

## Chapter 3 - Crow

At lunch time, Fleur comes charging to our usual table with her curly blonde hair bouncing on her shoulders. Collapsing onto the chair she grins as I continue to innocently nibble on my cookie. The lunch hall always gets packed and very loud so she has to project her voice so I can hear her. "Have you met him?" She squeals

"Met who?" I continue to nibble.

"The new boy! Oh my God! He is sexier than the young angels. How have you not seen him?" She says in disbelief. Great, now my only friend is obsessed with him. Yes he is hot, well hot doesn't come close. More like smouldering. But it's all everyone is going on about. And it's beginning to annoy the hell out of me.

"He is in a few of my classes." I mumble with a shrug.

"You don't think he is hot?"

"Well I may be a loner but I'm not blind!" A burst of laughter shoots out of her.

"Fair enough Em. You got another one of those cookies?" A er that our lunch goes very much the same way it always goes. And Luke was not in my last class.

At the end of the day, whilst fumbling for my keys in the school car park, a black crow lands on the roof of my car. I'm not afraid of any bird anymore. They treat me like a friend, like they understand me. This crow just sits and stares at me though, and it's unsettling. It's a very big crow and it doesn't even move. A er about a minute of staring, it swings its head to just behind me. Getting the hint I turn and look.

Luke is standing there and staring intently from me to the crow and back again. The crow lets out a single squawk and flies away. I turn back to Luke and find he is behind me.

"I take it that was that whole birds follow you thing?" He smiles.

"Yeah, but that was weird." I unlock my car and climb behind the wheel. "See you tomorrow"

As I drive away I look in the rear view mirror, and Luke is nowhere to be seen.

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That night I dreamt of wings.

Black wings to be exact. They covered me in a protective cocoon and radiated a comforting heat. They were so as silk and sparkled blue at the tips in the moonlight. A longing pierced my chest, why I felt this I didn't know, but I wanted to remain wrapped in these wings where I felt safe.

But they were ripped away and pain so excruciating hit me. It was then that I woke up with tears running down my cheeks, and sobs caught in my throat.

Looking at the clock I see it is only 5:00am, curling in the foetal position under my duvet I try to fall back to sleep, but fail. Thoughts of those wings kept swirling in my head.

A tapping noise on my window drew me from my thoughts.

Getting out of bed, I shiver when the cold hits me. Grasping my curtain I pull it open, and come face to face with the crow again. Like last time it just stops and stares at me, like it can see everything that goes on inside my head.

"Shoo" I flap my hands at it in an attempt to make it fly away.

Caaw!

"Shhhhh!" I cringe. It was loud, and my mother is asleep in the room next door. Weird bird. "What is it?" I place my hands on my hips in a pathetic attempt to look intimidating. But I look far from it in my pink nightie with pigs flying on it. The crow just continues to stare. Sighing in defeat I shut my curtains and snuggle back in my bed. But the tapping begins again.

Tip toeing down stairs I yank on my trainers and creep outside, making sure the latch is pulled; I do not want to be locked out. Walking to the front of the garden I look up at my window. The crow is still perched on the window sill.

"Hey" I stage whisper. "Mr Crow, come down here!" I wave my arms like a lunatic. It swings its head towards me and flies down. It's twice the size of a normal crow. More like a big bird of prey. But its colouring and the noises it makes clearly make it a crow ... strange.

Caaw!

It flaps its wings at my feet. "What? Please give me some hint as to what you want..." I plead.

"He is stupid. You won't get anything but weird gestures." A deep voice said behind me. I screech and the crow screeches with me. Spinning I go to punch whoever was behind me but stop just in time before I punch Luke in the groin. The shock on his face would have made me laugh had I not been so scared.

"Fuck. You scared me arsehole! Do you make it a habit to sneak up on people?" I get in his face. This close I can feel his heat and smell his cologne. It makes me dizzy. I take a step back and inhale, fresh, Luke free air. "I apologise for that outburst, I don't usually lose it like that." I give him the best apology smile I can.

"Well ... considering you almost punched me in my crown jewels and flapping at my bird, what will you do to make up for it?" he smiles a dazzling, bright white smile.

"P . What the heck are you doing up at five in the morning? And what do you mean your bird?" I ask puzzled.

"It's my bird."

"Well can you get him to leave me alone? He prevented me from falling asleep with his relentless tapping." I fold my arms.

A snort comes from him, followed by a high pitched whistle. The crow obediently flies onto his shoulder. He must surely be heavy.

"That must have been a bitch to teach."

He strokes its beak garnering a satisfied rumble from it; they clearly have a strong friendship. "It didn't take that long. Nice pyjamas by the way." He looks me up and down. Will I ever cease blushing because of him?

"Thanks. You still didn't answer my question." I tap my foot.

"I was looking for my bird." He looks at me as if it should have been obvious. Its then I notice he is wearing leather. Everywhere. A vest that shows his bulging biceps, some cu s with weird patterns on them, in fact the patterns are all over his clothing except his boots and trousers. And they are electric blue, just like the tips of his hair and eyes.

"Hey your hair and eyes match what you are wearing" I decided to voice my thoughts. By the look of shock on his face he wasn't expecting such a dramatic subject change.

"Your observation is good. It's my uniform." He cringes as if he said too much. "I got to go. Sleep well Em." He walks away, getting swallowed by the darkness with the bird still perched on his shoulder.

Weird. I wonder where he works. Sighing in defeat and exhaustion, I quietly go back to my room. Only this time I'm not thinking of wings, but a blue eyed boy and his bird.

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This morning, Sam is actually at breakfast. The last time I had breakfast with Sam was on my thirteenth birthday. I used to find it really awesome that my dad worked with angels. He kept peace between them and the humans by travelling to the north city for the Prime Minister. It was really dangerous but he loved it apparently. Living with an angel has erased all wonder for me. Sam is like an old man, the type that would yell "Get o my lawn!" His wings are a copper colour but his hair is chestnut with blonde specks. He has caramel coloured eyes and is built like a body builder. I see my mum blush whenever he li s something.

"Morning" his gru voice comes from the corner where he is sat.

"Good morning" I reply, which is followed by an awkward silence. I pour my favourite cereal in a bowl and sit opposite him. His wings are hanging lazily from his back with the ends spread on the ground around him. Ever since a new archangel took over the nearest city, Sam has been extra busy. He's a very good warrior and has a room stocked in the basement full of weapons. I used to beg him to teach me how to use a bow and arrow but he adamantly refused.

"How is school?" He asks. Wow. He is initiating conversation. Go Sam!

"It's good. A new student started yesterday." I get out around munching. Time is ticking and I don't want to be late. And I'm eager to see said new student.

"This late in the year?" Shock is clear in his gravelly voice.

"Yep. I got to go, bye." I go to the sink and rinse my bowl, rustling feathers draw my attention.

"How bout I take you in today?" He attempts a smile and it just looks unnatural on him.

"Um..."

"Look can you keep a secret? There is this extremely dangerous angel about. And I promised your dad before he died I would keep you safe. I am not taking any chances."

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