

Ravens, Monsters & Phoenixes

By Veronica S.

Authors Note:

Let me start by saying this. Don't ever go on a cruise if you're in a relationship and don't plan on taking your boyfriend/girlfriend/spouse/significant other/whichever

you wish to call it. Especially if you're a teenager. Things will happen that you likely will regret whenever your back.

Names, appearances, company names, etc...have been slightly modified to protect identities. The main character, Vei (pronounced V-ay), is my own perception of myself in many ways. She is my ideal self, with most of my real details, and some modified details, something I've always wanted to have, etc...

What I will tell is something that really happened to me, with some minor modifications. (reasons stated in last paragraph).

Also, I, just like Vei, take interest in all sexes. If you have a problem with same-sex love, flirting, kissing, etc... than drop this now. I'd rather have my book read by people with open minds, than with people sticks up their bums about the subject. With that being said, let's let our story begin =)

Chapter One: Arrival

"Don't forget to change, honey!" I heard Mom say. I gave a sigh. We had just entered our snug little room, on this ship. This had come as a complete surprise to me and my mother. Dad decided to surprise us on Christmas, so here we are now. I smiled to

myself at the thought. I loved my parents, but it was always interesting to see the new twist they would add to things.

I shook my head of the thought as I felt Dad accidentally bump into me, trying to get the suit case on the Queen-sized bed. There was the bed on the right side of the room, a small bedside table, a large curtain hanging from the ceiling (you know...the types of 'curtains' they have between hospital beds), and a small sized sofa that transformed into a bed. The large bed was light blue in color with snowy white pillows. I silently walked over to my sofa and sat myself down on its tacky-green fabric. I looked across the walls. The wallpaper was a deep sea blue-green color. The wall opposite of myself had a dark brown desk with the typical 'welcome' brochures and 'safety' brochure. I shook my head and looked at the large, flat screen TV. Well, it was large for what you'd expect to be in a tiny ship room. I smirked and looked outside of our sliding glass door, to my right. There was a small balcony that currently over looked the city of Miami, Florida.

I lived in Kingsland, Georgia. A small town in almost the middle of nowhere that could see Florida from their backyard. It was warm most of the year, got mega humid in the summer and quite brisk during the winter. Dad said we needed the cruise to escape 'the real world' for a week. I made a face at the thought. 'Getting away from the real world' meant me dropping the internet for a week, and being unable to call OR text anyone. Yes, scream, I know, it's agonizing. Especially for a seventeen year old girl, such as myself!

"When's dinner?" I asked to no one in particular as I searched for the black remote to turn the TV on.

"Seven tonight, sweetie." I heard Mom say. I gave a nod as I flipped through the channels. Not a lot of channels to choose from. I should have guessed.

"Go on and explore the ship, meet us back here at about 6:30, 'kay?" I heard Dad ask. I gave a nod as I stood up and turned off the TV. I gazed down at myself. I had on a black, strapless/sleeveless dress that went down to about my waist, where it fanned out into a flat-black tutu style. The torso section was raven black with a few buckles down the middle. My legs were covered with black/white striped tights and my favorite pair of white, knee high, platform, combat boots. Yes, you heard right, WHITE combat boots. I don't like being all dark in my style. I wouldn't call myself 'gothic' either. I dress according to my mood, so some days I'm bright and sunny, other days I'm rather dark, and sometimes, I am just a hot mess.

The ship had nine floors. I figured out only three decks were important to me though. The second deck (aka as the Arne deck) held all the restaurants, the eighth floor (aka as the Frits deck) held two large pools and a casino, and the ninth floor (aka the Kees deck) held a library on the far right end and a dance floor on the far left end. In case you are wondering about the names, the ship is run by a Dutch line, hence the Dutch names. I had just wandered around the three floors, getting my bearings before heading back to the room. I changed into a dark violet halter dress that went down to my knees. The dark purple dress highlighted my olive-toned skin. My hair was about down to the center of my back and raven black with deep-purple tips. The purple came in different hues and shadows, depending how the light hit it. My parents hated me dying my black hair, but hey, I loved purple! I pulled my hair back into a high ponytail and pulled on a

silver necklace with a pretty sapphire-blue sapphire stone in the center. It was a gift given to me from my boyfriend, we were in a long distance relationship. My parents, however, did not approve of me being in a long distance relation, so they still considered me single and always gave me a death glare whenever I mentioned him. I rolled my eyes at the thought of my parents' displeasure towards my boyfriend as I put on a simple, thin black liquid eye liner on my top lid. I didn't use a lot of make up. More often than not, I try to use none. Less is more in my mind when it comes to makeup.

The food was yummy at dinner. The service was quite good too. The soda cost us three dollars, but everything else was included in the 'final' cost of the Cruise. At least, that was what my Dad said. I had myself a large steak. I am thin for my height. I am about 5 ft 10 inches and 135ish lbs. I have high metabolism too. My mother complains about my bad eating habits, I simply tell her 'I am using it while I have it mother!'

"Oh, Victoria." I heard my mother say. I visibly cringed. I HATED my real name, so I got everyone to call me by my own personal nickname, Vei (pronounced V-ay).

"Don't cringe....There will be a dance tonight!" She said enthusiastically. I raised an eyebrow. Dance? I loved dancing, whether it is hip hop, ballet, jazz, and everything and all between. She smiled.

"It starts in about an hour. There is no dress code, but please...try not to dress as dark as you normally do." I smirked as I sipped on my soda. Mother and father gave up on attempting to 'dictate how I dress' when I turned thirteen.

"I'll see what I can do." I said simply as I excused myself from the table and skipped over to the elevator. I waited patiently for the doors opened. I raised an eyebrow. There was a hot guy inside!

He had long dark red hair and a little bit of facial hair along the side of his chin. He had dark brown eyes and milky white skin. He wore a dark brown T-shirt and black pants. He didn't seem to notice me as we went up one floor. I smirked and left, going over to my room, secretly hoping I spot him later.

I changed into a short sleeve black top and a plaid mini skirt that had fishnet-netting beneath it. My legs were covered with badly torn up black fishnets. My shoes were black tennis shoes, which were designed specifically for dancing. This meaning, there wasn't 'hard' grip on the ground and it was easier to shift movement between the ball and heel of my foot. I grabbed my room key, tucked it inside my raven black push-up bra and headed out. I honestly didn't need the push up, but hey, a little boost was always sexy in a man's (or woman's) eyes. I gave a laugh at the thought. Oh, a tease and flirt I was...

Chapter Two: So Wrong

I had entered the dance floor whenever the dance was just beginning to pick up. The dance floor was pretty large with comfortable-looking booths lining the walls with a glass table in the middle of the half-circle booths. It was dark with flashing, moving

lights. The lights made intricate designs on the floor in a circular motion. I looked to my right; there was the DJ behind a half wall-half glass barrier. He was sitting at a desk with a computer, supposedly doing requests. I smiled to myself as I let the rhythm take control of my body, so to speak. I loved to dance and I love music. I just kind of what whatever my body feels like doing, without caring for the eyes/stares I may potentially get.

I danced along to the music, not really dancing with one particular partner. I occasionally danced by or with a group of two or three other dancers. The DJ played the 'Top 40s' type of music from our time. Meaning, hip hop, pop, trance/dance, and some rock n' roll type music. I danced through it all. My dance style, whenever I am not dancing with a particular group, involves a lot of large body motions, combining different styles. I like jumps, spins, large arm/hand movements, and quick feet movement.

I lost track of time and frankly, I didn't give a damn. Later though, when I was almost on the brink of exhaustion, I spotted a dancer that had been on the floor just about as long as I had been on it. He had medium length raven black hair, beautiful crystal-blue eyes, and light milky white skin. He had on a raven black bandana, a black jacket, a raggedy looking white T-shirt, somewhat-baggy black jeans and black shoes on. I smirked, hearing a latino-dance style song come on and made my way smoothly over to him, passing the other dancers.

Our eyes locked and I saw him gradually get closer and closer as we danced. My eyes just couldn't leave his handsome blue hues. I smirked, hearing a slight pause in the song. I stopped my body from moving as he took a single step towards me, now only a few inches away from me. I smiled a seductive smile, hearing the song pick up again. He put his hands on my shoulders and I put my hands lightly on his arms. We danced closed together like this for a few seconds before I felt myself move closed to him. I knew I was losing control completely of my body's movements.

We kissed. It was only a brief peck, but it was still a kiss. I smiled as we kept dancing, his hands moving down to my waist. I moved my face close to his and we kissed again before I felt him press his nose close to the rear part of my cheek, him breathing in my scent as we danced. He moved his hands lower to my hips. All the while, my mind was racing with thoughts of '*This is wrong! Stop!*' but my body refused to cooperate with my mind, knowing my boyfriend at home may be a little mad, if he found out. The terms my boyfriend gave were simple, '***I don't care if you kiss or do anything with anyone else. Just don't do anything more than kiss and don't have sex***' but lately, he seemed to be getting rather...protective of me.

I tried to brush the thoughts out of my head, but it was fruitless. I heard the song end and I breathed hard, me and him sitting down heavily onto the booth. He smiled at me and I smiled back

"What's your name?" He called out loudly towards me, trying to beat the blasting volume of the music around us.

"Vei! Yours?" I called back towards him. He smiled.

"Flynn! Nice to meet you!" I gave a nod before hearing the next song begin. I let my head hit the back of the booth lightly and smirked, hearing Flynn curse.

"Damn it! Just when I got too tired!" I chuckled at his remark. We sat there, mainly just catching out breath as we listened to the music play. I smiled, hearing a heavy bass song come on after about three songs. He gave me a sly smirk and stood up, walked

over in front of me, and offered me his hand. I wrapped my hand around his, and he helped pull me to my feet.

We danced along to the music. We avoided the drunks that were beginning to come to the floor. I heard the DJ say, "It is now midnight, and we are now 18 and over only!" I ignored the rest of his words. I was six days away from being eighteen, close enough in my eyes.

As the song came to a finish, I said loudly, "I better head back! My parents might be getting worried." He gave a nod.

"I hope I can see you sometime during the rest of the cruise, Vei!"

"Hope to see you too, Flynn!" I called out happily. I kissed his cheek and exited the club. I smiled with relief, feeling my heart in my head. It was beating so hard! Not just because of the flirting with Flynn, but because of the hard dancing as well. I gulped as I thought of my boyfriend.

I managed to bring along my stuffed bear that he gave me. All I really wanted to do now is snuggle up to him and hope that what I had with Flynn was strictly/purely a 'one night stand' type of deal only. I was afraid of getting emotionally attached to him, knowing I would likely never, ever, see him again after the cruise. I bit the inside of my lip as I opened the door to my room.

Parents were dead asleep in the room. I silently entered the room, closed the door, and turned down the heat ever-so-slightly. I changed into my pajamas and curled up on my bed. I cuddled up to my bear and yawned as I felt myself slowly drift to sleep. Whatever I dreamed that night, I can't quite recall, but my worry was still there when I awoke.

Chapter Three: Winning Reluctant Hearts

I awoke the next morning. I gave a lazy yawn, hearing Mom turn on the TV to the news.

“Did you have fun last night?” She asked me. I gave a sleepy nod as I sat up and ran my fingers through my hair. I had bed head. I shook my head slightly and tried to smooth out my hair.

“What time did you get in?”

“Around Midnight, where’s Dad?” I asked.

“Breakfast, you got thirty minutes to get ready, meet him there, and eat with him, then you’re free to do whatever.” I gave a nod as I got to my feet and got dressed. I chose my lime green bikini with a black T-shirt and light blue shorts.

I met/found my Dad on the Arne deck. I ate quickly, my mind on Flynn. He was like poison in my veins. I wanted to forget about him, but I just couldn’t get him out of my mind. Every time I thought of him, his eyes were the first thing to pop into my head.

“I’ll be heading to the pool, Dad.” He gave a nod.

“Just meet us back in the room, same time as before.”

“Ok, see you” I said as I stood up and headed to the Frits deck to hit the pool.

I spotted Flynn, him appearing to be napping on one of the lawn chairs. I walked over to him and saw him open his eyes. I smiled.

“Hi.” I said quietly. He smiled back at me,

“Hey.” He said, friendly enough. My eyes wandered. I could see him in clear detail now, compared to last night. He had a tattoo on his right arm of what looked to be a large pendulum. I always wanted a tattoo, but knew my parents would kick me out of the house if I got one. Something I couldn’t afford quite right now. I shook my head and sat down next to him.

“I just got done swimming, just kind of laying out now.” He said with a lazy yawn. I nodded.

“You danced well, last night.” I offered, trying to start up a conversation. I saw a smirk tug at his lips.

“Thanks, you were good too.” I laughed sheepishly, looking to the side. I wasn’t blushing, thank dear God above.

“So, where are you from?” I asked, trying to learn more about him.

“Northeast. I’m currently in Florida now though, trying to go to college and living with my grandfather” I nodded. “What about you?”

“I come from a town in the middle of nowhere, GA. I’m on my senior year and I’ll be graduating in a few months” He gave a nod of approval. I looked up at the roof; they had opened it up slightly to let in the sunlight. Apparently, the upper deck had a sunroof and glass floor on the library so the sun could seep down and warm the pool/guests on the cruise.

Flynn and I continued to make small talk for the next hour or so, just getting to know each other better. I found out that he enjoyed dancing as a hobby and was Russian, just like myself. He wasn’t too sure about his past. Apparently, his dad may have been his real dad, despite currently holding the status of ‘step’. I didn’t understand it and wasn’t going to bother digging and prodding around. I know some people were sensitive to their past.

We ended up walking to the Kees deck together. The club was now barren. It was a little cool as well. He sat down on the booth and I sat about two seats away from him. Flynn gradually got closer to me. He wrapped an arm around me and I laid my back on

his chest, propping my right leg up on the booth. He lightly caressed the side of my leg as he held me with his other hand. I kept quiet as he kissed my cheek. I felt his hand gradually move closer to my hip. I felt myself shift my position slightly, moving more upwards as I moved my hand down to my hip, to keep it from potentially exploring “private” territory on me.

He smirked and kissed me. I kissed him back, but only briefly, allowing only a peck. Flynn gave me a disappointed look for a quick second before kissing me again. Once more, I only pecked his lips.

“Only a peck?” He questioned softly, after a few more repeated attempts to hold a longer kiss with me. I gave a nonchalant shrug.

“I’m a flirt.” I said almost silently in response. He smirked and kissed me again. Only this time, I reluctantly held it longer. He seemed to smile into the kiss. I only held it though for a second or two longer before breaking away from his lips.

“Better.” He said quietly. I mentally gulped as I looked up at him. The lights were still dim in the area, so it was somewhat difficult to make out his features. He slid his hand carefully above mine and tried to go under my hand. I pressed down hard, my eyes narrowing. He kept silent as he relaxed his hand for a moment before attempting to kiss me again. I turned my head away. He frowned and sighed.

“I need to go out for a cigarette, wanna follow?” He offered. I shrugged, standing up with him and brushing myself off. I didn’t care for cigarettes. I’d never, ever smoke one, but I could stand being around others who did.

We walked outside together and he lit up a cigarette. I watched him silently as he took a drag off of it. He smiled faintly at me for a moment. I looked away. I knew he was admiring me. He seemed to give a low, almost sadistic chuckle. I narrowed my eyes and looked quickly over at him.

“What?” I asked him, sounding rather offended.

“It’s nothing” He said quietly in response, flicking some of the ash from the end of the cancer-stick. I rolled my eyes in response.

“I think...I’m going to go hang in the casino for a little bit. Feel free to come along.” He nodded, despite how I noticed my tone turn a little bitter near the end of it. I walked back inside, noticing he was following me out of the corner of my eye. I did my best to shake the conflicting emotions rising within me as I sat down at the Texas Hold ‘em table.

I smiled, my mind turning its focus onto the game. My hand? A King and Queen of hearts. My eyes focused on the other players and the dealer. My dark brown hues casually looked around myself as well. Flynn had wandered off to the slots, and there were a few watchers in the casino. It was amazing that people got paid just to make sure no one cheated. Than again, it was practically impossible to attempt to get away with cheating in the casinos now.

I won a few, I lost a few games. In the end, I managed a profit of about thirty four dollars. Pretty good, considering I only started with about ten dollars. I quit while I was ahead, not wanting to risk losing money. I noticed Flynn had wandered off as well. I frowned. Part of me wanted to see him again, but the majority of me felt rotten. I felt like I was cheating on my boyfriend, despite how he gave me permission to kiss and flirt with others. I gulped as I headed back to my room. I knew I was beginning to fall and fall

hard, all due to stupid hormones. I let out an irritated sigh as I fished out my card and slowly inserted it into the door. A small green light came on, showing it was ready to be opened. I silently opened the door, shutting it behind myself. I yawned and noticed the note on my parent's bed. "Went to grab a snack and sunbathe! Hope to see you at 6:30!" I smiled and lay down on the sofa. Apparently, room service came and changed my bed into a sofa every morning after breakfast. While my family was at dinner, they changed the sofa back into a bed.

I lay down on the bed and felt myself doze off. My mind swirling around Flynn. I wasn't going to deny it, he was cute and a good kisser. Not to mention, he could also dance, a huge perk in my mind. Then there were the 'not so nice' things about him: he smoked, he was clearly interested in more than just kissing, and whatever this was, was not going to make it past this cruise. I frowned at the thought as I turned over to my side. I felt myself gradually drift into an uneasy catnap.

I was shaken awake by my Mom.

"Honey, it's time for dinner" She cooed softly. I slowly blinked myself away and looked over at my mom. I smiled faintly as I got to my feet. I changed myself into a strapless/sleeveless black dress that went down to my knees. I had on tightly-knitted black fishnets beneath the dress with simple three inch black heels. I walked to the Arne deck with my mother and we took our seats at dinner with my father and an older couple that looked to be in their late 50's.

I quietly ate my beef and mashed potatoes, mostly tuning out their conversation. My mind felt like the aftermath of a hurricane. What I knew was being so shaken up by just the thought of one single boy! I stabbed my meat roughly with my fork, slicing frustratingly at the meat. My Dad gave me a curious look.

"Er, Honey...are you ok?" He asked a bit concerned.

"PMS" I said simply. I wasn't on PMS, but it was the one answer that could get most men to shut up on something girls didn't want to talk about. Dad gave only a nod, before going back to his soup. I sighed inwardly. I hated having emotions! I shook my head at the thought as I finished up dinner and went back to the room to change into a dark blue tank top, black skirt, and my dancer shoes once more.

I smiled to myself as I walked onto the dance floor. It was slightly crowded. Not too bad. I looked over where the DJ was, it was the same guy from beforehand. I sat down at one of the booths and looked at the dancers that littered the dance floors. Most of them were around college age, or looked to be around college age. The occasional older person came to the floor, but that was it outside of the college-range. My eyes skimmed the crowd for Flynn. Part of me wanted to see him and dance with him, the other part of me was repulsed by what he was after earlier. I gulped mentally before hearing one of my favorite songs come on. It was trance-style song with heavy beats and a very electronic sounding style. I danced along to it with a small group of dancers. I found myself keep looking at the entrance of the club, waiting for him to appear. '*Damn you heart, damn you!*' I thought fiercely to myself. I shook my head as I continued to dance, trying to dance my troubles away. It was a complete flop though; I just couldn't unwind my thoughts from Flynn.

I think he appeared on the dance floor around midnight or so. I recall seeing him come onto the floor with a dark red bandana, gray faded t-shirt and black, slightly baggy pants. I smiled widely. I knew my face lit up like a Christmas tree. I did my best to make my way over to him in a not-too-enthusiastic way.

“Let’s dance!” I called loudly over to him. Flynn looked over his shoulder at me and nodded. We made our way to our own little semi-open section on the dance floor and danced. It wasn’t really intimate at first. We just kind of danced, twirled, and went about our own dancing ways. We kept semi-close though. As the night drew on though, we found ourselves getting closer and closer to each other. The mental red flag went off in my head, telling me to stop. My body, once again, didn’t obey. We danced close to each other, his hands on my hips and my hands resting somewhat awkwardly on his upper arms. Flynn moved in closer to me and kissed my cheek. I seemed to laugh lightly, causing him to smile. We exchanged a few light, butterfly kisses before the song ended.

Both of us danced until and through our own exhaustion. I think around 12:30 AM I decided to call it a night. He followed me, wanting to walk me back to my floor. We made out on the elevator. Each time it stopped on a floor, we’d close the door the moment it didn’t look like anyone was at the door, and went back to kissing. I felt him grope my bum, causing my hips to instinctively move up and closer to his. I mentally cursed myself.

I smiled, seeing we had finally reached my floor. I gave him one last good bye kiss. He held a wolfish smile as he watched me get off. I paused and looked over my shoulder, seeing the elevator move back down. The doors were glass, so I could easily see him. I stood there for about another minute or two. ‘*Monster*’ and other such vile curses ran through my mind. I looked down at the floor before hearing one of the crew-service men ask if I was alright. I forced a smile on my face and told him I was OK.

No, I wasn’t OK. I was feeling horrible. I hated myself for growing so close, so fast with Flynn. He was a player, I knew in my heart, but my stupid teenage hormones wanted his body. I shook my head quickly, as though it would help dispel the horrid thoughts as I walked back to my room.

My parents were sleeping like babies when I entered the room. I silently closed the door behind myself and went into the bathroom to wipe myself clean of sweat and change into my pajamas: a pair of shorts with my favorite cartoon character on it (which was a female starfish with large eyes and a cute smile with dimples), and a plain black T-shirt with one of my favorite bands on it. I walked over to my bed and laid down on it. I absent-mindedly watched the TV for about ten minutes before turning it off and turning off the bed light. I wanted to talk to my boyfriend so bad, but knew that I couldn’t even call him on this ship because it would be very expensive. I frowned as I felt myself slide into an uneasy, dreamless sleep.

Chapter Four: Abandonment

I woke with a start. It was a nightmare. I looked down at my sheets. I narrowed my eyes. I couldn’t recall the nightmare, but it sent a shiver down my spine. I shook my

head slightly before looking over at the bedside digital clock. '9 O' clock' I read mentally before noticing only my mother was still in bed. I shook my head and turned over, seeing my teddy bear that my boyfriend had given me. I smiled faintly and hugged her close for a moment. She gave me comfort immediately. I laid like that for the next five minutes or so. I got myself up, took a quick shower, and got myself dressed. I wore a lime green bikini with one of my favorite band T-shirts and a pair of dark blue shorts.

"I'm going down to eat, than hang out at the pool" I told my mother, who nodded sleepily in response. I grabbed one of the small black bags I brought onto the ship and opened it up. I had some of my sketch-art supplies, some make up, and my lime green mermaid tail. I smiled widely and closed up the zipper. Good, I hadn't forgotten my tail. I threw my bag over my shoulder and headed down to the Arne deck.

I had some scrambled eggs and toast. I spotted Flynn's father while I was eating. He came over, asking why I was alone. I told him I overslept and he laughed. I smiled as we exchanged our goodbyes. He looked like one of those 'fathers every punk/rocker child wished to have.' I shook my head. My father was just getting old. Many people mistook him for my grandfather instead of my father. I smiled to myself, finishing my small breakfast before heading to the Frits deck.

I walked over to the pool and sat myself down in the first empty lawn chair I spotted. I threw off my T-shirt and smirked, spotting Flynn as I did so. I ran my hand through my hair for a moment before slowly taking off my shorts, purposely doing so in a motion that showed off my curves. I couldn't help my bizarre mentality of being attracted to him. Perhaps it was that common 'sheep attracted to wolf' saying. Whatever. I threw my shorts to my lawn chair before I looked around myself slowly, only to spot Flynn wasn't there anymore. I narrowed my eyes. *'God, that boy is fast. I only looked away two seconds!'* I shook my head at the thought and walked over to the side of the pool.

The pool had an interesting set up. There was a mini, six inch ledge, than there was there was a flat top that was about three feet, before dipping down into a six foot deep pool. The deep end was six feet; the shallower end was five feet deep. The water was an inviting, clear blue color. Sometimes whenever the ship got rocky, mini waves would form in the pool. I giggled for a moment before fishing my mermaid tail out of my bag. I laid out flat on the ledge and slowly slipped into my tail. I knew I'd be getting stared at. Not my fault that I liked swimming as a mermaid instead of a human!

Once my tail was on, I scooted myself over to the pool edge and dipped my tail/legs in. I shivered for a second. The water was lukewarm-cold. I slid myself over to the shallow, sunny side of the pool. I forced myself to go under the water. I stayed there for a moment before slowly swimming up to the top of the pool. I breathed in deeply and smiled, looking around myself. Some little girls obviously took interest in me. They only appeared to be about seven or eight, at most.

They laughed delightedly and began to follow me as I swam around the pool. I smirked as I swam over to the deeper end of the pool, where two adults were. One was with his child, teaching her how to swim; another was just kind of hanging out. He was an older gentleman, a bit heavy set, and had some gray hair on his head.

"You seem to have attracted quite the crowd." He said jollily. I smiled.

"Not everyday you see a mermaid swim." I spoke coyly with a sly smile. He nodded.

“So, what brought all it about?” He asked curiously.

“I found a video on the internet that taught you how to make tails and bam, here I am now.” I said with a shrug. He nodded.

“You should charge money.” He said with a playful wink. I laughed in respond before dipping my head under the water for a split second. I looked around myself for a moment. Swimming in my tail was quite tiresome. I swam more like a dolphin instead of a human!

I swam around for about another hour before deciding to get out of the water. I looked around myself as I shimmied out of my tail. I twisted it, trying to wring out some of the water before draping it over the back of my chair. I lay down on my chair and sighed, throwing a towel over my face in such a way that only my eyes were revealed. My face was slightly sunburned and I did not want to do more damage to it.

I think I fell asleep like that, letting my body tan up. I turned on my side every now and again, just to be sure that one side of my body was not getting too much sun. I didn't believe in sunscreen. The only spots I normally got burnt was my face, and my toes. I'm not entirely sure how long I was on that pool deck, but relaxing on it felt like heaven.

I ended up returning to the room with a DVD from the ship's desk. It was a modern-vampire movie about '*What if the blood supply for vampires suddenly depleted? What would happen?*' I found the concept interesting and decided to watch it. I smiled to myself, seeing the main character appear on screen. He was hot looking. I grabbed my teddy bear and got myself all comfy on the parent's bed.

The movie was about two hours long. I looked over at the bedside table clock lazily, seeing it was around five thirty now. I frowned, knowing my parents would be expecting me back soon. I went over to the closet and changed into a raven black short sleeve dress that went down to about my ankles. I had a white wrapping under the bust, just to give it a not-so-plain look. I brushed through my hair before braiding it into a single braid. I smiled at myself in the mirror before grabbing a silver necklace that had a blue sapphire on it. It rested between my collar bones.

I scooted myself into the dinner chair and smiled at my parents.

“You look nice tonight” My mother complimented, before sipping on her water. I gave a faint nod.

“There's going to be a show tonight, would you like to come?” My father asked with a boy-eager smile. I shrugged. Well, it'd be something to get my mind off the little-devil Flynn. I knew my attraction to him was deadly, at least, to my mental sanity. Even when I didn't want to think about him, he somehow always entered my mind.

I ordered myself some steak. I loved meat and steak was normally quite expensive. This cruise gave me a chance to order whatever food I wanted with it already paid. My mother informed me that we were supposed to dock today, but didn't because of dangerous weather near the island. The captain thought it'd be best not to risk it and move on ahead to the next island. Which meant we'd be spending another day at sea. I shrugged. I didn't mind being at sea. It gave me more time to attempt to sort through my thoughts about Flynn.

I excused myself to the restroom. It was just outside the restaurant doors when I spotted Flynn standing with his family. He was all dressed up and looking fancy. I smiled inwardly and swung over to his side.

“The dance tonight starts at around 10:30; I hope I can see you there.” I said with an assuring smile. He shrugged.

“I’ll see what I can do.” I nodded, before heading back onto my quest for the restroom. I pouted though on my way there. I wanted to dance with him again, and he seemed totally disinterested.

When I came back to dinner, I had myself some chocolate cake for desert. I loved cake and chocolate. Best combination on Earth! I smiled to myself as my parents finished up as well.

“Let’s go to the show!” My mother said eagerly as we got to our feet after our meals were done. I followed my parents behind them, not exactly in the snuggly-cuddly mood. We entered into the mini-theater and we sat ourselves down.

The show was more of a stand up comedy type thing. Some of the things he said were funny, but I didn’t find him *too* funny overall. I just wasn’t a fan of stand up comedy to begin with. I felt more than half the time it was either see how many times they could curse, or just potty-mouth humor. I shook my head at the thought as I saw him exit the stage. I clapped politely before standing up and asking my mother for the time. She told me it was about 9:30 now. I nodded and went upstairs to change.

I changed into a dark red tank top with a black mini skirt. My fishnet thigh-highs were dark red and my shoes were my black dancer-shoes. I headed down to the casino and hung out with one of the guy’s I spotted in the club the first night I was here. He was broad shouldered, had dirty blonde hair and a hair cut like he was freshly enrolled into the military. He was friendly enough.

I spotted Flynn and smiled friendly over at him, waving. He smiled, although it seemed forced as he walked over to where we were. My friend was at the slots, so Flynn joined in. That was one thing I noticed about Flynn. He loved gambling, especially the slots. Something we had in common. The gambling. I loved Texas Hold ‘Em. I watched the boys win and loose some money before looking over at the clock and noticed it was about 10:30.

“I’ll be heading over to the club guys. Feel free to join.” I looked deliberately at Flynn as I said the words, as though to give him an obvious hint. The boy I saw the first night shrugged.

“I’m not much of a dancer, but I might come just to watch.” I nodded before looking at Flynn, almost pressingly.

“I’ll see if I’m in the mood tonight” He spoke with a shrug. I gave a nod before heading over to the club.

I danced the night away. I spotted first boy, but I never saw Flynn. I asked him about it at one point; he said that he was feeling tired and decided to head back to his room. I gave an aggravated sigh.

“Oh by the way, I never got your name” I said, looking up at him.

“Bryan.” He said loudly enough for me to hear. I nodded.

“Vei!” I called out. Bryan nodded before I headed back onto the dance floor.

Needless to say, I was a little bummed that Flynn didn't make it. I did my best to enjoy myself though. I danced through my exhaustion and I danced with a few different people. I noticed the same general crowd from the past few nights. The music was pretty much the same selection from the past few nights, just on shuffle.

The drunken people were rather amusing. A song about being sexy came on and they dropped their pants, dancing around sloppily in their boxers. Needless to say, it was quite the sight for the night.

I retired to the room around midnight. I silently went up to the room and sighed mentally. It was a relief to not see Flynn at the dance floor, but I was also sad because he was a great dance partner. I fished my room key out of my bra once I was in front of my door and slowly entered it into the slot. The little green light came on and I went inside. I closed the door silently behind me and threw my key onto the bedside table.

I changed into a pink bra and black pants. I didn't mind sleeping in my underwear. I went over to the bathroom and used a slightly damp tissue to pad myself down, to at least get the sweat off me. I gazed at myself silently, taking off the last of my jewelry.

"I love you boyfriend..." I muttered, more to myself for self-reassurance before I shook my head and went over to my bed. I curled up on it and fell asleep within minutes.

Chapter Five: Seductive Lies

I woke up to my mother shaking me awake.

"Honey, what time did you get up?" She asked with a frown.

"Around midnight, why?" I asked, blinking the sleep out of my eyes.

“It’s just around ten thirty is all. We need to meet your father for breakfast” I yawned in response and sat up. Mom threw over some clothes onto my bed. It was a dark green T-shirt with a cute cartoonish-looking dragon on it. It said ‘*Rawr! I’m the cutest darn thing EVAH!*’ I smiled and threw it on and got into blue jeans.

I ate some chocolate chip pancakes before heading up to the casino floor. I watched some guys play at the slots, blackjack, and some other types of poker games.

I think I spotted Flynn after about an hour or so of hanging out there. I walked over to him and hugged him affectionately. He seemed surprised, and was a bit hesitant with the hug.

“Oh, hey.” He said with a faint smile. I smiled back before letting go of him.

“Let’s go to the slots.” I offered knowing he loved the slots. He nodded as we headed over there.

I noticed him flare up a cigarette. I didn’t put my hand over my nose, knowing it’d be rude, but mentally I was gagging. I breathed only when I absolutely had to. I didn’t make it so obvious that it looked like I was taking a gigantic breath every x amount of seconds though.

I noticed he didn’t have his wallet on him, like he normally did. I saw him frown, seeing he ran out of cash.

“Hey, I ran out of cash and want to go back to my room to grab my wallet, want to come?” He asked. I shrugged. I saw he really didn’t have his wallet on him, so I figured ah the hell with it.

We went to his floor and over to his room. I wasn’t getting any pit ‘*this is wrong*’ types of feelings, so I was sure it wasn’t a trick. My gut feelings generally kicked in before something wrong happened.

We entered his room. There were two single beds: one for his grandmother, one for him. His porch was joined to his parent’s room. I laughed lightly,

“Jeez, I’d have fallen off if I was only in a bed that small” I teased him playfully. He laughed quietly as well, looking through his bag for his wallet.

He walked over to me and gave me a devilish smile. I mentally froze. Oh. Shit. I just walked straight into the lion’s den.

Flynn wrapped his arms around my waist and kissed me deeply. I closed my eyes half way, partially giving into my hormones’ desires.

I kept myself from letting out any sound of any kind, not wanting to fuel his primal, bestial lusts and desires. His hands drifted south, caressing my rump and playfully squeezing at it. My left hand grabbed at the corner of the wall and held as tightly as though my life depended on it as I returned his kiss, my hips against his.

He separated his lips from mine for a brief moment.

“You know....swim trunks don’t hide certain things so easily.” He breathed out close to my ear. I turned my head away from his. I felt rotten. He frowned and kissed from the hollow spot behind my ear to my cheek, and finally to my lips. I kissed him back lightly. His hands lightly traced over my sides for a moment before I felt his right hand cover my right hand, trying to get it to his....part. I restrained my hand, forcing it to rest on my own leg, not letting him move it. He frowned and refreshed the kiss. I could feel his boyish-goods on my leg. My god, this was awkward for me.

He sat himself down on the edge of the bed and I looked down at him. He patted the empty spot behind him invitingly.

“Come on, and sit down.” He offered me. I shook my head no.

“Come on...give me a reason.” Flynn breathed out quietly as he looked up at me with those devil’s eyes.

“I don’t want to *loose* anything on this cruise.” I said in the calmest voice I could manage, putting extra emphasis on ‘loose.’ His eyebrows lifted and said the single word,

“Oh.” He looked like he had just seen himself win the jackpot on one of the slot machines. Jaw dropped and everything. I raised an eyebrow. Was it really that much of a shocker that I was still a virgin?

He shook his head slightly before standing up and kissing me again. I returned the kiss, wrapping my right arm around him. He smiled as he deepened he kiss. He tried to get his tongue to go into my mouth. I wouldn’t let him though. I did my best just to make it look like I was only going to return the kisses.

Flynn gently wrapped his left hand against mine that was still glued to the wall. I wouldn’t let him remove that hand either. He seemed to give a sigh as he slowly separated his lips from mine.

“Look...” He began quietly as he took a step back. I gulped mentally.

“If we’re not going to go further than this.....than I’m...” He looked as though he was trying to carefully pick out just the right words.

“I don’t want to say I’m not interested, because that sounds harsh. I’m still interested in your as a person, it’s just....you get what I’m saying, right?” I nodded. I didn’t want him to hurt himself with just coming up with the correct words. He smiled a half nervous smile. Wait, nervous? Wasn’t I the one who nearly just got my virginity stolen?

We exited the room and I followed a few paces behind him. I told him I wanted to go to my room and hang out there with my parents. It was a flat out lie, but I needed to just get myself away from him. Especially after what he just did.

I found myself wander off to the library. I sat down by a chess game that was going on. The set was black and white. The white looked to be getting clobbered by whoever was using the black pieces. I smiled faintly.

I waited for the game to end before saying I’d like a game. The boy behind the black pieces accepted and he decided to be white this time around. I played skillfully, despite how it’d been a few years.

I beat the boy easily. I had set traps and he fell right into them, loosing his best pieces. I managed to checkmate him in about an hour.

I glanced over at the clock on the room. It read 2:00. I frowned. We were supposed to dock sometime around 3:00 in a Jamaica! I smiled and practically ran to my room.

I changed my jeans into a pair of black shorts. I met up with my family and we docked onto the island. My parents and I just kind of shopped around, being it was a little too chilly for any water activities. I found a pair of shoes I wanted to buy, but they were too expensive; even if we managed to haggle and bargain them down. I got back onto the ship around 7:00 PM, with my parents. It was dinner time, just about. We went to our room and got changed.

I threw on a dark green, strapless dress that went down to about my ankles. I wore two inch, black, platform heels. I got myself some teriyaki chicken. For desert, I had some chocolate ice cream.

I was on my way to the club before I heard four string instruments. I stopped myself mid pace and smiled, seeing a cello player, two violinists, and a viola player. I smiled widely, spotting the red hair'd boy I saw on the elevator for the first night. I waited patiently for a song to end before I sat myself down next to him. He smiled friendly over at me.

"Hello, I'm Vei." I introduced myself. He closed his laptop. He looked to be working on some sort of story.

"Hi, I'm Steven." I smiled at his name. It was a nice name. We found ourselves talking about all sorts of different types of music and instruments. I found out he liked classical music, some metal music, and string instruments. I liked the same general types of music. I mentally realized I had been looking for this boy. The realization slowly slipped into my mind. If I had been hanging around with Steven this entire time, instead of Flynn, I would have so much more of a positive experience! Flynn was one of those charismatic people you just wanted to hate so much, at least in my mind. While Steven on the other hand seemed like a real, genuine gentleman! I smiled pleasantly at the thought asked,

"Do you mind if I sit closer?" He shook his head no and I scooted closer to him, my leg nearly touching his own. He wore raven black pants and a dark brown T-shirt.

I found myself get gradually closer and closer to him, to the point where the side of my pants was touching his pants. I ended up resting my head on his shoulder too, at some point during the musical night.

I smiled to myself. It felt so good, not having to be on my guard about some guy attempting to slip a finger or try to grope me in some form or fashion. I was attracted to Steven because of his gentlemen-like qualities. I sighed with relief and happiness as I heard the song end.

The four strings players thanked us for attending and said their good byes. I got myself up with Steven. He said he wanted to go out for a little walk around the ship. I agreed to go, not thinking there'd be anything much better to do.

We walked to no specific spot. We just kind of wandered together. I found myself really enjoying his company and I'm pretty sure he enjoyed mine too. We often found ourselves in 'dead' spots in conversation where we'd just look at each other dumbfounded, but in an admirable fashion.

We ended up wandering along the outside deck. It was slightly windy, so I stuck close to him, mainly for warmth. He smiled as we stayed out there for a few minutes before going back inside, thinking it was too cold. I found myself almost going in for a kiss. I knew better than to push my luck with this guy though. He wasn't some horn dog, like Flynn was. I cringed at the thought. '*STOP! Don't think about him!*' I mentally commanded myself strictly before I found myself at the elevator with Steven.

"Well, it's getting kind of late and I'm tired." He said quietly. I nodded.

"See you tomorrow?" I asked the hope quite evident in my voice.

"Sure, I'll be at the same place you found me last night." I nodded in response. I hugged him good night and he hugged me back before I watched him get on the elevator.

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