



**Lee
Avalone**

**Wild, Wicked,
and Haunted**

**IN
HOLLYWOOD**

WILD, WICKED, AND HAUNTED IN HOLLYWOOD

...Nick grabbed hold of Paul's hand, and Paul pulled him to his feet. Their cocks touched in the space between them before any other parts of their bodies did. A blast of pleasure hit Paul like a ton of bricks. He stepped back and gave Nick's great-looking body a raking glaze. *Damn! Incredible.*

Paul took Nick into his arms. The feel of their bodies against each other sucked away his breath. Paul's gaze settled on the full lips so near his own. Cupping Nick's stubbled chin with his hand, Paul drew him closer. The clean, manly scent of Nick made him want to rush.

The tension built.

Paul inhaled sharply, parting his lips. He pressed his mouth to Nick's warm fullness. The intimacy, the rich texture, and the drugging of Nick's hot breath all grabbed Paul by the balls and twisted. Hunger for everything at his fingertips took control and Paul deepened the touch to explore the inner recesses of Nick's mouth. While their tongues began a slow waltz, their cocks humped in a heated frenzy.

The dark aura from earlier came back to envelope them. Paul broke the kiss. "Do you feel this?"

Nick blinked open his liquid lavender eyes with a quizzical expression on his handsome face. "Are you crazy? How could I not?"

Paul reached down to take Nick's cock into his hand. The touch sent him reeling. How long had it been since he'd experienced this? "I'm not talking about this." He gave the velvet shaft a caress, hating to release his grip. "I'm talking about the aura. We aren't alone here."

Nick seared a path over Paul's shoulder with kisses. He moved up Paul's neck to nibble at his earlobe. *Aura be damned...*

ALSO BY LEE AVALONE

Light My Fire

Sex Scene: Take One

Tall, Dark, Tattooed and Twisted

WILD, WICKED, AND HAUNTED IN HOLLYWOOD

BY

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*I'm dedicating this to the characters
who won't go away. The characters in this story are
connected to Light My Fire, Tall, Dark,
Tattooed And Twisted, and Sex Scene: Take One. While
this story stands alone, don't miss the other three.
Paul Dean was introduced in Light My Fire and now has a
story of his own. Both Sataire and Volmere,
the totally twisted vampires, were introduced in Sex Scene:
Take One. In Tall, Dark, Tattooed and Twisted,
Sataire finds someone to love. I've almost tied up the
dangling love interests...except for Volmere,
the most twisted vampire of all.*

CHAPTER 1

Something startled Carter awake. Had he dreamed the sound? Between the two of them, Nicky and he had finished a bottle of good California wine before bedtime, so maybe he was still a little tipsy. His half-conscious mind nagged him into believing something wasn't right. As he fought through the sleep-induced, wine-clouded cobwebs in his brain, Carter inched his hand across the Egyptian cotton to his right. He stroked the warm body of the love of his life as Nicky slept. It only took a touch to both reassure Carter and ratchet the growing sense of foreboding. If Nicky was next to him in bed, then he wasn't making a midnight raid on the fridge.

Defuse light filtered around the bedroom door where it was

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cracked open. When no other sound came, he should have been reassured. Carter wasn't. He'd had a sense of apprehension, a feeling of impending doom he'd lived with for months. The erratic beat of his heart was nearly as audible as Nicky's soft wheeze while he slept.

Something told Carter this time was different. *Why?* And then he heard Sukie, their cat, howl somewhere in the distance. *Sukie. Of course, that must be it.* Sukie had awakened him, and it wouldn't be the first time...or the last. Nicky's damned, out-of-control cat.

Carter relaxed. Tension drained out him, leaving him weak, and he breathed a deep sigh of relief. It was fucking stupid to be this paranoid. He'd been like this ever since he'd fallen in love—finally—forever. He hadn't thought it would ever happen to him, but now the idea of losing Nicky made him a crazy man. His greatest fear was Nicky dying. Like always, Carter only needed to think it to have his throat close and tears sting his eyes.

He'd waited his whole life for someone like Nicky. Once Carter gave up believing...there Nicky was, a young director with more insightful talent than Carter had seen in his thirty years in Hollywood.

They had an alarm system with a touch-pad and dead-locks...no one could get inside without tripping the alarm. He picked up his pillow, fluffed it and was about to settle back when Sukie howled a second time. If he wanted to get any sleep he needed to get her and bring her into bed with them. She hated it when they forgot about her and left her to wander

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the house all night alone. Carter pushed himself up and took a second to clear the remaining cobwebs. Where had he dropped his robe?

Someone spoke!

The short, clipped and muted sound startled his heart into his throat and choked him. An agonizing maelstrom of fear paralyzed him for what seemed an eternity. Another muted sound mobilized him to action. Bolting naked from the bed, Carter grabbed for the phone and called 911, grateful for the lighted dial. He wanted to scream into the phone...but what if he was wrong? "I think somebody's broken into our house. Fourteen-twelve, Bright Wrenwood Drive. Please hurry."

The woman who'd answered started to say something, but he laid the phone down...still connected. He couldn't wait. Nicky hadn't roused. Carter started to reach for him, but stopped. This had happened once before and he'd been wrong. Carter drew back. If he was wrong again, Nicky would be so disappointed in him. He needed to do this himself this time.

He needed to protect Nick. *How?* If anything happened to him...

If only they had a gun, but Nicky hated them. What could he use for a weapon? There were knives in the kitchen. Could he get there? His legs shook uncontrollably as he moved toward the door.

In the next second, the bedroom door opened and a figure flew across the floor so fast Carter froze where he stood in abject terror. He brought his hands up in defense. As the intruder grabbed him in bear hug, the sensation of bare male

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muscles and a hard body shot another blast of terror into his already shaking body. Carter couldn't physically fight against this kind of brute force.

Nicky.

Everything was happening too fast. He needed to protect Nicky. What did he need to do to make that happen? His breath came in heaving pants and his erratic heartbeat sent a pain racing down his arm. How to save his love?

"Let's go out into the other room," Carter whispered in a coarse, breathless rasp. "You don't want to do this here." He had to get the stranger out of the bedroom. "Please take me to the other room."

A horrific smell filled his nostrils—fear...his fear. An overwhelming stench poured out of him as his stomach clenched and revolted. His naked intruder jerked Carter's right arm high behind his back and propelled him away from Nicky. Both Carter's relief and pain were so acute it brought tears to his eyes.

"It'll be quiet in the living room." The plea came out more sob than words. *Weak.* Carter hated himself and tried harder. "We need to be alone."

The man said nothing, but they were gaining distance from Nicky. The beast walked them both through the doorway. Out of the corner of his eye, Carter saw Sukie against the wall, the hair on her arched back raised in a black ridge, but he needed to concentrate on his attacker.

"You d-don't want to d-do this." Carter's words made the intruder jerk his arm higher. Carter's shoulder made an

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audible pop as pain sliced through him.

Carter felt the urge to fight coursing through him like a lightning bolt. With the next step, he arched his back and kicked out with all his strength. His attacker grunted and released him. He'd done it! He'd gotten free! The door to the kitchen was just ahead...

Only steps away he would have a knife. The intruder was right behind him, though. Adrenaline propelled Carter faster than he'd ever moved. He scrambled toward the island in the center of the kitchen, lit from the night light outside. There it was on the counter—the knife rack. His hand closed over the highest knife.

He was going to live!

A hand came down on top of his. Hard. At same time he was jerked back by the hair. His head snapped back and he lost his chance to escape when his knees buckled. His scalp ripped. Still on the knife handle, his hand was controlled by the intruder's larger, stronger grip.

Carter couldn't breathe...couldn't think of anything other than Nicky. Silent tears wet his cheeks. The knife controlled by the attacker, now scraped against his throat as he was propelled forward. He didn't fight. The farther away they got from Nicky, the better. The longer it took, the more likely the police would arrive to save him. *To save Nicky.* They'd come any moment.

The two of them moved in surreal harmony until they'd left the house...and when his bare feet touched grass, Carter realized how far they'd come.

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“Nick left me for this? You’re a goddamned fucking pussy. An old man, and a fucking pussy.”

With the words Carter recognized his attacker. Nicky’s ex, Mark. *Impossible*. Nicky’s ex was in Mexico. But it had to be him, since Nicky didn’t have any other ex-lovers who wanted revenge.

Mark wrested the knife out of Carter’s hand with ease since his fingers had gone numb under the pressure of Mark’s bruising grasp. In the next moment, a staggering blow to his stomach doubled him over. Burning pain shot up Carter’s spine. When, an instant later, warm liquid ran down to his groin, he understood he’d been stabbed.

“You want to suck cock. Suck this.” The knife caught Carter just above his balls and the pain blinded him. He screamed for only a moment before a cock was stuffed into his open mouth and down his throat—his own. The taste of blood...his blood...twisted his mind. He tried to grab the knife as stabbing blows rained down on him over and over.

Nicky!

CHAPTER 2

Nick cocooned within the comfort of an overstuffed sofa, tension controlling his body as always. Like most nights, he sat in the dark and stared out the floor-to-ceiling window, keeping vigilant watch of his neighborhood.

Waiting.

Watching.

Elevated from the houses across the street, his chartreuse silk perch afforded the perfect view of his neighbors. And he'd worn the expensive coverlets thin sitting in this same spot day after day, well into the late night hours.

The highlights of his day were watching people walking their dogs, jogging if he was lucky, or driving by as they

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hurried about their lives if he wasn't. But most fortunate of all...nobody bothered him. They didn't ask anything of him. His neighbors allowed him to sit in peace while he watched them and regarded him as a poor off-balanced wretch. This window had become his only connection to the outside world.

This night was different. His customary tight knot of nerves was raw as he watched the drama unfold across the street. "What's all the commotion?" His voice came out more rasp than sound.

::It must be bad. There's the coroner's wagon. Come away from the window, Nicky. You don't want to see this. We've had enough horror in our lives.::

A primitive warning flashed in Nick's brain and sent a spasm of alarm along his nerve endings. Could that really be the coroner's van parked in the driveway behind two police cars? It was, indeed. The scene, reminiscent of one in front of his house—his home—only a little less than a year earlier made him despair. Assaulted by a sense of anguish, Nick retreated into the cushion behind him and looked away.

But maybe there was hope... He pressed a trembling hand over his fast-beating heart and leaned forward again. Nick counted six black vans with initials on the driver's side doors as they lined up along the curb. "The initials on the van are NCCSC."

::National Command Center for Supernatural Control.::

When Carter had been murdered in their front yard, there hadn't been this much attention. Three police cars—two were standard issue, one unmarked and the coroner. That had been

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it. No mysterious dark vans with initials, not a single one. “I don’t have a clue who they are. Then again, I’m behind times. I hope it wasn’t one of the boys who died. This neighborhood has gone to hell.”

::You can say that again. Let’s go to bed. I need you.::

A warning voice whispered inside his head as Nick watched a tall man step between two of the vans and into the street. The street light overhead and to his right did little to show his features. He looked both ways and then seemed to stare straight at Nick.

Impossible. No way could he see into the darkness of Nick’s living room. The figure crossed the street unhurried, his movements a study in fluid motion.

“One of them is headed this way.”

The doorbell rang and, despite anticipating it, Nick physically jumped and swallowed hard. As much as he wanted to know what was happening across the street, he didn’t want to see anyone—definitely didn’t want anyone seeing him. He could count on one hand the times he’d been out of the house since Carter’s death.

::Come on, Nicky. Let’s call it a night and go to bed. I want to make love to you, my love.::

“I’m coming,” Nick barked as he reluctantly unfurled his six-two frame from his plush sofa. As he straightened, a pain shot up his leg from being cramped in a single position for far too long. He was much too young to be so out of shape. Hesitating, still undecided about answering the door, his curiosity pushed him to take a step. Who had died across the

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street?

During his slow journey to the door, the impatient visitor rang two more times. Nick flipped on the overhead light to the outside portico enclosed with a stucco wall. He punched the code into the alarm pad. The alarm light flashed to off. Yet silent alarm bells were ringing in his brain.

Like the coward he was, Nick hesitated again. He couldn't bring himself to end his miserable life and he couldn't make himself live it. What he did here...day in and out...wasn't living.

Instead of opening the door to the stranger, Nick cracked the small barred window eyelevel on the door. What if it wasn't someone official from across the street? What if it was someone using the excitement to make Nick believe they'd come on authorized business? He depressed the intercom button, while looking out at the figure shadowed by a rowdy rhododendron in dire need of pruning. "I'd like to see some identification, please."

::Come away from the door, Nicky. You know how I feel about cops. They're never around when you really need one. If you talk to him, you do all the talking because I'm not saying a word to this guy. I don't care who he is.::

The tall man moved into the light and removed his black cap, threading his hand through thick, style-less, deep auburn hair before fishing in the breast pocket of his black jacket. He held a badge to the window, but Nick didn't want to look away from his incredible face—a man confident in his strength. It had been so long since Nick had experienced

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interest enough to give anyone a second look. This fellow deserved to be studied at leisure, but not right then. Not under these kind of circumstances. Especially did the jagged scar cutting across his stubbled cheek up to his hairline need to be explored.

His too-tight lips softened as he opened them. “Paul Dean of the National Command Center for Supernatural Control. I need to speak to the owner of the house, please.”

His green eyes were fringed in darker auburn and his brows furrowed into almost a single line, eyes with an unsettled, faraway look. His determined face showed whatever had happened across the street hadn’t been agreeable, but he gave the impression of a man who could handle whatever life threw at him and then some.

Paul Dean. Nick reached for the second coded touch-pad on the steel security door. After cracking open the door, Nick stood in place, hoping he wouldn’t be pressed into inviting this stranger inside—even a very handsome and scarred one. “Nick Zander. What do you want?”

The man leaned forward, nearer the door, and Nick regretted unlocking it. His hands jerked forward to keep it from opening. He pushed, even knowing the strength of this man would far dwarf his insignificant effort.

“I work for the NCCSC.” Paul spoke in a slow, controlled voice, a deep baritone that was almost soothing. Nick had been weary to the point of exhaustion for so long. He eased the pressure he exerted against the door.

“I investigate supernatural activity, primarily demon

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attacks, but other paranormal anomalies, too.”

Nick hadn't suspected this for a moment. A different sort of tension gave him a knot in the gut. “Do you mean demon hunter?” Nick looked closer, as if the man's scars could somehow tell the story. His five o'clock shadow was much darker than his thick hair tapering down to his collar. His long, lanky frame, while more than likely stronger than Nick, didn't seem overtly muscular. Then again, demon hunters didn't wrestle their prey, did they?

Nick recalled the infamous squads of demon hunters were rumored to be made up of all gay men. The idea intrigued him when it shouldn't. In seeking to erect a wall of defense against this attractive stranger, this didn't help matters. The only erection he managed was inappropriate.

The knot in Nick's stomach sped to his genitals as a carnal reaction to the man overshadowed all else. He had no right to feel anything for another man. Being gay was a fact of life, taking a backseat to his everyday existence and not an issue in his life any longer. He had black hair...he was gay. Both were facts, and neither meant a damned thing in the grand scheme of things. He'd turned thirty this month, feeling much older than his years, and he wasn't into looking for love ever again. “Is that what happened over there. Demons? It wasn't Clay, Henry or Patrick killed, was it?”

Paul Dean gave a single curt shake of denial and a dismissive wave. “No, it was their elderly housekeeper. And I'm afraid more than demons were the problem. She was attacked by zombies. I need to make certain we've contained

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them.”

His deep voice, edged with steel, traced a path to Nick’s lower half and caused havoc. *How inappropriate, to say the least.* How dare his body react to talk of death, demons and zombies. Nick’s reactions spun out of control, ping-ponging from one thing to another. He shuddered. “Zombies in Hollywood? Imagine that.”

“Are you okay?” Paul stared past Nick’s head like he expected to see someone—as if he did indeed make out someone lurking over Nick’s right shoulder. Paul’s square jaw tensed visually and his eyes narrowed. “Do you need help?”

“Do I look like I need help?” Did Nick really look so bad the handsome demon hunter felt compelled to make uncalled-for remarks under the guise of being helpful?

In the next moment, an easy smile played at the corners of Paul’s full mouth, but it didn’t begin to reach his green eyes, as he gave a restless glance back to the same spot behind Nick. “Am I interrupting anything?”

::You’re fucking right you interrupted, dickweed. We were about to make love and three’s a crowd. Nicky, let’s go.::

Nick heaved a sigh. Maybe Paul Dean was trying for an invitation inside the house. Why not? What real reason did Nick have for making him stand on the door stoop?

::Stop! Don’t let him in here!::

CHAPTER 3

Not fully aware of these surroundings, Paul moved slowly, while he tried not to spook the specter who didn't want him inside the house. Haunts could be so fucking unpredictable. A little voice inside his head told him to call for backup, but he resisted. They were a stone's throw away and could be there in seconds. He didn't know the forlorn soul who allowed him entrance well enough to pass judgment, but he instinctively knew the man was clinging to life by a thread.

"Do people call you Nick or Nicky?" He spoke to Nick Zander, while he stayed focused on the ghost. "How long have you been here?"

Nick took a step back and into the haunt's aura, now

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brown and angry. Nick gave a visible shudder, as if he sensed the malevolent atmosphere enveloping him. “I’ve been here ten years now. And please don’t call me Nicky.”

Only he hadn’t spoken just to Nick and the spook knew it. The apparition was of a young man, someone who’d more than likely passed in their early twenties. His facial features were blurred, but the dark cloud hovering around him revealed his cavernous anger.

::Go away!:: The shrill sound pierced the air much like a feminine scream and sent vibrations pinging off the walls of the foyer.

“I’m not going anywhere until I get answers.”

Nick huffed and drew Paul’s attention, his compelling eyes sparking with anger. “What’s that supposed to mean? Have I refused to answer your questions? I only asked not to be called Nicky.”

“Sorry.” Right...the last thing he wanted was to give this poor guy a hard time. Paul needed to be alone with the ghost. “I didn’t mean to overreact. It’s everything that’s happened tonight, and I really need to talk to you, but could I bother you for a glass of water first?” Paul gave his host a contrite smile and tried his damndest to make it look sincere.

The line of Nick’s full sensuous mouth tightened a fraction more, but he gave a small nod. For the first time, Paul really saw the man in front of him. In the dim light, Nick’s skin color blended into the darkness, but his eyes—liquid lavender fringed in thick black—made Paul’s muscles stir where he had no business rousing under the circumstances. Shaggy,

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thick black curls framed his serious and unsmiling oval face.

“My mother was from India. My father was Swedish,” Nick said, as if Paul had commented out loud on Nick’s unusual dark and mysterious attractiveness.

Maybe he had silently communicated he liked what he saw because there was no doubt about it. He’d have to be dead not to appreciate Nick Zander’s good looks.

A muscle ticked at Zander’s strong jaw line shaded by a heavy five-o’clock shadow. “Only one person could ever call me Nicky. And he’s gone forever.”

“I could really use that drink of water...with ice. And a twist of lemon if you have it.”

“Huh. Lemon. And ice.” Exhaustion twisted the crinkled skin at the corners of Nick’s eyes. He swept his hand through his dark curls, then moved away, his steps awkward and stiff. And Paul really needed him gone. He needed to know if the haunt was real or a product of Nick’s imagination.

Some individuals attracted spirits, enabling them. Separating the power of ghost from the authority of the human conduit could be the key...or so Paul hoped.

::I’ll kill you if you lift a finger to hurt Nicky!::

Once Nick left, the specter flew at Paul. Paul stood his ground, expecting to be sucker-punched with a blast of energy.

An icy gust engulfed him, as the electromagnetic field surrounding the figure intensified with painful prickles. This wasn’t just a psychic imprint from Nick’s mind, but could it be a combination of human imprint mixed with unsettled spirit.

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“I’m not here to hurt your Nicky. I’ve dedicated my life to protecting mankind from the evils of the supernatural world. Do I need to protect him from you?”

::Don’t touch him.::

Icy fingers clamped Paul by the balls and squeezed. *Fuck!* He didn’t dare show any sign of retreat. “Are you touching him? Are you worried you have a hot-blooded rival?” At Paul’s words, the grip intensified and almost took him to his knees, but he didn’t let it show. Instead, he folded his hands in a mock pose of serenity.

A large Siamese cat came arching sideways into the room hissing, and the specter released Paul’s balls. It disappeared.

Paul searched the room. Nothing, except pictures everywhere of an older man with silvering hair. *Nick’s father?* Could be. He didn’t look like the ghost. Paul knew he had a lot to learn about that part of the paranormal world and prayed he’d stay ahead of learning curve because Nick Zander needed his help.

Nick followed behind the angry cat. “Sukie, you know you’re not allowed in here. You’re not afraid of cats, are you?”

Paul leaned down to capture the slender feline, who now rubbed against his calf. He caught her behind her front legs and lifted her against his chest, cradling her with his arm.

“I owe you one, Sukie.” Were all ghosts afraid of cats? Or just this particular phantom? It seemed too clichéd to be true of them all. Sukie responded to being picked up by purring and kneading his chest with her soft, declawed paws.

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“Well, I never. Sukie doesn’t go to strangers. She doesn’t go to people who are friends. Even I need to mind my manners with her or I risk alienation and damage.”

“She knows how much I love cats.” He almost laughed. He loved dogs and could take or leave felines. “Animals are funny that way. How about I take Sukie with me and look around? After what happened next door, I want to make sure there’s no paranormal activity lurking in your home.”

Nick gave a visible shudder and motioned him away. “I’ll wait for you in the living room. And if you find any zombies...please, keep it to yourself. Just do whatever you have to do to get rid of them.”

“Done.” Paul took his time as he examined every corner in the palatial Hollywood mansion. The place stretched on forever, more than five thousand square feet, just in the house alone. Plus there were guest quarters behind the pool, next to the tennis court. It took longer than he anticipated, but he didn’t find anything suspicious. When he came back to find Nick stark naked and being fucked by a man in the living room, he drew up short.

Who wouldn’t?

Bent over the back of a chaise lounge in the living room, Nick had his head back, and his chin thrust high as he took it in the ass. Even with his eyes closed, the ecstasy on his face was unmistakable and made him beautiful beyond words. A pulse beat of sensuous pleasure erupted inside Paul’s long-neglected nether regions and made him even harder than he’d gotten earlier.

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The lovers' bodies made a striking contrast—Nick's mocha richness to the other man's almost white starkness. Nick's visitor raised his hooded eyes to stare at Paul while he rained kisses along the shapely tendon on the side of Nick's neck. The obsidian-and-silver stare gave him a jolt.

The apparition looked for all the world like a living, breathing man, except for the wild-assed stare. Despite the weirdness, the supernatural creep-factor of it, Paul got caught up in the enthusiasm of the lovers, growing hard enough to penetrate concrete as he watched the two of them.

Sensations, both familiar and strange flooded Paul's body. Although he'd been long overdue a good fuck or two, this wasn't just about his own desires. This came from the two going at it like pros. Nick writhed beneath the phantom's touch, while the ghost's fingers caught at Nick's nipples. Paul felt it, too, and it shocked the shit out of him. His reaction was fast and furious.

His blood surged and his heart hammered, sounding in his ears as other needs took hold of him. What Nick experienced—Paul did, too. But even more surprising...he could feel what the specter felt both physically and emotionally also. It was as if Paul's cock was penetrating Nick Zander's tight pucker. And it was as if Paul's ass was being drilled by a ghost with a very hard and long log.

This supernatural threesome was like a drug...intoxicating and powerful. Explosive currents of bliss raced through him...filling him. This wasn't a random act...this ghost loved Nick. Loved to fuck Nick.

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Paul had once had this unique para-psychic-sexual ability with his ex, but had never shared it with anyone else. To experience this with a ghost surprised him to say the least. Wrong on so many levels, his brain wanted to reject the experience, while his body wanted more. He was a fucking expert in paranormal manifestation. He should be able to avoid this colossal complication, or at least fucking control it!

As the sensual pleasures of Nick and the haunt increased, Paul began to breathe harder until he rasped, propelled toward an orgasm at a rapid pace. His heart hammered a rapid staccato in his chest as if searching for a way out. The sexual excitement coursing through him was off the charts and out of control, far surpassing ordinary ecstasy and bordering on pain. This was the paranormal world magnified by a unique mysterious power he'd never known and didn't suspect.

"I love you," the specter said out loud, and Paul relaxed, even though the ghost hadn't been talking to him.

CHAPTER 4

Nick awakened from a deep orgasmic sleep to discover he was almost face-down in the plush carpet. He sniffed. It needed a shampoo. This was yet another hint he needed to get a life. He used to have the carpets cleaned every couple of months, but since Nicky...

A cool breeze on his backside made him shiver. He'd done it again! *Shit*. He'd undressed—again. Finding himself naked wasn't new, but doing it in front of someone he didn't know? Holy hell! He needed a keeper. He often lost track of time and clothes, mostly at night. It happened while he dreamed of making love to Carter all the time. But there'd been a demon hunter in house, for crissakes.

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He raised his face from the carpet to see toes. Very masculine toes sprinkled with auburn fuzz and a scar. He rolled to look up and see a once in a lifetime sight. “I find myself naked at inappropriate moments all the time. What’s your excuse?”

The handsome demon hunter gave a wry grin and crossed his big hands over his exposed genitals. “If I told you, I don’t know if you’d believe me.” His voice was low and seemed to be purposely seductive.

Who was he trying to fool? Being naked was seduction enough. “Try me.” Nick was pleased at how unaffected he sounded...because he wasn’t. The eye of Paul’s cockhead peeked out at him between Paul’s fingers. And it took everything he had not to reach up to touch. He ached to make love...like he had with Carter.

“Would you be more comfortable if I put my clothes back on?” Paul offered.

If he never put his clothes back on it would make Nick ecstatic. “Answer a question for me first.”

Paul grinned. His easy way awakened a response deep in Nick and he smiled back. He hadn’t smiled in so long, he didn’t know if he could.

“You want to know how I got all the scars?” Paul questioned.

“No, but if you want to talk about them...” Everywhere Nick looked he could see either a scar or a tattoo.

“I was almost killed by a demon a while back. It fucking messed me up. I started getting tattoos to hide the scars. If you

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look close, I'm tattooed over top of scars."

"That's interesting, but it wasn't what I wanted to ask."

"So shoot."

Please don't say "shoot" while your cock is winking at me.

"Did you consciously remove your clothes? Did you do it because I stripped first?"

Paul huffed and gave a sheepish grimace. "Not really. I didn't see you undress. I came upon you once you were already bare-assed naked. I knew I was doing it, too, but couldn't stop myself."

"Has something like this happened to you before, or is it this house? I find myself naked when I didn't plan to be all the time." It was liberating to finally share his secret. "Until tonight I thought maybe I should be locked in a loony bin. It's comforting to know I'll have company there, even if we've just met."

"My ex and I had a psychic connection...a deeper level of telepathy. We didn't have to be in the same room to have sex. Hell, we didn't have to be in the same city, our link was that strong at times. But we broke up, and he found someone else. I, on the other hand, haven't been able to move on. Until tonight it would appear."

Paul raised his hands and Nick realized where he'd been staring. He looked away from his magnificent cock to meet Paul's heated gaze. A shiver of anticipation ran along his spine. "I don't have a psychic connection. I just have dreams where Carter and I are making love. I have them often, every day, several times a day." Nick resolved in that moment to let

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himself reach out to see where this would lead. It had been so long since he'd experienced a flesh-and-blood lover, one who wasn't a figment of his imagination. "Carter is gone...dead. It's been about a year for me."

"My ex isn't dead, but at times I would've preferred it. Losing him to someone else is— I haven't been with anyone since."

Nick didn't know if he'd lost his mind, but he wanted to proposition the handsome demon hunter. "So would a little fooling around be out of the question? I'm versatile...anything you want."

"I appreciate that." The sensuous gravel in Paul's voice said he'd told the truth. "But I think we need to talk about who you're fucking now."

Nick didn't understand. "I just told you it been over a year since Carter died. I haven't been with anyone."

"I think you're fucking Carter's ghost."

* * *

Nick's wild-eyed denial as he shook his head showed he wasn't ready to hear the truth. "I dream about Carter. It's only dreams."

Would he be more amenable if Paul gave him what he wanted...what he believed he needed? Paul reached down to him.

Nick didn't hesitate. He grabbed hold of Paul's hand, and Paul pulled him to his feet. Their cocks touched in the space between them before any other parts of their bodies did. A

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blast of pleasure hit Paul like a ton of bricks. He stepped back and gave Nick's great-looking body a raking glaze. *Damn! Incredible.*

Paul took Nick into his arms. The feel of their bodies against each other sucked away his breath. Paul's gaze settled on the full lips so near his own. Cupping Nick's stubbled chin with his hand, Paul drew him closer. The clean, manly scent of Nick made him want to rush.

The tension built.

Paul inhaled sharply, parting his lips. He pressed his mouth to Nick's warm fullness. The intimacy, the rich texture, and the drugging of Nick's hot breath all grabbed Paul by the balls and twisted. Hunger for everything at his fingertips took control and Paul deepened the touch to explore the inner recesses of Nick's mouth. While their tongues began a slow waltz, their cocks humped in a heated frenzy.

The dark aura from earlier came back to envelope them. Paul broke the kiss. "Do you feel this?"

Nick blinked open his liquid lavender eyes with a quizzical expression on his handsome face. "Are you crazy? How could I not?"

Paul reached down to take Nick's cock into his hand. The touch sent him reeling. How long had it been since he'd experienced this? "I'm not talking about this." He gave the velvet shaft a caress, hating to release his grip. "I'm talking about the aura. We aren't alone here."

Nick seared a path over Paul's shoulder with kisses. He moved up Paul's neck to nibble at his earlobe. *Aura be*

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damned! Paul turned his head to capture Nick's lips again. This time, when their mouths collided, any reserve shattered like a crystal glass thrown from the top of a skyscraper.

Nick pulled away to take hold of Paul's hand. His eyes darkened as they smoldered with passion. He nodded toward the door and started walking. Paul followed, anxious to taste all Nick offered. Because of his earlier exploration, he knew the direction Nick took him. When they entered the spacious bedroom, Paul took Nick into his arms to kiss him again. No way would he allow this unique and delightful man to have second thoughts.

No way!

Once Paul made up his mind, he never questioned his decisions. In his line of work, indecisiveness meant sure death. The day of reckoning couldn't be postponed forever, so it was about time he really lived.

Nick feathered his hand over Paul's abdomen and he tensed his muscles when it tickled. "I love the scars. I've never been with anyone so rugged."

Paul's heart swelled with pride and emotion he'd never thought to experience again. His ego had taken a beating over the past year. This had to be about the paranormal effects still lingering from earlier. His heart was made of stone...didn't everyone think so?

Nick's wonderful musky smell made Paul press closer, but Nick moved away. "I'll get us some condoms. They're more than a year old. Do you suppose they've expired?"

"I'm about to expire if I don't feel you inside me." Paul

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could go either way, but he'd choose bottom over top.

Nick smiled like he'd won the lottery. "I never would've believed it. You're so virile."

Paul smiled inside and out. "And twisted." He watched while Nick sheathed himself before he reached back into the drawer where he found the condom.

A shadow passed over his hand, making Paul search for the source.

::Keep your fucking hands off Nicky! You slut!::

CHAPTER 5

The demon hunter was a nut case, but who was Nick to be picky about a little mental abnormality when this guy turned him on like nobody's business? As the scarred, tattooed and spectacular man lay naked, stretched out in the center of Nick's big bed, Paul took Nick's breath away. His body was lick-able. Perfect. And surprisingly enough, he didn't feel guilty about wanting to make love again. Carter wouldn't hold it against him, since he was the first to be in awe of a sensational six-pack. Nick had once achieved a four-pack that didn't last... and the other two had resisted him.

Nick's dormant sexuality had been awakened. But that wasn't quite true. His sexual interest in a living, breathing man

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had been awakened. They had chemistry. How had he come to believe he could live without sex? This was living...what he'd been doing with his life before this night was waiting to die.

After applying lube over his condom, he smiled at Paul while holding his hand out, with lube to spare for Paul. He couldn't wait to touch him there. It had been so long and never did he imagine it could be this easy...this great to be a normal man again.

Or maybe this was more about a handsome demon hunter than he knew. Maybe he couldn't do this on his own.

Paul lifted to put the pillow, shaped into a wedge, under him. This was an intimate position. They would staring into one another's eyes the entire journey. Paul drew his legs up to his shoulders with his butt in the air, the most beautiful muscular bum Nick could remember. Even it was tattooed, with a dragon on one side and mountain scene on the other. The colors were unique and needed to be explored, but not now. Right now Nick needed to be inside Paul.

Nick crawled onto the bed and wasted no time touching his lube-covered fingers to lift Paul's balls with one hand and touch his pink pucker with the other. Paul sucked air and arched his back. A moment later Paul took hold of his balls and drew them out of Nick's way. This was one of the best reasons for fucking like this. When the balls drew tight, it was easy to see and recognize when a lover was ready to come.

Nick couldn't wait to see Paul's scarred, rugged face during his release. The thought sent Nick's heart hammering.

Nick penetrated.

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The tight heat of Paul's channel shot a near-orgasmic burst racing through Nick's body as every part of him filled with desire. He'd expected this to be good, but to respond to this degree... He yielded to sensations he'd come to believe could only come from dreams. This was real. Better than any dream.

Nick's breathing rasped. His heart pounded in his chest. Tension wrapped him tight...too much so. His short, fast thrusts ratcheted his pleasure off the charts. He was ready to come and he'd only started. "This is incredible."

"Relax. Take a couple of deep breaths."

Nick stilled and did as Paul asked. The ragged sound as he attempted to breath deeper made him laugh. With the inappropriate outburst, he could feel a flush shade his face. When a moment later, Paul broke into a robust laugh, Nick's heart lurched.

Everything changed in that moment. Everything. It was if a burden had been lifted from his shoulders. *Could having sex do that?*

This was so much more than sex. How could that be possible so fast? And he'd thought the demon slayer was a nut job.

When a hand touched his ass, to say it startled him would be an understatement. Paul's face went solemn, like a switch had turned off his humor. He stared at a spot beyond Nick's left ear. And in the next moment, cool lips touched his ear.

"What the fuck?"

* * *

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Just his luck, he hadn't had sex in over a year and his first time was about to become a ménage. Not that he hadn't done this before and enjoyed it, but the third party in the equation had never been a ghost.

"I can't be dreaming. I'm wide awake and..." Nick looked down to where his cock was buried in Paul.

::He's mine!:: the ghost screamed.

Nick failed to respond to the words. Paul could hear the spook, but Nick couldn't. Was this another psychic gift? *Just great.*

Just like before, Paul could feel what the ghost felt when he penetrated Nick's ass and screamed his pleasure. Nick's liquid lavender eyes widened as the pain became pleasure. Not just pleasure, but intense ecstasy. As though he'd read Paul's mind, Nick began to thrust hard. Paul's balls tightened in spite of the bazaar three-way, or was it because of it?

This wasn't what he'd imagined his first time after so long would be. What did he expect? Love? That wasn't realistic.

Tears began to stream down Nick's face. Dampness clung to his dark fringe of lashes. Nick lengthened his incredible stroke. His nine inches or so drilled Paul. Paul's own cock stood rigid as the sensations of plunging into someone's ass were not just feelings alone. The skin on his dick visibly moved as if sliding in and out of a tight space...surreal.

He wouldn't last long like this. From the way Nick trembled and frowned, he wouldn't either. Then, just like earlier, the sensations going through Nick became Paul's, too.

The ghost threw his head back and screamed.

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All three of them became one for an intense few moments before they erupted together. And just like earlier, the powerful explosion had him seeing stars swallowed by darkness...

CHAPTER 6

“Do you believe me now?” Paul walked around the den looking at all the pictures of Nick’s dead lover. However, these pictures and the ghost looked nothing alike.

“I certainly felt what was happening, but I didn’t see anything. I didn’t hear him—or it—talking like you did.” Nick held up a picture of a silver-haired, age-weathered man in a gilded frame. “Are you certain it wasn’t Carter? That’s the only thing that makes sense.”

“These pictures are of a man in his fifties. Your ghost-lover looks to be twenty-something. Do you have pictures of Carter when he was younger?”

“I didn’t know him then. I suppose I could look through

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the few things I kept, the stuff I didn't send to his mother. Carter didn't like to be reminded of his youth and beauty. He didn't like my obsession with pictures, but he indulged me. Everything I have was taken during our time together."

He sat the picture back on the shelf and stared at Paul, like he wanted to memorize Paul's face. "Where does this leave what happened between us?"

Was there an us? Had touching Nick been an unspoken agreement to become a couple? What about his ghost? Shouldn't the us be a we? "This isn't something I normally do. I'm not a spontaneous kind of guy." No way did he want to ignore the attraction. "It's been far too long since I wanted anyone. I want more of you."

Nick nodded his handsome head, sending a curl bouncing across his forehead as his intent gaze pinned Paul. "I want more, too."

Uncomfortable under the scrutiny, Paul looked away and focused on his watch. His men had to be worrying about him by now. And he wasn't certain he wanted to work through this without time alone to consider the ramifications. "How about a date later, after I finish up across the street? I'll take you out and see if we can't get some alone time."

The ghost materialized in his face, almost blocking his view of Nick. This time its substance was thin, not like the earlier manifestation. *::Like hell you will. Nicky isn't going anywhere without me.::*

Paul planted his feet. While the specter hadn't been dangerous yet, Paul didn't know what could happen. Maybe if

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he became angry enough...“We’ll see about that, won’t we?”

“Are you talking to him now?” Nick’s voice hitched up an octave or two. “Is he here again?”

::You’ve ruined everything,:: the ghost screamed.

“He’s here and he doesn’t want you to go out of the house with me. Are you going to let him have his way, or do you want to join the living again?” After he gave Nick an ultimatum, Paul regretted it. Nick needed some loving care, not a kick in the ass.

::Nicky would never leave this house!::

“As long as it’s not too public,” Nick said, just as Paul was about to take his ultimatum back. His full lips twisted into a tentative smile.

“I’m surprised. I thought you’d argue.”

The ghost began to fade. *::Don’t do this to me! Please?::*

As the voice died away, Paul swore he heard a sob. He needed to get to the bottom of this.

“I can’t believe it myself.” There was an inherent strength in Nick’s good-looking face as he spoke. His generous mouth tilted into a wide smile, revealing striking white teeth against his dark skin and five o’clock shadow. A small gesture, but enough to make Paul hard again.

“Then again, until tonight I thought I was alone here,” Nick continued. “It’s unnerving to know I have a ghost in residence.” The smile still lingering didn’t make it appear he worried too much about it.

“You can come with me now. You don’t have to stay here if you’re uncomfortable now.”

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Nick huffed. "Finish your business. I can wait. What's my ghost going to do? Fuck me to death? Bring it on!"

* * *

The dank and intense psychic vibes that previously had shrouded the house where he'd destroyed a demon had dissipated like smoke. Only demon hunters could feel and see them. Paul's ex had called it a gift. That was how he knew he'd find a demon inside.

But Paul didn't want any part of it. He wanted out. Earlier, he'd told the powers that be he'd killed his last demon. And then they stuck him smack into the middle of another demon-infested locale. The money, the adulation, even the satisfaction of saving lives didn't do it for him any longer. He wanted a normal life.

Paul crossed the street, just as the coroner wheeled the dead housekeeper out on a gurney. It had taken longer than it should have. Had something else happened in his absence? He changed directions and approached the doctor, known to be a very belligerent and combative man on a good day. Paul had avoided him so far since coming to Hollywood. Paul flashed his badge, and the coroner gave first it and then him the once-over.

What the hell did it matter if Paul had another confrontation? "Do you mind me asking what took so long with the body?"

The older man turned beet red and swiped his age-spotted hand across his shaggy gray brow. "I draw a line in the sand

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when it comes to zombies. I want no part of them!" His loud, gruff voice cut through the quiet neighborhood.

Just great! Now everyone would be panicked. Paul didn't want any part of them either, but he didn't have a choice. "Just tell me. Did my squad do anything? You shouldn't have to deal with what was left of the zombies."

"Fucking paranormal shit!"

Paul saw his ex-lover's car parked down the street. How had he missed that? "Did you have a problem with the vampires?"

"Vampires!" The doc began to wheeze. "What vampires?"

"My men didn't chop up the zombies. They had help. Did anyone on my squad bother you? Just tell me what the fuck your problem is."

The skin over the coroner's cheekbones pulled taut as his eyes crinkled with suspicion. "It wasn't your squad. No. They were fine." He shuddered.

Now what would rattle a man who'd seen hundreds of corpses over his lifetime? Maybe thousands.

"When I inspected the body, I found..." He shuddered again and looked down at the body bag. "I found zombie lips attached to her vagina."

What do you say to something like that? It took everything Paul had not to smile at the very least. In spite of being about to confront the man who'd broken his heart. In spite of having his first sexual experience with a ghost.

"I told your men I wasn't touching her until every rotting piece of zombie was accounted for. This is the second time

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this week I've been called to a zombie attack. What's the world coming to? Maybe it's time for me to retire."

His eyes showed his bewilderment, and Paul took pity on him. "My advice is to go fishing. The trouble has just begun. As much as I'd like to give you hope, I can't. The paranormal world is here to stay, and our only hope is to learn to control it. We sure as hell have lost the battle to get rid of them."

"Next you know they'll get the vote! I guess it wouldn't be the worse thing in the world to retire. I need a break."

Paul shrugged. He didn't want to philosophize about the future. He didn't know what the next hour held for him. Fuck, the next minute was anyone's guess.

"Here come the pieces." His wave directed Paul's attention to the door he'd just exited with the body. Two of his men carried a large metal trunk between them, while it pitched back and forth in their hands. Zombie parts and pieces.

"The individual body parts seemed to have more power this time," the doctor said. "Next time it could be worse."

Paul left the doctor to ponder his career path, intent on talking to the vampires who'd destroyed the zombies and staying away from his ex. When he worked for the CDDC, Chicago Department of Demon Control, he'd only had to worry about demons. Now every day was an adventure! He'd joined the NCCSC, National Command Center for Supernatural Control to avoid being sent to Los Angeles where his ex had been assigned to hunt demons. Now here he was, stuck in Hollywood and the complications abounded.

"Special Agent Steven Richter's waiting inside for you,"

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the doctor shouted to Paul's back.

He froze. *Fuck!*

Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!

Special Agent Steven Richter. The man who was fucking Paul's ex. *Just great.* For a moment he considered going back across the street. A ménage with a ghost was looking better and better. He walked into the house, hoping this wasn't going to hurt as much as he thought it would. He hadn't seen either of them since he almost lost his life in Chicago.

Each step he took he anticipated Steven's smug face. It probably wasn't fair, but he still didn't think Steven was good enough for Craig, Paul's ex. The man had been selling his body in a Chicago club when Craig found him. He'd been attacked by a demon and had a crucifix shoved up his cock. He'd tried to cut it off. Steven, the damned effeminate waif turned special agent! Who knew Steven would end up with more supernatural powers than anyone in the agency.

As he rounded the corner and walked into the kitchen Paul saw him. Special fucking Agent Steven Richter.

"We were about to send a search party for you," Steven said the moment he caught sight of Paul. He pinned Paul with the weird, pale blue-green gaze Craig found so appealing. It gave Paul the creeps. No hello. No how are you? *Prick.*

He didn't answer to Steven just because a demon was involved. "I didn't realize I had to go through check-point-Special Agent Steven Richter to do my job. I was across the street and encountered a problem."

Paul fought to control his raging emotions, but his temper

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rose and he clenched his fists. Steven looked better than in Chicago. His blond hair was fashionably cut and he wore a suit that looked handmade for him. This Steven didn't resemble the one Craig and he had met over a year ago. This one wore confidence as well as he wore expensive clothes.

"It's been a long time. Haven't you been eating enough?"

The sound of Craig's voice cut through Paul sharper than any knife would. In the past, Craig never could've snuck up on him. They'd shared a powerful psychic connection.

::We still share it::

Craig's voice inside Paul's head made him jerk like he'd been struck from behind. Steven shot his lover a dirty look as if he'd heard, too.

Paul tried to use his power to hear what Craig was thinking and couldn't. The self-satisfied look on Steven's face told him why. Steven blocked him. He may have been a slut in the past, but he had more psychic ability than anyone Paul had ever met. *Selfish blond bastard.*

"You two knock it off!" Craig threw his hands in the air before pinning his lover with a heated stare. "You know better, Steven."

"He never apologized for what he said." Steven gave Paul a haughty glare and turned away, his profile strong and rigid.

Good grief. Maybe he wasn't as confident as Paul first concluded. "I said a lot of things I shouldn't have, most of which I probably don't remember. What did I say that's got your ass puckered?"

Steven didn't look at him again. "You told me it was just a

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matter of time until I got Craig killed.”

That was his grudge? Of all the things Paul had said and names he’d called Steven, this was what he couldn’t forget? “Since Craig is here by your side, it would appear I was wrong.”

“Damn straight.” The prideful set of Steven’s chin suggested this wouldn’t be easy.

“I apologize.” And Paul didn’t choke on the words like he thought he might.

“Do you mean it?” Steven faced him, his well-groomed appearance incongruent with the fire in his pale eyes.

“Let it go,” Craig interrupted. His deep voice seemed to defuse Steven’s anger. “Can’t you see he’s suffered?”

Now Paul was pissed again and his hand flew to his scarred face before he even realized what he’d done. “What’s that supposed to mean?” Sure Paul knew he had lost weight and he had physical and emotional scars. Did he really look so bad? He hated hearing those words come from Craig’s mouth. He didn’t want to be pitied by the man he’d once loved.

Craig’s lips parted into a smile, but not big enough for his dimples to pop. In the past, a single smile showing his dimples and bright white teeth would render Paul speechless. Would it still?

“I didn’t mean anything,” Craig said. “I’ve worried about you. So sue me. Now what’s the problem you had across the street? From the way you were leaking psi, I could’ve sworn you were having a lover’s tryst over there.”

He never could hide anything from Craig. Absolutely

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nothing! “The man across the street, Nick Zander, is living with a ghost and...”

“Shit!” Steven cut him off. “Hollywood Hills is becoming a hot-spot for paranormal activity. And to think we once thought demons were the worst thing to ever happen to the world. Well, maybe they still are. But when you combine the threats, it has the makings of a fucking disaster. So how did you handle it?”

Craig laughed at Steven’s question.

Craig knew.

“Do you know the meaning of private?” It appeared Craig still was privy to Paul’s mind.

Paul’s psychic manifestation was visual and other times mental. And on occasion, not often, if a soul reached out, he could hear a person’s inner thoughts. In the past, he’d heard Craig’s thoughts. They’d even made love telepathically, much like Nick did with his ghost.

Craig removed his wide-brimmed, black western hat and swept his hand through his hair, a gesture of nervousness Paul knew well. He must know what Paul was thinking and it made him uncomfortable. How often in the past had Paul run his fingers in Craig’s short dark hair, amazed by the bouncy curls and the feel of silk. This man was a cliché, tall, dark and handsome. His hair, eyes, and even his tanned skin—everything about him was perfection.

Then again, so was Nick. “I think you know how I handled it so far, don’t you?”

“Sorry, I couldn’t help myself. You really were leaking.”

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Craig gave a lopsided grin and flashed his dimples. “We’ll put our heads together and see if we can’t find a solution that doesn’t involve fucking a ghost. I’d like to see you with someone who makes you happy.”

Surprised the dimpled smile didn’t hurt as much as Paul would’ve believed, he nodded. He might not be reaching for happy, but what he had earlier would do. “The ghost is having sex with Nick, not me. I just got caught up in the middle of it. Nick thought it was dreams until tonight. Now he knows it’s a paranormal manifestation, and I’m worried what the haunt might do if Nick rejects it. I need to get him out of the house to see if he can leave the spirit behind.”

“Have him come over here,” Steven said. “Tell him we could use his help consoling the guys who live here, Patrick and Henry. Besides, it’s true. I’ve been here fifteen minutes and I’m ready to strangle them both.”

That was all the encouragement Paul needed to go after Nick. He needed a distraction, anything to keep him for thinking about Craig and his new lover.

CHAPTER 7

No sooner did Nick get dressed after a quick shower than a crash sounded in the living room. He rushed from his bedroom and down the length of hall to find the pictures usually sitting on the grand piano flying through the air, being smashed one after another. They crashed against the wall, as though an invisible hand was swatting them.

“Stop!” he demanded and then felt stupid to be talking to a ghost. Or had that been what he’d been doing for a long time now? How many times when he’d spoken aloud, alone and in the dark, it had seemed as if someone listened.

::You’re going to walk right into a trap. Don’t even think of leaving this house...leaving me.::

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“You have no right to destroy Carter’s pictures.”

::The Carter you knew was an effeminate coward.::

The carnage continued until only a single picture remained. A small one in an ornate silver frame. How had he forgotten it? He raced to the piano before his haunt damaged that one, too. “Carter.” It was Carter’s picture, taken when he graduated from Harvard in 1975. So long ago, a year before Nick was even born. Their May-December romance had been an incredible strike of luck for both of them. Until...

The energy in the room stopped pushing against Nick. Did that mean his ghost was otherwise occupied? Had it left? He stared at the picture of the charming young man with light blond hair and sparkling blue eyes. How he would’ve loved to see Carter like this—young, virile. Now Nick’s predominate memory of him was too horrific to put to words.

::I need to hold you, Nicky. I’m still in love with you. Please don’t shut me out.::

The picture would fit in his wallet and be safe from the ghost’s rampage, only he’d stop carrying a wallet long ago. He’d stopped everything. He removed the photo from the frame and held it against his heart before doorbell rang. *The demon hunter? Why would he be back so soon?* Nick raced to the front of the house again and threw open the door.

::Nicky! You didn’t look first!::

It was Paul. “I need your help across the street. The excitement has been hard on Patrick and Henry. Could you come?”

Someone needed him? Did he dare? He thought of the

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pictures flying across the room and the one still in his hand.
“Let me find my shoes.”

* * *

A red aura had surrounded Nick's house as Paul approached, and once inside, the place vibrated with energy pulses. This couldn't be good. He looked around while Nick was searching for his shoes and discovered the mess in the living room. Broken glass and frames, with some of the pictures damaged. The ghost had been busy.

From out of thin air the ghost materialized and flew toward him. *::Get out of here. You don't know what you're doing! You'll get him killed.::*

“I need to protect him from you.”

::Not from me. Never from me.::

“Then who? Who is it I need to protect Nick from?”

Nick came back dressed in faded jeans and a violet sweater that looked like cashmere and brought out the lavender of his eyes. He looked incredible, even better than the first glimpse.

“How did your lover die?”

Nick blinked and stiffened. “Someone broke into the house, dragged him outside and stabbed him thirty-eight times.”

No wonder Nick hid in the dark and pulled away from society. “Did they catch his assailant?”

“At first they believed it was a robbery gone wrong, but nothing was touched and the authorities didn't have a single lead. Not even close.”

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"I'm sure you were told thirty-eight stab wounds makes Carter's murder sound personal."

Nick seemed to shrivel a little and he stepped back. At any moment Paul expected him to walk away. Paul wanted to comfort him. "I want to help if you'll let me."

::Don't say it! Please don't talk about it, Nicky.::

Nick wrapped his arms around himself. "His penis was cut off and shoved down his throat."

Inwardly, Paul winced, but he controlled his demeanor. "Did he have any enemies?"

"At first one of the detectives suspected my ex. But he wasn't even in the country when this happened. He was off filming a movie in Mexico. And if it was him, wouldn't he be trying to get me back? He calls now and then, but rarely."

"Your ghost doesn't want you to talk about it."

"It must be Carter. Tell me what he looks like."

"He has short blond hair and his eyes are blue. Pretty is the first word that comes to mind. He's lean and maybe five-ten."

"I found this today. Maybe Carter wanted me to find it." Nick reached into his pocket to pull out a wallet. "A picture of Carter when he was young."

Paul looked at the picture. The ghost was Carter, but he didn't say anything. He didn't know if he should. Would it be a burden for him? Or a blessing?

"If the ghost is Carter, why would he be young?" Nick asked.

"I'm not saying it is or isn't, but maybe he didn't like himself when he was older."

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::Maybe I hated what I'd become.::

Right then, Paul wanted to get Nick out of there. If Nick thought the ghost was his dead lover, the consequences could be detrimental to him. People did strange things to hang onto the ones they loved. Nick had already become a recluse. A very sated recluse.

“Are you ready?”

Nick shrugged in response.

“Let’s go. Just tell me you aren’t queasy about associating with vampires.”

“Vampires? I heard a news report just yesterday saying we didn’t have any known vampire infestations in the Los Angeles area.” That got his attention off the ghost.

“I wouldn’t use the word infestation around them if I were you. I can kill demons because of this.” Paul held his hand out to show Nick his ring. Not even the demon hunters knew the secret that made the rings work, but they did. The rings gave off energy that translated into chains of fire to bind a demon and end its miserable existence. “I’m not sure how it works, but it does. It wouldn’t do shit against a vampire. If they decided to fight back, I doubt all of us together could contain them.”

“They’re tame?”

“Where have you been? I thought everyone had come across a vampire by now.”

CHAPTER 8

In the space of a single night, Nick had entered an alternative realm. One where he lived with a ghost, fucked a demon hunter, and stood five feet away from a pair of vampires who looked about as twisted as anything he could ever hope to see. Both had hair down to their butts, one's hair white and the other's a dark auburn.

The one with white hair stared at Nick with bloodlust as his heated gaze swept him from head to toe. In a flash, his dark robe tented at the groin.

Paul stepped nearer. "Don't even think about it, Volmere."

If they were standing outside instead of in the middle of a spacious foyer, Nick would've sworn it had begun to mist. But

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when he brought his hand to his cheek, it was dry. What was this?

The vampire Paul called Volmere stepped nearer and in doing so his robe flapped open. It was a brief glimpse, but enough to make Nick gasp for air. Hung didn't begin to describe him. Hung. Huge. Tattooed. Pierced.

"Don't forget I'm telepathic," Paul said.

The vampire called Volmere seemed to be taunting Paul as he stared back.

Could this be about me?

"Is he really so unassuming?" Volmere asked Paul about Nick's thought.

"What he is—or isn't—is none of your damned business."

They're fighting over me? Nick moved closer and touched Paul's elbow. He jerked around with an expression Nick couldn't read. It almost looked like confusion, but this incredible demon hunter wasn't the kind of man who'd be cowed by a vampire.

"I'm going to let you talk to Henry and Patrick while I have a few words in private with Volmere," Paul said.

The demon hunter was going to battle the vampire? Nick felt a little giddy.

* * *

"What do you think you're doing?" Paul stepped into the vamp's personal space.

"A little P and P. Provoking a poltergeist."

Paul's anger deflated as fast as it had risen, making him

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step back. “It’s here? The ghost followed us?”

Volmere shrugged. “If I were to hazard a guess...I’d say it never leaves his side. He gives it power.”

Paul had already come to that conclusion and didn’t like it one bit. “Have you seen this kind of thing before?”

“Now and then. That one is powerful, and any human trying to come between them is toast. You’re not going to see it coming. If you have designs, you may as well get over it fast or suffer the consequences. Besides, why would you want a human with a vampire in the neighborhood?”

“The ghost hasn’t done anything to hurt me. He just screams a lot.”

Volmere’s pale eyes narrowed. “That’s because you haven’t been a threat—yet. Have you hurt the handsome host?”

“No. Don’t be ridiculous. I hardly know him.”

“You know him well enough to fuck him,” Volmere retorted with cold sarcasm.

Paul was at a loss for words.

A shadow of annoyance crossed Volmere’s beautiful face. “And you want to continue fucking him. He’s awakened something you’ve been missing and you want more.”

Want more? Yes, Paul did. As much as he could get. The idea both surprised and worried him. “Your point?”

“The very nature of man varies, and most of the time it’s easy to guess his motivations. A gay man is another story.”

Volmere was screwing with him. “Fuck you.”

“I could be wrong, but sooner or later you’ll do something

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your new lover doesn't like. The degree to which you disappoint him will determine the rage of his poltergeist. This one is strong enough to end your life. But if that doesn't worry you, I'd say go for it. The man is beautiful."

Volmere wanted Nick—it had been obvious from the moment they met. Then again, Volmere was a sexual predator and he wanted what his eyes could see. "Of course, a poltergeist wouldn't worry the likes of you.

"Not in the least." Volmere huffed. "What's it going to do? Kill me?"

"The poltergeist may not kill you, but I will if you touch Nick."

"I'd like to know what it is about this man that makes the ones who fuck him so possessive," Volmere said. "Interesting."

"How do I know you're telling the truth?"

"It'd be easy enough to prove. Go piss your lover off. I'll make sure his haunt-lover doesn't kick your ass. And you can reward me." Volmere dropped his robe.

Paul wanted to look away, but the vampire was breathtaking, tattooed and twisted. His pale skin almost glowed, except for the ebony tattoos on his arms and right shoulder. The vampire lifted his long white hair above his head and turned. His entire back was covered with an intricate serpent tattoo, colorful and precise. His ass beneath the narrow hips was tempting, but not as much as Nick's.

Volmere spun around and his cock stood high above its white nest. It was a sight to behold. At least twelve or thirteen

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inches, the base was thick and the length tapered toward a dark, coned head. If the size wasn't impressive enough, his accessories made it more so. An amp with three-quarter-inch solid gold balls on his purple cockhead made Paul want to move closer. Or was it a vampire trick? On Volmere's scrotum was a line of deadly-looking golden talons progressive in size. Stunning and twisted. The grand finale—along the length of his erection was the tattoo of another serpent. Volmere wrapped his bejeweled fingers around it.

Paul looked away to Volmere's face. His pale blue eyes smoldered with desire, making Paul want to...

He needed to get away! "How many times have you fucked already today and how many different people?"

Volmere shrugged and his glistening white hair rippled. "Ten times, maybe more." He released his cock and held up his hand with a closed fist. He stuck out his thumb. "Sataire." He raised his pointer. "Henry." Another finger. "Patrick". Two more fingers went up. "Two of your squad."

This is who Paul should fuck—a vampire. Not someone like Nick who would want a relationship. "I'm going to put a poltergeist to the test. Don't let me die and then we'll talk."

As he walked away, knowing he'd come to a decision, it didn't make him feel any better about life in general. What if the next time he made love to Nick his heart wanted commitment? Could he handle it? He didn't want to go there again.

What if Nick's ghost wanted to kill him? Would Nick allow it?

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It took no convincing to get Nick alone in a first-floor bedroom, near where he'd left Volmere. Nor did Nick argue when Paul undressed, then stripped him. There was no sight of the ghost as Paul also shed his clothes.

"Is something wrong?" Nick asked.

"Suck my cock," Paul demanded.

Nick stiffened as if he'd been struck, but dropped to his knees. Paul's took his cock into his hand and ran it along Nick's freshly shaven cheek toward Nick's open mouth, his full lips quivering. He stopped short of sinking into Nick's mouth, and instead smacked his cheek with his shaft. He repeated the act with the other cheek and continued back and forth slapping Nick until his cheeks were wet with pre-cum and Paul was hard, ready to explode.

With his free hand, he sank his fingers into Nick's soft curls, tilting back his head. He lifted his ball sac and laid it across Nick's chin and mouth. Nick's tongue laved him first and then sucked one ball into his warm mouth, rolling it. By the time he did the same with the other one, Paul's breath hitched and his heart began to hammer. His cock, swollen and throbbing like his heart, wanted attention.

Paul eased back, freeing his balls, and wasted no time seeking the pleasure of Nick's mouth. He fucked Nick's mouth, feeling the muscles at the back of his throat grip his cockhead. Nick took him deeper...into his throat. So close. The frenzy of release made Paul hump into Nick's mouth at a feverish pitch. He came hard, the pleasure lifting him, transporting him, while still Nick sucked.

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Suddenly Carter's ghost was there behind Nick, and naked.
"Oh, no, you don't," Paul said.

Carter's obsidian eyes burned into Paul's. *∴Nick is mine.∴*

Nick eased Paul's cock out of his mouth and gazed up in confusion. "What?"

"Tell your fucking ghost to get out of here. Tell Carter to leave us alone."

"It's Carter?"

"Just tell him," Paul demanded.

"Go away."

Carter smiled and materialized as fully as he'd been the first time Paul saw him fucking Nick.

"You don't mean it, Nick. You're making him stronger."

"I'm not doing anything."

Paul slapped Nick across the face with his open hand. Not enough to hurt him, but the ghost wouldn't know that. The haunt flew at him, encircling Paul's throat with hands all too real. But as he tried to pull them away, Paul own hands didn't connect.

"You're doing this," he said to Nick as the pressure on his throat increased.

Nick didn't respond as he held his cheek.

Volmere was right...this would've happened sooner or later. As if the thought of him caused his appearance, Volmere was there. An aura of dark energy surrounded him as he moved toward the ghost, who released his grasp on Paul's throat. He fell back to the floor panting for breath.

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Nick still on the floor, hugging his legs, eyes wide, hadn't uttered a word.

And it pissed Paul off. "You could've stopped that. You would've let your fucking ghost-lover kill me." He turned to Volmere, who appeared entirely too smug. "You tell him. I can't do this."

Paul pulled on his jeans, grabbed his underwear, shoes and shirt and headed for the door. "When you grow enough of a spine to stand up to Carter, call me. Otherwise, forget we ever met."

And he meant it.

CHAPTER 9

A month later, Paul still regretted his hasty actions. He should've tried harder. He'd missed Nick more than he would've imagined. To make matters worse, Volmere had become a pain in his ass, and not in a good way. Somehow, he'd become Volmere's new best friend. Volmere's previous best friend Sataire was busy with a new love...a soap opera star. Volmere, feeling neglected, had glommed onto Paul and showed no sign of easing off.

"I think you should move in here," Volmere said as he fried eggs. "You've had to come to this neighborhood almost every day."

"At least they don't call me for the demons any longer.

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That's one good thing to happen lately."

"And me." Volmere stopped stirring and glared. "I'm a good thing."

"You've gotten me in trouble with my squad every single day. There's not a one of them you haven't fucked, and they're all mad as hell, competing for your—attention. How is it you're a good thing?"

After removing the skillet from the flame, Volmere removed his apron and ran a fingernail over the piercing on his nipple. "Your life was boring without me. Nor would you have learned so much about ghosts so quickly."

"I owe my new job to you, that much is certain. And you have my profound thanks. If I'd found myself in front of another demon or my ex I would've finished what Nick's ghost started."

Volmere scrapped the eggs out of the pan onto a plate. "You can't go a day without mentioning Nick. I take that back...you can't go an hour."

"I'm not that bad—" The expression on Volmere's face brought Paul short. "What?" He glanced back over his shoulder to see what had Volmere's interest. Nothing. Or was there? An energy seemed to be present. He turned back to Volmere.

The vampire responded with a frown. The dark brows that so contrasted with his white hair were pulled tight together. "This is a new one."

"A new what? What is it?"

"You have company, but he doesn't have much power.

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He's trying to say something and can't get it out."

"He who?"

"Carter. Nick's ghost."

Carter was here, in Volmere's kitchen? Granted the vampires lived across the street and diagonal to Nick's house, but he hadn't expected this. However, Paul had learned enough about haunts to know it couldn't harm him like before. If Carter was so weak he couldn't materialize, then he wasn't a threat.

"Is there anything you can do to help him?" Paul asked Volmere.

"What am I? A ghost conduit?" Despite his retort, the energy in the room increased and Carter emerged in a hazy white quality, with no facial features, only dark spots where the appropriate features would be.

"Help..." the ghost said barely above a whisper.

"Is it Nick?" Paul's heart crashed, then jumped to knot in his throat and choke him.

"Help...Nick..."

Paul didn't waste a moment getting to Nick's door, Volmere right behind him. He rang the bell. *Please let him answer.* An expensive car in the drive warned him Nick wasn't alone.

Nick opened the door. The sight of him nearly brought Paul to his knees. Had he done this?

Nick gave a dismissive wave. "Yeah, I look like shit."

Paul could address that later. "May I come in?"

Nick stood back and waved him inside.

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Paul walked into the foyer to see a man in a designer suit, with a haughty smirk on his face. It seemed like a permanent fixture, one Paul had seen worn by men used getting their own way. He took an instant dislike to him.

"I was just telling Mark I've been able to get rid of Carter's ghost. He thinks I'm insane."

Mark's arrogance ramped up a notch with the elevation of his nose. "If you've been putting this foolishness into Nick's head, I want you to stop immediately. And I'd appreciate if you'd stay away from Nick. He doesn't need his head filled with—"

In a flash, Volmere had Mark by the throat. "This is who killed Carter."

"Call 911," Paul told Nick. "I hope we have proof. I'd hate to say a ghost told us so."

Carter materialized and began to beat Mark in the face. Volmere dropped him when a blow hit him instead. "Try to be nice and see what you get," Volmere complained.

"He's wearing the ring Nicky gave me on a chain around his neck. The one he cut off my finger."

"I heard him!" Nick shouted and raced to Mark, clawing at his neck. A moment later he produced a chain with a gold band attached.

"Leave it on him," Paul said before the dynamic duo ripped it off. "Leave it for the police."

* * *

Paul rubbed against Nick's abdomen and down to where

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the coarse hairs lead to the man-meat waiting to be tasted. The scratchy texture against his freshly shaven cheek only heightened his anticipation. The closer Paul came, the more he savored the scent, the musky heat rising to meet him. The clean smell of soap from their shower.

Nick raised his up onto an elbow and brought his hand down to catch Paul's chin and lift. "Are you sure about this?"

Paul took a moment to savor the sated lavender gaze. "How many times are you going to ask?"

Nick let go of his chin and threaded his hand in Paul's hair. "What if Carter comes back?"

Paul understood why Nick would worry. He'd been an ass. He'd expected Nick to get rid of his ghost without offering help or hope. Now that Carter's ghost had kept a murderer away from Nick, Paul had changed his mind anyway. If the ghost of Carter wanted to be near Nick, so be it. "The fact we just made love in the foyer, the bed, the shower and now we're back here again without a sign of your ghost makes me think he's gone."

"What if he does come back?"

::I'll only show myself if you say so.::

Paul looked away from Nick's beautiful face to see the ghost hovering in the corner. "I wonder why you can't see or hear him...only feel his touch," Paul said to Nick.

::I was humiliated by what happened. How I died. What that man did to me.::

Paul smiled at Nick. "If and when Carter decides to make his presence known, we'll deal with it. I'm through running

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away. When I met you, I was still hurting from my failed relationship. It hurt my pride to have the man I loved reject me for a slut. I couldn't see the man inside waiting to come out. I only saw the pitiful waif who sold his body for rent and booze. Now he's a respected colleague. So I don't think I'll pass judgment on your ghost. And I have to admit, he really adds spice to our lovemaking."

Nick looked offended.

"I'm not saying this isn't great. I just don't want you to worry I'll get jealous."

"He's here, isn't he?"

Paul thought of denying it. He wanted a little more time alone. And just as the thought occurred to him...Carter disappeared. When he'd been thinking he wouldn't mind if Nick wanted his ghost to stick around, Carter had appeared. When he wished for some time alone...he disappeared. Paul needed to be very careful. He smiled.

"No, he's not here. But it's possible our happily-ever-after is more than likely going to be crowded."

LEE AVALONE

Paranormal author Lee Avalone is new to gay erotica, but not to writing best-selling stories. Lee's otherworldly stories promise sizzle with a twist of the unusual and heroes ranging from demon hunters to vampires to ghosts. This is an exciting to new journey and Lee hopes to make many new friends along the way.

Feel free to contact Lee at Leeavalon@gmail.com.

* * *

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