlight spilled through the window, played across the floor, and washed over Kayin as he awoke. There had only been one room with a single bed available to them at the inn, and he'd given the bed to Figgy, feeling all chivalrous and stuff as her new companion and definitely-not-bug-eating manbitch, and crawled nekkid under a blanket to sleep on the floor beside the bed.

Succubi snore. That was something he learned. As he came to, he realized that Figgy had left the bed and was now curled up beside him, extremely naked, a long leg draped across him, her head on his chest, snoring considerably softer than she had the previous night.

He also became aware that her right hand was firmly fixed around his junk which, as it was wont, was standing at rapt attention for morning muster.

“Figgy?”

She groaned in her sleep and curled tighter against him. “Noooo...” she said in half-garbled dream-speak, “Not the *radishes*...”

“Wait, what?”

Her eyes fluttered open and she smiled. “Mmm. G’morning.”

“Figgy, you’ve got my unit.”

“Hmm? Whazzat?”

“My penis.”

She looked down. “Oh. So I do. Hey, wow, you’re circum-whatsit! Are you Druish, Kayin?”

“No, Figgy. I’m not Druish.”

She laid her head back on his chest and didn’t move. Not even slightly. Her breasts pressing against his side and her unreasonably long leg over him, that high-noon sundial wasn’t going anywhere anytime soon. If anything, the

captain thought it was party time and, if possessed of the powers of speech, would be going “woooooo”.

“I’m glad you’re comfy,” he said, wrapping an arm around her, accepting his fate.

“You’ve resigned to your manbitchery, so this is mine,” she said with an emphatic squeeze.

Wooooo.

“I am not your manbitch,” Kayin said.

“True. You’re my Cuddle Monkey.”

“I hate you.”

“No you don’t.”

“No I don’t.”

“Your boobs are muscley and hairy.”

“Comes with the job.”

“All mercenaries have hairy chests? Even the *girls*?”

“No, Figgy,” he said.

They lay there silently for a time and Kayin began to doze again.

“You needed me,” she said finally.

“Whazzat?”

“You needed me. And you found me. You needed fun. And you needed *this*.” She tenderly caressed the width of his chest before returning her hand to his wang. Apparently that was her comfort zone.

“What do you... Hey, I’m not desperate or anything, if that’s what you’re getting at.”

“No, but something inside you had all but *given up* on life, on fun. Maybe you finding me, and me finding *you*, was the will of the gods or some such. You’re lonely. You’ve been lonely for a long time. Hangs on you like a stinky jacket, but you’re not *actually* stinky. I’m a succubus and it is...*was* my job to know these things. And as my loyal and faithful manbitch, and because you did sorta pull my truly magnificent ass out of the fire, it’s my *new* job to make sure you’re never lonely again.” She nuzzled against him.

“I’m not lonely, I’m just, you know, alone a lot. And I don’t have a home. Or any real friends. Or any living family. And I wander around kinda aimlessly from contract to contract and...wow. Okay, maybe you’re onto something.”

“You’re a doofus.”

“*Are* there gods, by the way? Is there any word on that?”

“Meh. Nothing solid.”

Figgy shifted, her glittering, black eyes looking up into his. She grinned her Figgy Grin, garnishing it with a dash

of succubus mischief. “On the subject of solidity, this unit of yours could split diamond.”

Kayin hadn’t noticed that there were flecks of blue in her eyes until that moment.

She propped herself up on her hands, pressing her firm breasts against his chest, snowy hair falling into his face, perfect, rosebud lips perilously close to his. His hands had found the pronounced curve of her hips. Gods, she smelled so good, like rose and strawberries. Kayin’s heart was roaring in his ears. Every molecule of his body was screaming in ravening, primal want. Her leg drawing up across him, he could feel the rising heat emanating from between her thighs and all the promises that heat made.

Woooooo, said the captain with gusto that possibly could have driven a spike through a brick.

“I *am* a succubus, after all,” she whispered lustily, huskily, her lips caressing his as she spoke, languidly sliding upward to mount him, “so I’m *sure* I can do something about...”

That’s when the flash of orange light enveloped the room and warm wind rushed and whirled like a dust devil, filling the room with the nearly chemical scent of raw magics. Kayin and Figgy sat bolt upright and as the light faded, there stood a woman every bit as tall and stunning as Figgy, though she was impossibly even *more* curvaceous; her skin was rose-red, her hair was silken midnight, and her eyes were glittering amber. She wore a frilly, black corset, high-heeled shoes, and nothing else.

“Changed my mind,” Figgy fumed, “There *are* gods and every one of them clearly hates my ass and doesn’t want me having anything even *faintly* resembling an orgasm.”

“Ooh, hello, Iphigenia. I do hope I’m not interrupting. May I lend you a hand, or if you prefer, I can watch and self-capitulate,” the curvier-than-a-country-road-upon-which-one-might-hear-the-ominous-sound-of-a-banjo red woman said.

“Uh, hi,” Kayin said, raising his hand, true to doofus form, not entirely certain as to what just happened, though a portal seemed the best explanation.

The red-skinned woman, obviously another succubus, regarded him with an appreciative smirk.

“It really must be said that, while you’re positively abysmal at evil, Iphigenia, your *taste* has greatly improved since your dismissal. My, my, if he’s even half as strong as he looks...”

“Hi, Lil. How’s tricks?” Figgy said, plopping dejectedly on the bed.

“Darling, aren’t you going to introduce me to your charming companion with the pouty lips and bedroom, baby blues?”

“Ugh. Kayin, that’s Lilith. Lilith, this is Kayin Frost. My manbitch.”

“I am *not* her manbitch.”

“Of course you aren’t, darling. Iphigenia, word on the grapevine is your delightful toy here rescued you from a wizardly fellow with a proclivity for anal.”

Figgy shrugged. “The netherworld has an eye on me? That’s annoying. Are they watching when I pee? Because if so, that’s weird, even for them. But yeah, Kayin... might have helped. With his ridiculous sword. In a pokey fashion. I totally had a genius plan to foil that necromancer, though.”

“I have no doubt, darling,” Lilith said, perhaps meaning to sound consoling but coming off more than slightly patronizing, “There must have been intestines. Though I may be a devoted servant of the dark abyss, I can only say that I find necromancers simply ghastly. He summoned you, used binding sorcery, and tried to strip you of your magics, didn’t he?”

Figgy nodded solemnly.

Lilith put her hands on her screamingly outrageous hips. “That’s the fifth incident this month, you know.”

“It’s getting worse since I got shitcanned, isn’t it?”

Lilith nodded. “Thus far, you’re the only subject who didn’t end up dead, crazy, or stupid, though the latter two may be up for speculation and the ritual wasn’t completed, in your case. Williams is scrying into entrails most every day, trying to triangulate the incidents, establish a pattern, but thus far is coming up empty. Mages all over western Alterys seem to be gobbling up demonic magics at random. For what purpose, we cannot discern, but we’re being cautious regarding any summoning. By the way, darling, if

you want to come by to clean out your desk, Williams is still very upset about the ‘Pee Incident’. He only drinks tea now. You might be pleased to know you’ve attained a somewhat legendary status in some circles.”

“Nobody can prove I did that and Williams is a dick.”

“Oh, he’s the superlative definition of ‘Positively Unfuckable Douchebag’, darling, but he’s still head of Evil Regional Marketing.”

“What’s a ‘douchebag’?” Kayin asked, “I hope *I’m* not a douchebag...”

“(You’re not a douchebag, Kayin.) Lil, my magics are on the fritz now. Ever since that ritual, it’s like my magics got blackout drunk and got seriously questionable tattoos. I can’t remember what all I can do or even *how*...”

Lilith laughed. Her laughter was a sound seemingly like a beautiful instrument that could paradoxically turn deadly at any moment. Like a voluptuous, evil violin. A violin in a corset.

“Iphigenia, *you* of all people are having *performance* issues?”

“Not really funny, Lil,” Figgy sighed.

“Oh, but it is. I *am* evil, you know. In any case, darling, you *are* the magics. They’ll return in time. Take your friend with the chest here, ride him like a disobedient mule, whip him until he likes it (I have a fabulous crop for that if you like), and everything will come back via the

symbiosis. Provided, of course, he doesn't die a horrible death in the process."

"That's *just* what I was about to do, sans whip, and...wait, what?" Figgy asked.

"Wait, what?" Kayin said in unison.

"Darling, your magics have been siphoned; they're still within you, though untethered, you might say. If you try replenishing them now through sexual symbiosis, you would likely rip poor Kayin's soul right out of his *truly* boneable body and that would be an unconscionable waste."

"*WHAT?*" Figgy was decidedly displeased. Kayin fancied that he could see a vein throbbing in her forehead.

"Think of siphoned magics as creating a vacuum, darling. The tidal pull inside you is quite strong now, and the power is unmoored, seeking for something to latch onto, so as to steady itself. In this case, it would be Kayin's soul...also, you know, his dick. By the way, Kayin, are you Druish, darling?"

Kayin thought for a moment that there could be worse ways to die...no, no, no, soul-ripping was bad. Don't think about how the curve of Figgy's hips felt. Or how good she smelled. And aquamarine. *Definitely* don't think about aquamarine. *Anything* but aquamarine. And don't look at those breasts that could start a war that inexplicably lasted over a decade on a beach and ended when somebody built a statue of livestock.

“I...am...going...to...murder...literally...*everyone*,” Figgy growled.

Lilith patted her shoulder. “Oh, darling, it isn’t the end of the world. Just allow the magics to find their footing inside you naturally and then you’ll be able to bang him until his balls rattle and not reduce him to a withered, shriveled, desiccated, ashen husk of what used to be an immensely doable specimen.”

“I’m a *succubus* and I have blue vagina. Literally and figuratively. I’m wetter than a bog and I hate the whole *world*,” Figgy seethed.

“This would be so much simpler if you were evil, Iphigenia.”

“We’ve been over this, Lil. I suck at eviling.”

“That’s true, darling, but you’ve many other talents. No one has been able to get the printers working properly since you were so unfortunately dismissed... You didn’t pee in them, did you?”

“No, Lil, I didn’t pee in the printers.”

“Ah, well that’s good to know.”

Lilith raised her upturned palm and therein a ball of orange light began to form.

“Well, I’ve done my uncharacteristically good deed in checking up on you. I’m happy to have found you in good health, Iphigenia,” she said with a smile, “I’ll endeavor to keep you in the loop should we learn anything below. Oh, and if you find you simply *must* bone Kayin to death, I

would appreciate a chance at him before you gobble his soul like a fat guy on a cookie bender.”

Figgy shot Lilith a middle finger. “Love you, bitch.”

Lilith returned it with a swivel of her world-destroying hips. “Kisses, darling.”

Orange flash, whoosh, and Lilith was gone.

Kayin stared, a bit awestruck, at Figgy, who was herself pondering the eternal mystery of her navel.

“She is, uh, something else,” Kayin said.

“Yeah. Would you believe she did seven dwarves at once to start a trade war between stonecutting guilds? Because she *did*. The beardy little guys filled her out like an application. I saw etchings you wouldn’t believe. I mean, that girl is bendy in ways I can only dream about. She got Employee of the Quarter for that one.”

“Are you alright, Figgy?”

“No. I’m a succubus who has been cursed with The Vagina of Vicissitude. If she hadn’t arrived when she did, you’d be very laid and very dead due to my Tunnel of Torpou and I couldn’t live with myself having murdered my manbitch who I will totally never make eat bugs!” She hung her head so low it was nearly between her knees.

Kayin gathered his thoughts and considered for a moment. Given the overall enfilade of weirdness of recent events, he was rather surprised he arrived at the conclusion so readily.

“Come on. Get up. We’re leaving. I’ve got an idea.”

Figgy flopped face-down on the bed. “No. I don’t wanna. Let me wallow. Behold my wallowing.”

Kayin began dressing as Figgy wallowed in the manner of a practiced professional. He found her thong and her shirt near the door where she’d cast them off almost immediately after entering the room. She remained limp, like a blue, boiled noodle, as he dressed her. Resolved in her wallowing, Kayin lifted Figgy up and she flopped over his shoulder in a potato sack-like fashion. He fastened Winter to his cuirass and Figgy raised her fist.

“I spit on your name, Eddie the Buggerer. You’ve cursed me with Murderous Muff and all I wanted was to have hot, sweaty escapades with my cute manbitch (fuzzy as he is) and I didn’t get the orgasm I wanted and I can’t even magic properly. I am a succubus burdened with The Pussy of Peril and now my magics can’t get it up. Woe unto your soul, Eddie the Ass Man. I *stab* at thee!”

“Figgy, he’s already dead.”

“Yeah, I know,” she sighed regretfully, “But still...can you maybe take me back to the tower so I can kick him a few times?”

“Listen, I have an idea that may get you some answers regarding you getting your mojo back *and* get *us* some answers as to what’s going on with mages taking demon magics.”

“Are you going to carry me?”

“No.”

“Please?”

“Nuh uh.”

“Why are you helping me, Kayin? You already saved my life and now I can’t even repay you with my planned lurid, one might even say *demented*, sexual favors. I don’t know how to use a sword beyond swinging and poking and I can’t cast any spells. I’m a succubus who simply *sucks*.”

“Well, swinging and poking is actually a pretty good place to start, sword-wise... Look, I’m doing this because I like you, Figgy. You’re fun. And you’re right, I was lonely. The truth is, in all honesty, I have *absolutely* nothing better to do, I just made quite a bit of money, and an actual *quest* sounds like fun. And...well...”

He sighed. “And because I’m apparently your non-bug eating manbitch.”

“Will there be beer?”

“Yes, I imagine there will be beer.”

She raised her fist again. “Onward then, mighty steed! Adventure awaits!”

“I’m not carrying you, Figgy.”

“I hate you.”

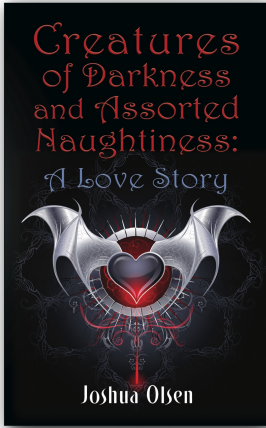
“No you don’t.”

“No I don’t.”

“Any more alliteration you want to get out regarding your vagina before we embark on this, our glorious quest,” he asked the living, shapely potato sack.

“Clit of Cataclysms, Vag of Vociferousness, and Labia of Lugubriousness.”

“Huh. Not bad.”



Is it true love for Kayin Frost, a wandering mercenary with a secret, and Figgy, a recently-unemployed succubus with skin as blue as her verbiage? It could be, and as we all know, no love story is complete without zombies, dragons, shenanigans, and saving the world.

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