

The Devil Deals in Souls

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This story revolves around when dark Rave and her hyper brother, Chris move from Downville to Los Angeles and meet the three gangs that rule the city.

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Chapter 1 - Hickville to Cityville

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1 - Hickville to Cityville

Can you say you've never seen a 'gang'? I could, at one point. Before my parents died and my brother, Chris, and I had to move in with an aunt. She lived in Los Angeles, and we were expected to move there with her. Ha, how Chris laughed. A small town girl like me? In the big city? I could barely navigate myself around a Walmart enough to find the bathroom, how would I deal with the big city?

"Rave," he told me, still fighting the chuckles, "You'll never last a day. I'll have to watch your back all of the time, won't I?" He grinned, and burst into laughter as he walked off. He needed the laughter, he'd been so close to dad, that I was pleased he could snicker as he did, even if it was at my expense. He didn't laugh the day we climbed onto that bus, leaving our common friends and homeland behind. I waved once to the Louisiana people seeing us off. My last glance at Monroe, not where I lived, of course, was blurred by tears I quickly blinked away. I had already cried over the loss of the childhood home, Downsville LA, for the actual L.A. Lovely, right?

The first stop was in some small town called 'Shreveport'. It sounded similar to Shreveport and nearly sent me into tears again. Chris saved me by shoving a candy cane up his nose.

"See, Rave? No hands!"

The stop was entirely too short, and we were soon loaded back onto the bus. I spent the next three hours studying everything around me, and I found it immensely depressing. The seats were a gray-blue and covered in all sorts of stains. The floor was littered in trash, and there was very little chance of seeing any floor, which I assumed would be brown and stain-spotted as well.

The people are probably what kept me entertained. Chris has nodded off, and I was people-watching. Across the aisle from us was a thin elderly lady, with yellowed gray flyaway hair hidden under a straw hat and faded blue eyes. Her clothes were baggy, and didn't sit right on her frame. She caught me looking, and sent a faded yet still bright smile my way. I glanced away, not feeling like smiling in the least.

The next interesting one was a blonde girl who could have been a damned play-boy bunny. She was bouncing around and looking at everything. "See that?!" She said, gesturing at a dust devil whirling its way across a bit of dry, dusty land. The man she was speaking to, clearly a stranger, was too busy staring at her jumping anatomy than at the spinning dust devil.

Sighing, I glanced behind us. One boy, about sixteen, my age, caught my eye. He was raven-haired, onyx-eyed and just as pale as I was. His eyes, so black they could have drowned someone, were ice-cold and glaring. At me. I gave him a quick once-over, curiosity winning, and noted his black shorts and high-neck tee-shirt. His shoes were black sneakers.

I finally spun back around, feeling how wide my thickly black-lined eyes had become. It wasn't every day some random guy glared at me like I was a harpy or something. Yeesh, what was his problem?

"Most there, Raven?" I heard my brother's bleary murmur beside the window. He was blinking, getting his eyes back used to the light.

"Not nearly. Hey, glance at the back. Is that dark guy still glaring at us?" I told my elder brother, who glanced back and frowned before turning back. He'd clearly didn't like what he saw.

"Glaring at you, sister of mine. What's his problem? I'll handle this." My tall, running-muscled brother stood and turned around, ignoring the driver's yells of 'sit down!', turning his own glare toward the dark-haired boy. "Hey, b*** face! Keep your eyes offa my sister!"

I eased around, to see that the boy had stood up as well. "Want to fight over it? My merely looking at your sibling?" The boy's voice was confident, to the point of cockiness, and ice cold. A cold smirk was

plastered on his face, and his eyes glowed darkly with some kind of shadowed excitement.

"Hell yes! Move it, Rave," I turned irritated and exasperated on the dark-blond, tanned boy I referred to as 'brother'. "Christopher," I began, frowning rather hard at him. His emerald and turquoise eyes blinked, before saying, "What?!"

I sighed, standing up as well. "You can't fight on a moving bus. Sit down and handle it at the next stop. And, you!" I whirled to face the teen, who was obviously smirking in a hope to goad my brother into fighting. I gave him the best crazy, enraged look I could, knowing my narrowed eyes could be frightening. He didn't seem phased.

"Yes?"

Cocky SOB! I nearly jumped him right there. Irritating, that's what he was! But, I restrained myself and merely spoke in a cold/fiery tone that had made everyone at home move back a few feet, "Quit glaring at me. Or, I'll wipe that smirk off of your face, my brother aside!"

His smirk became interested, not intimidated at all. I grew so angry I knew it was pouring off of me in waves. My brother even cringed back. "Is that right? Although, how could you? You're very small. You barely come up to my chin." His smirk morphed into one of gloating.

At some point, my hand had come up to grip the back of the seat my brother and I were in. The hot reply burning its way up my throat was killed by the sound of metal groaning under strain, before snapping.

The boy's cold, eerie black eyes dropped to my hand, which was still clenched, then to my face. It faded into an approving smile, before his face slid into a cold, uncaring mask.

"Not all is as it seems, eh?" He said, before placing himself back onto the seat and turning his icy glare to the window.

"What is that supposed to mean!?" I exploded, before my brother pushed me back down into the seat. I continued to mutter curses under my breath, and planned all sorts of 'accidents' Mr. Cocky back there could have.

The next stop was in a place called Sizer. The bus driver stood up and faced us all, before announcing in a gruff, bored voice, "Rest stop, two hours. Meet back here at three o'clock sharp. Not here, you miss the bus. All off." In unison, everyone stood up except for me, Chris, and Cocky in the back. Everybody else filed off, besides the standing elderly lady, and us three.

"Coming, children?" She asked, eyeing us. Cocky smiled politely and walked on ahead, while Chris and I waited for him to pass. He paused beside our seat and looked me in the eye. His eyes were green now, with black dots. Chris put a hand on my shoulder protectively, as Cocky spoke, "I apologize for my earlier behavior. Perhaps I could show my regret by purchasing you both lunch?"

I frowned, not really feeling too hospitable, but Chris saved me, he forever being the peacemaker, "You could join us, if you want. That's all, though."

Cocky also frowned, but nodded and went on. The lady waved us ahead, and Chris followed me into the small diner/convenience store/gas station there. It didn't look like there was anything for miles, I noticed. Inside, we three found a table and I ended up in the corner with my back to the wall, beside Chris. Cocky sat across from us, studying me with a trained gaze. "Quit staring at me!" I snapped, wanting to call him every name in the book.

"Really, man. Keep your eyes offa lil sis here. She gets easily pissed off." My brother reinforced, saying it with a grin. He didn't stay mad too long. I was the grudge-carrier, and boy, was I carrying one now. Cocky was so irritating, it made my teeth hurt.

"She's different, that's for sure." Cocky said, distractedly. He was obviously scanning my lined eyes, which was only partially eyeliner, and my black lips. My irises were also something to study. One was a shocking sapphire blue, while the other was a calming, surreal lavender/sky blue. It was surprising with

my very pale skin.

"Sure is. Though, there is an upside. She never needed to be defended in school. She was scary enough all on her own, without the threat of her older brother to back her up. She still had friends, but they were as bad a** as she was." Chris rattled off. I shot him a glare, before I was distracted by the waitress. She was a buxom girl of about sixteen. She was blonde, blue-eyed and seemed an idiot. She could do all this and still smack gum. Ugh.

"Help you?" She murmured, then got a good look at the two I was sitting with. Her eyes widened marginally and she seemed as if she's swallowed her gum. "I mean, can I help you two?" She seemed totally transfixed on both at once. Holy mess, the two didn't appear as fine as that, did they?

I finally took a better study of them both. Seeing Cocky through the eyes of someone who he wasn't glaring at, he didn't look too bad. I shook my head. Not too bad didn't do it justice. He was hot and he knew it. Cocky Neanderthal! It was always the cavemen-ish acting boys that were hot and available. Curse all that was holy, why was that always true?

My brother was just as good, but in a more summery, daytime way. It was as if comparing day and night, in a way, with Cocky over there in all his moonlike glory and my brother shining like a beam of sunlight. Sunlight, describing his dark-blond sun-streaked hair, tanned skin. There were touches of chill too, his one turquoise eye and one emerald eye, almost like wind across a warm desert.

Poor waitress. I snickered to myself and rolled my eyes. She was screwed out of saying one more half-coherent word today.

"Oh! It's three of us. I must be sitting in front of Rave. See her?" My brother said, leaning back. She immediately shot me a withering look, obviously not seeing the brother/sister relationship here. Nice.

"Not necessary, brother." I murmured, watching her eyes fade with understanding. She appeared to almost like me now. Lovely.

"Sorry, sorry. To make up for it....Rave?.....May order first. What can I get for you?" She smiled warmly at me, with a glance that said, 'hot brother you got there'. I couldn't exactly argue or agree. He was my brother, but he did have looks. Oh, bother.

"No problem," I replied in an empty tone, the one I used with strangers. "I'm not really hungry. Just something full of caffeine will do to drink. No coffee, though." I didn't return the smile. I wasn't a smiling person.

"Naturally, naturally. And for the boys?" Her smile grew more suggestive as she glanced from one to the other.

Cocky lifted an eyebrow toward my brother and gestured before saying, "You first." Obviously a bit of a gentleman when not glaring at someone. Maybe I could add multiple personalities to his list of already known faults.

Chris lit up, immature as he was, and started rattling off what he wanted. Cocky and I, scary as it was, shared a look as he ordered five meal plates. He had always eaten big, but not that big. What had gotten into him?

After Cocky ordered, only water and rice strangely enough, and the waitress stumbled off, I turned to my elder sibling and demanded, "What on earth were you thinking, ordering that much food? How will you ever eat all of it?"

He shrugged, unrepentant, and said, "I'm hungry. Besides, I'm the one with money." He added a smug smile, and I hit him across the shoulder. Merely a slap, really, but he fell and skidded a few feet over the tiled floor. He was stopped by his head connecting with a wall. He sat up, rubbing his noggin, and whined, "Rave! That hurt!"

"Just reminding you that I am the one with strength and that'll get me a helluva lot farther." I sent him a smirk and gestured for him to get back in the seat. He stood and moved over, glancing around as if thanking all that was holy that no one was watching. We were freaks sometimes, plain and simple.

"So," Cocky began, cold as ever.

"So, what?" I snapped, still not really warm towards him. I doubted I would ever be. He was too damned cocky for his own good.

"We got off at a bad start, I see. Why don't we start over? I am Jason Reg Dange, most often referred to as Pheonix. Your names, please?" Cocky, or Jason as I guess we call him now, didn't seem to like the word 'please' too much.

"Nice to meet you, Jason. I'm Christopher Dominic Cauchemar. This is my younger sister, Annabella Raven Cauchemar. We're moving here from a small place called 'Downsville'. It's in Louisiana." My brother rattled off, not even consulting me. I glared at him, but didn't say a word.

Pheonix nodded, digesting all Chris said. He finally glanced at me, and stayed there. "And, why are you moving from such a small, unknown place to the big city?" His eyes caught me cringe as the reasons ran through my head. I slid farther into my corner, and kept my eyes down. I picked designs out of the brown, blue and yellow speckled table while my brother began our whos and whys.

"You see, our parents were in a vehicular accident," That was the only time he used such intelligent words. "The only survivor of the crash was....well, Rave, here." His voice had lowered in sorrow, and I felt my own heart lurch painfully as I lifted my hand up to my upper arm on my left, and the scar there.

"We are going to live with an aunt in Los Angeles. Where are you headed, Jason?"

Jason smiled, and I detected something pre-decided here. It looked fake. "Pheonix. The same. Strange, right?" I wondered if it was strange at all. I was suddenly very suspicious of 'Pheonix', as he seemed to prefer. "As for the matter of your parents, I am terribly sorry. It must be horrible."

Just then, busty and blonde showed up with our drinks. Chris started slurping down Coke and answered every question the waitress threw at him. The poor boy didn't seem to notice she was flirting with him, and the girl damn well was trying her hardest. I rolled my eyes again.

She moved on and Pheonix started again, "So, who is your aunt?" He seemed earnestly curious and that told me something. Either this guy was after one of us, or he was sent after us by someone. Nobody is ever that curious about a stranger.

"Aunt Clark." He stated, using what we called her. Her true name was Julia Anise Clark, but she was very serious about them being proper.

Pheonix nodded and said, "Must be-" The waitress arrived with the food and appeared as if she was struggling to carry it all. She set it down, smiled warmly at both of them before she was called off.

"As I was saying," Pheonix began again, "It must be nice having your Aunt Julia to care for you. At least you aren't completely alone now." He seemed blunt and cautious all at once. It seemed a strange combination, as well as impossible.

Then, as my brother muddled, "Yep." Through his mouthful of food, I blinked once. We had never mentioned our aunt's first name, yet he knew it. He'd slipped up.

"Can I speak to you for a few minutes, Pheonix?" I said through gritted teeth. I was worried, and that transferred into anger immediately. It was like a safety device for me. Worry tore me apart, while rage held me up.

"Of course, Annabella." He replied, standing. It took moments for Chris to get out of the way. He didn't seem to notice the glares I sent Pheonix, nor did he notice the nervous fire consuming Pheonix's eyes, which were once again green with black.

We ended up on the far side of the convenience store part, near the cold drinks and utterly alone. It would have been awkward if I hadn't been so angry.

I sighed, and set my glare upon his face, saying, "I don't know who you are or why you're interested in my brother and I, but you better stay away from my family, or so help me I'll decimate you." My threat was full of the need to carry it out, and the unwanted to start a scene.

Pheonix stared at me for a second, before speaking, "You don't know how to use your powers, do you?"

You think you're the only freaks in the world, right? Wrong. There are more of us, and I was sent to make sure you ended up with the right ones. I'll thank you not to make my job harder."

I blinked, thinking. Us? He has....abilities too? There are more? "My sibling and I have just been through a tragedy. Stay away from us. We don't want to be part of your freak organization. Leave us alone." As much as the idea of having someone else to talk to about our freak-show powers appealed to me, I wasn't about to trust Pheonix.

He smirked, and moved as if he were about to leave. "Shouldn't we allow your brother to decide? He has rights too, you know. And, he's your elder. He should decide for you both."

Aie! Annoying, cocky, enraging Neanderthal! I was mere inches from killing the boy. But, I didn't. No, I restrained myself. I couldn't restrain myself, however, from pushing him.

I shoved him and he collapsed. I had used barely any strength and I wasn't trying to hurt him, just show my immense dislike for him. Yet, he hit his knees like he was fainting, and paled as if he had just seen someone's spirit. A person he had killed.

I was allowed to see this for one second before I was consumed in fire. I didn't see any light outside of me or on my clothes, but my body was suddenly burning. I could have sworn my flesh peeled away, charred or only ashes. My bones seemed to melt, while whatever blood I had seemed to boil within veins that didn't exist.

Then, as it started, it faded away. Slowly, away from first the tips of my fingers, which I was pleasantly surprised still existed, then up my arm. I couldn't open my eyes until it had retreated to my heart, where it burned like a captive forest blaze.

I slowly peered from between cracked eyelids, and carefully blinked, allowing my eyes to, once again, become used to that light, and not some internal firelight that threatened my existence. That done, I forced myself almost vertical once more and glance around. Nobody had seen it, because of our secluded section of store.

Pheonix was kneeling five feet away, glaring at me. It wasn't the earlier glare of a stranger, but the utter hating glare of a person who knows what you can do, what you are, and resents it. He seemed to completely hate me, but in the depths of his eyes I saw a flicker of something totally different. Fear. "What just happened?" I murmured, standing. My body hurt, and I studied myself to check, but I saw no burn. At first, anyway. Then, on my left hand, one of the lifelines was a burn. Brilliant red, with blackened smaller lines. Freaky.

Pheonix didn't answer. He merely stood as well, and gestured with his head to return to the table. I was inches from throwing an unholy fit, I wanted to know, but something in his stance stopped me. He appeared to be in intense mental or physical anguish. My burning, pulsating heart could wait. I could behave for a second.

I, against my usual nature, followed Pheonix to our table, where my brother was happily consuming his third meal. I gestured for him to stand up, but he only scooted over. I growled, but eased onto the outside part of the hard, blue bench. Pheonix looked absolutely pitiable as he slid into his side of the table, and his skin was still chalky white.

"You look like you've seen a ghost, Pheonix. What happened?" Chris started off, then turned mock-accusing, almost playful eyes, toward me, "What'd you do to him, Rave?"

I winced, and watched as Pheonix sipped a bit of his water and nibbled his rice. He was uncomfortable, I could tell, but he said nothing to my brother of his freak-show friends. I was glad for that, so my voice wasn't venom-filled when I muttered, "Not sure. I....uh....Not sure." I repeated it twice, because I wasn't sure. Not in the least.

Chris's eyes suddenly filled with a strange intelligence I saw only rarely. When he actually caught on that something important was going on and he decided he wouldn't miss it. With this strange smartness in his eyes, he turned to Pheonix. "What's going on? Now, someone tell me. Now." His demanding tone

surprised me, but I shrugged helplessly toward a Pheonix, whose eyes were actually asking me for permission.

"Chris, I don't know how to explain what happened, but I'll explain what I came to you two for." He began, and I narrowed my eyes, but nodded for him to complete. He started again, "I belong to a...a gang, for lack of a better word. My gang is called the Creed. Our gang members are all...special.

"You see, in Los Angeles, at some point we were all born from absolutely normal parents, but we were abnormal. We had...powers, abilities, and we couldn't explain why. All of us lived nearby, went to the same school, but we never spoke of these 'powers' we had. Finally, some people, out of college and way older than us, gathered every one of us freaks together and explained everything except why. They figure it's some genetic mutation, but, either way, we grouped up and named ourselves.

"At one point, before many of us were even out of diapers, two gang members broke off and started two more gangs of their own. BloodRain and WhiteNoise. Mutated people also joined them, and we had three rival gangs in one city.

"BloodRain slashed out a weaker, older gang, SandDunes, and we gained their remaining members. But, after this victory, BloodRain aspired to decimate the Creed as well, and WhiteNoise wished to surpass BloodRain by destroying us first. Thus, we live in constant struggle, and any shift in power to tumble down our carefully structured balance.

"So, when your Aunt Julia told us about you, I was sent meet you both and 'make friends', so you would not join either BloodRain or WhiteNoise and disturb our balance. All of this make sense?" He finally stopped, and watched us both for a sign of change.

Chris blinked and the intelligent look remained as he thought through this new development. He finally met an almost-frantic Pheonix's gaze, and asked, "Both of us?"

Pheonix snorted, "Ha. Like we'd want a weak, untrained girl. Only you, Chris." I almost snapped at him, before a twinge in my mind stopped me. I saw an elderly couple watching us nervously. Like we were all about to sprout horns, pitchforks, forked tongues and tails, and demon's wings to fly off and wreak havoc somewhere. I would have snickered at the thought, if I hadn't been so upset. Weak, untrained girl? I oughta...

Chris nodded, and some tension went out of him. What on earth? He spoke again, "I'll enter the Creed, Pheonix. First, though, what can you do that's so special?" His eyes lit up and he was my annoying, childish elder brother again, but the glimpse of his other, unknown side worried me.

Pheonix smirked and brought his hands up onto the table. I glanced around, for any speculators, then back in time to see a flame go up in his cupped hands before fading. The miniature blaze, or seeing it, returned the missing color to his face and made his chilly eyes dance. It almost made him look....tolerable. Then, the light went away and his eyes quit their alluring twists.

"Awesome!" Chris crowed, before grinning brightly and murmuring excitedly, "I'm okay with fire too, but it's more the fact I can turn into a demented fox that makes me different. It's weird, but fun."

Pheonix nodded and replied, "You're one of the 'demons'. Supposedly, the angered spirit of an animal caused your birth mutation. It's very nice, and it almost decides your gang name. Fox."

I smirked and muttered, "Aw, Foxy." Chris playfully slapped at me, but that was the only reaction.

Pheonix sent me a glare.

"Oooh, is the mythical birdy mad?" I don't know what had made me want to mock them so, but I did. And, I would for a while.

The glare worsened, but a smirk of my own met it. It'd be effortless to learn to hate this guy. I already did, a little. Why? Well, he was a total jackass, and that's just starting. He was cocky, annoying and easily enraging, but it didn't seem like my brother saw him that way. My brother seemed to see him like an answer to a prayer. Oh boy, Pheonix would be his new best friend. Eh, life just didn't work the way it should have.

"Oh, Rave. Lighten up. You're a girl, what would you want with a gang anyway?" Chris said, elbowing me in the ribs. I sighed and shrugged, "I don't know, Chris. What would I want with living a dangerous, exciting and possibly fatal lifestyle?" Putting it that way, I saw him frown. Something that seemed to be worry flashed through his eyes before fading away.

"You're too much of a daredevil, Rave. You really need to calm down some. You're too young to do most of the things you do." Words I would never have expected from my brother's mouth emptied into the air. I gaped at him. He wanted me to calm down...

In Downsville, we had been well known, and were usually described as uncontrollable, crazy and reckless. And, everything we had done had been a pair activity. Stink-bomb the principal's office? Chris had been look-out. Put sugar in the school's meat surprise? Took two people to get through the window and two to pick all the locks. Put dish soap in the fountain at the mall? One was a distraction and the other poured the liquid soap in.

Too young? I was so much more mature than he was in so many ways. I had aged years the night my parents died, when I had to hear their last sounds of pain, when I had to see the damage done to them and I could do nothing about it. I was so much older than him on the inside.

Me calm down, too young? Like hell. I sent him a glare that should have melted him, and shoved him into the wall, effectively making a dent that followed the build of that side of his body. He appeared so shocked and hurt, that one glimpse I got of his face, and I felt absolutely no remorse. He had asked for it.

"Rave? Rave! Annabella!" I heard him behind me, trying to follow. I rushed out into the parking lot, anger carrying me and flooding into me a wave of energy. I had to change, the rage was building into more energy, but there was only grass surrounding this place. Several people in the lot had stopped and were staring as I stumbled off of the concrete and into the grass, which was very tall I was pleased to see.

"Rave? Stop! Annabella Raven Cauchemar, listen to me!" My brother had caught up and he grabbed my shoulder. He was trying for the parent look, and it only angered me more. He drew his hand back as rage heat poured off of me in waves, and shadows coming from within me tried to shatter his fingers and palm.

I faced him for a minute, tracing the familiar lines of his face, the one scar high on his cheekbone. My brother and I had been best friends, understanding the best and worst of each other. We still had, until Pheonix showed up, with this gang stuff.

I had my epiphany right then. It was Pheonix's fault. We had been fine, then thirty minutes after we meet him, my brother was already worlds away. Pheonix. My inner spirit roared. Folie, my inner wolf demon. She was just as angry as I was. Pheonix. We must kill him.

I could have resisted, but I agreed. He was trying to take my brother away. If we killed him, it destroyed the problem. If we killed him, he could never hurt us again.

Yes, Pheonix must die. I decided then. My rage intensified as Folie argued for a way out. She wanted to be free for a bit. I didn't argue. I delayed a second, finally saying to Chris, "Get the hell away from me. Go back to Pheonix, you seem to have so much fun together. Go back to him, and stay out of my life."

I hurt him badly then. He winced and I saw the pain seep over his face. I had damaged him internally.

"Rave, I'm-" I cut him off with a look, and ran out into the grass, finally hitting my hands and knees. I felt shadows surround me, my hands and feet retract and reform, becoming paws. My nose and mouth stretched outward, now a snout. A tail appearing and my ears stretching upwards. In less than a minute, I had morphed into an onyx-colored wolf. I glanced around, blinking two-colored eyes. Folie gave me one minute to get the gist of my surrounding before muscling her way to the front. We'll run. Yes? We'll run. She asked me, or demanded. I sent a positive answer back and we started off, loping our way through the grass as fast as we could.

Pheonix is bad, taking your brother away. Killing him will make it all better. After all, it won't be the first

time you killed to protect the family, right? Folie told me.

In fact, it wasn't. There had been several instances when someone who hurt my family lost their life. A boy had pushed my brother down. I had enthusiastically ripped out his guts and tried to feed him his own intestines a mere week later. A man fired my father, and I had made him run like the deer and other game he hunted, before taking him down. A woman had snubbed my mother, and I made her beg for her life before I slowly skinned her alive.

The worst one, though, was the drunk that had crashed into my parents. There had been two boys and a girl in the other car. The week before we had been forced to leave, I had killed them all in front of each other. The girl had been cut into pieces in front of the boys' eyes. One of the boys had watched his best friend be burned alive slowly. The driver, however, suffered more. It took me two days to kill him. I drowned him several times, only to revive him. I burned his leg to ash and poured boiling oil over the other. One of his arms was cut off, while Folie knawed off the other. His spirit was broken long before I took a athame to him, and sent him straight to hell.

I'm ruthless, Folie. Most girls my age aren't like this. I murmured to her, realizing it myself.

Most girls can't do what you can, sweet. Don't beat yourself up over it, it's a gift. You can do whatever it takes to protect those you love. Or avenge them when it's taken out of your hands.

I could only agree. I finally rested, drawing back as Folie ran the anger-energy off. When she finally slowed, we could see Denver.

Can we get back to catch the bus? I asked her lethargically. She sent an affirmative, and spun, letting me take charge to run. I wasn't even tired and I knew we had run farther than a car could make in equal time.

We rushed into the grass near the convenience store and came to a complete stop. Looking behind me, I found we had left no tracks, as if we were merely shadows passing through. It was like that everytime. I morphed back and my clothes, which had also merely become shadows, reappeared and I stood up. The people loitering in the parking lot all acquired eyes the size of plates when I seemingly appeared out of nowhere.

One of them was my brother, who was leaning on the building beside a very irritated Pheonix. My brother wore a mask of worry and started to meet me, but Pheonix's hand on his shoulder stopped him. He turned his anxiety-ridden eyes to the darker one, easily seen as protesting, before pulling his shoulder away and briskly walking toward me.

"Rave, whatever I did, I'm-" Again, he stopped, scanning my features, which formed a cold, uncaring mask. It was the face I used on everyone. Except him. Except my brother. Practically the other half of my soul. The living, breathing, pulsing part that could have fun, that could laugh. Without him, how could I survive? I needed my better half.

But, he thought I was young, wild. He wasn't my better half anymore. I'd have to learn how to breath on my own, how to be alone. I had to recede from him, lest I was hurt again. I would do him a last favor, kill Pheonix who destroyed the last bit of our family bond. Then, I would pull away. Leave him to find his own way, as he so seemed to want to.

It could go back, sweet child. Without Pheonix. Kill him, restore your relationship with your brother. You can fix it, sweet. Folie murmured in my head, a soothing whisper. Her voice was like searching hands, spreading through my mind, calming my fears. I returned my cold eyes from where I had glanced down and shook my head at my brother. "Don't speak to me and I won't say things that you will regret forcing me to say."

Again, his pained, shocked look hit me hard, but my face faded into the mocking guise that Pheonix always wore, from what I understood of him. "Bye, Christopher." He recoiled, his face a bewildered and harmed mask. I turned away from him and hurried to the bus, which was already loading passengers. I climbed up the steps, which I now noticed were covered in some type of goo and soda. Suddenly and

without warning, I was very tired. The delayed reaction surprised me. I didn't usually tire this easily. You don't usually run that far or fast, either, without calming yourself. Anger energy spends quick. I told myself, as my mind started to spin, or was it the world? I was feeling the loss of energy, feeling it alot. I felt my knees buckle, and, instead of spinning, the world blurred entirely. What did you do, Folie? What...The ground came up fast. ...did... My hands weren't quick enough to catch me, and it didn't even hurt. ...we... I attempted to get up, but nothing responded to my mind's orders. ...do...? Finally, a blanket of black covered everything. The only thing that broke through the black was shining, bi-colored eyes. My eyes.