

[Adam C. POV]

I watched as the woman continued to approach, arrogance on her every step. She simply had no doubts she could win this.

Her confidence was such, I couldn't help but wonder if this bordered on naivety or hubris.

"So, he's yours you say?" I replied, flipping her blade around, like a kid with a new toy.

The woman chuckled, and the wolves growled, their teeth bared in warning. "Yes. That thing is mine. And I suggest you hand it over if you value your life."

I raised an eyebrow, unfazed by the threat. "Threatening me with a good time? My my, how scandalous, what would the community say? We barely know each other, miss."

The woman's eyes narrowed, and she took a step forward. "Do you think I'm playing, brat? Hand over the beast or suffer the consequences."

Brat? She couldn't be more than a few years older than me.

I shrugged, still twirling her blade between my fingers.
"Maybe."

"Are you sure you want to throw your life away for a beast you just encountered?" The woman sighed, a condescending smile dawning on her face.

That's a terrible argument for someone who attacked me before trying to negotiate.

I deadpanned, shattering her blade with a flick of a finger.
"Adorable, but no. I'm afraid I can't do that. This little guy here is far too adorable to give away. Besides, we haven't even asked the little guy if he wants to go with you, have we?"

At this, the Crow shook his head and flapped his wings, as if agreeing with my sentiment.

I blinked, not expecting that level of understanding from the little guy, but happy with it, nonetheless.

"Very well," The woman smiled, snapping her fingers. "Boys, tear him apart."

With their order and a roar, the wolves lunged forward with incredible speed, their jaws snapping.

This might be fun.

Their assault came in swift and powerful manner, an aggressive showcase of predatory instinct, giving their all to sink their fangs into my flesh.

To the untrained eye, their movement might have seemed like a flurry of red, a deadly blur of teeth and claws. But to me, it was a choreographed dance that I knew all too well.

With a lighthearted smile, I began to move, sidestepping their lunges and dodging their snapping jaws, booping their snouts with a finger with each movement I made.

My actions were fluid, almost lazy, as if I was merely partaking in a friendly game, instead of evading two seemingly deadly beasts.

The woman watched, her smile turning into a frown as I continuously dodged her wolves.

Growing frustrated, the woman raised her hands, and a strange glow began to form around her. I could feel a surge of energy, and it wasn't before long, when more creatures came into the picture, an assortment of beasts that seemed to have materialized from the shadows of the church.

Each and every single one of them, flayed off their fur and skin.

"I have decided to take you as well, you'll make a fine addition to my collection," The woman said, her eyes glowing with a sinister light. "Soon, you'll be calling me Mistress Yelema."

I couldn't help but chuckle at her statement. "This is getting kinky in a perturbing direction," I said, my voice filled with amusement. "A question before we continue, are you perhaps the one known as Yelema the Walking Grave?"

The woman's eyes beamed with delight; clearly happy at the fact I knew of her infamous moniker. "Indeed, I am," she said, biting her lower lip. "And you will soon know the pain of being one of my thralls."

Well, that pretty much seals the deal.

"I'll pass," I replied.

"Darling, you don't have a say in the matter," The woman chuckled, ordering her minions to attack, confident in her victory. "You never had."

Sadly, for her that is, her smug satisfaction wouldn't last much.

In a heartbeat, my demeanor changed. One moment, I was standing idly, appearing almost indifferent to the situation. In the next, I was gone, moving so fast that it defied comprehension.

In the span of a breath, I closed the distance between us, my form phasing out of sight before reappearing directly behind the woman. It almost seemed as though I had teleported.

And before she or her beasts could react to this, a hissing sound sliced through the air. It was a clean, swift strike, one that cleaved the woman and her creatures down the middle, ending their lives in an instant.

Well, that was about as disappointing as I expected.

The little crow was stronger than her in terms of magical power alone.

"You defeated the evil witch!"

I turn on my heel at this, staring at Mavis. But like me she seemed almost as confused as I was.

Could it be that there was someone else in the church?

No, that couldn't be... If that was the case, I would've felt something, not necessarily magic power, but something.

"Hey, down here!"

I looked down to see the little crow I had fed a few moments ago, making its way toward me.

"It talks!" Mavis squealed, her eyes wide with wonder.

"It?! Do I look like an inanimate object?!" The little crow squawked, clearly offended by Mavis's lack of respect.

...

I'll be honest, I wasn't expecting this. I mean, sure, this world is one of magic, but I had yet to encounter any talking animals besides Happy, and he wasn't even an animal, he just looked like one.

"So, what's your name, little crow?" I asked.

"Crow?! Ha! Not even close! I'm something far more magnificent than that! I'm a RAVEN!" The little crow-- Raven squawked in indignation and pride.

"Adam, how can you make such a terrible mistake?" Mavis sighed, shaking her head.

"Aren't you more concerned about the fact he can see you?" I asked, frowning at her teasing behavior. I mean, I was no bird expert, and Crows and Ravens were pretty similar to me in my eyes, so... yeah.

Mavis shrugged.

Rolling my eyes at her, I turned my attention back to the raven, who was now pacing around in a circle. He let out a series of sharp caws before pausing, cocking his head, studying me.

Curious as to where this was going, I watched, as he began to draw something on the ground with his beak. To my surprise, he sketched a complex pattern of lines and curves, which despite my lack of knowledge in the area, I immediately recognized as a runic circle, an old one at that.

Once he finished, he straightened up and turned to me, fluffing his feathers in what I presumed to be a raven's version of a dramatic flourish.

"I, The Superbly Magnificent Raven, accept you, Adam, as my master," The raven announced, doing a few poses.

I blinked. "What?"

At my side, I could hear Mavis who was trying to stifle her laughter.

The raven let out an annoyed caw at Mavis's reaction before turning back to me. "You heard me, dry meat giving savior! I have chosen you to be my master. So, rejoice, for my powers are yours to command!"

"I... what?" I repeated.

"Indeed, dry meat giving savior! As the sun's rays kiss these ruins, I find my heart stirring with a hunger not for food nor drink, but for glory and honor in the fiercest of battles at your side!"

I...

I was not prepared for today.

"His name is Adam," Mavis giggled.

"Adam the dry meat giving savior, what a glorious title!" The raven squawked, bobbing his head up and down in excitement. "And with me, The Magnificent One, by your side, we shall conquer all who stand in our way!"

I was not prepared for today, AT ALL.

The raven swooped down and landed on my shoulder, his talons digging into the fabric of my shirt. "Now, let us begin our journey, for glory, for battle, for blood, and for honor!"