

Kiss the Reaper

By Blak Rayne

'Wherever depravity knocks, he will answer. Whenever Z knocks, he will kill.'

For Z, prostitution is a way of life, but it's also become his prison. Desperate to forget his ugly existence, even if it's only once a week, he confides in a john—a mysterious but kind man named Brody. Every Friday night they talk until the early morning hours. Brody is altruistic, giving him the attention he craves and, in time, they cultivate a unique bond.

For Brody, he's found something special in Z—an innate charm and pure view of the world—qualities he can appreciate. He's grown fond of Z and comfortable with their routine, but he knows it will soon come to an end.

Fueled by curiosity, Z follows Brody through the city to a dance club. He wants to learn all he can about his unusual client. However, he discovers more than he bargained for—a dark unsettling secret is hidden in a back room, a secret he can never share.

Excerpt:

The elevator slid shut at the far end of the hallway and I caught a glimpse of Brody inside. I raced past it and down three levels of a concrete stairwell to catch him. Once on the street, he walked like he had a purpose, cutting straight through anyone in his path. I followed him for several blocks, where he entered an abandoned warehouse in an industrial park. I kept close to the walls and shadows, careful not to disturb anything.

On the fifth floor, in what had once been a spacious office, sat the basics in furniture—a liquor cabinet and kitchenette, bathroom, and a bed—it wasn't how I expected him to live. A meticulous man, he seemed the type who would rent a West End condo.

Brody began to remove his clothes, and I ducked behind a rusted filing cabinet. He wasn't huge or burly, but lean, an unbreakable man, and I felt an even stronger attraction to him. In certain respects we were one in the same—a pair of freakish oddballs—mutually needy. I wanted his attention and it seemed he wanted my approval. But what about love? And what about sex?

His cock was long and lean like him, his nakedness beautiful. My stomach fluttered and I bottled my breath, quickly looking away to stay calm. He deserved privacy and my respect. But my thoughts were far from respectful.

Water ran, and I waited, rubbing nervously at my sweaty upper lip. The bathroom door opened, and Brody emerged in a cloud of steam, waist wrapped in a towel. In minutes, he was dressed and adjusting his tie in front of the large window. Then he slid the holsters over his shoulders, buckled the chest strap, and put on his blazer.

Once again, he was on the move, myself in pursuit. But somehow within a block of the warehouse, his trail had gone cold.

“Shit,” I gasped, my breath misting in the air. Light from a neon sign nearby glistened on the damp pavement. No other business in the immediate area was open. I had a hunch and pulled on the blackened entrance door.

Loud music hit like a brick, rattling my chest. People drank, danced and made out—the club was a den of wickedness. And I soon became disoriented in the chaos, temporarily absorbed like water into a sponge by the hypnotic pulse of lights. I shoved against the suffocating mass of bodies and scanned the sea of bobbing heads. At the rear of the club, I noticed a hallway emitting a red glow and, for some inexplicable reason, I felt drawn to it and moved in that direction.

When I reached it, a man brushed past, bumping my arm. The unnatural light obscured his head and shoulders. I paused and glanced back, but he’d vanished. Our interaction was so brief, only his stature had registered. There were three doors to my left and the middle one stood partly open. I gave it a cautious push and it crept inwards. The red glow from the corridor gradually spread across the floor.

I gagged.

In the center of the room was a dead man, seated on a chair in front of a boarded window, his mouth gaping, a quarter-sized hole in his forehead. He stared with vacant eyes, those deprived of a soul. Blood trickled past the bridge of his nose and had spattered the plywood in the window, like someone had flicked paint from his or her fingertips.

For the first few seconds, I was too traumatized to be scared, but had enough sense to get out of there. Murder was still illegal. Turning on my heels, I blew from the room, heart hammering. I tried to act normal, but failed, wading at an urgent pace across the dance floor, propelling people out of my way. A yard ahead was the silhouette of a tall figure, a man

engulfed in the epileptic beat of strobe lights. I don't know why, but the back of his head and shoulders, and his sturdy purposeful gait seemed all too familiar. He had to be the man who'd passed me minutes before.

He exited the building and I did the same, dashing outside into the drizzly night. Gulping at the cold air, I looked in every direction. The street was desolate, not a human in sight—the man had, yet again, vanished into thin air. I turned east for home, an alley sandwiched between the club and neighboring building, and someone materialized from the shadows.

“W-who are you?” I demanded, limbs shaking.

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