



PHAZE
HEAT SHEET

RAVEN

Leigh Ellwood

DON'T DARE
THE REAPER

Don't Dare the Reaper
Leigh Ellwood

*Published by Phaze Books
Also by Leigh Ellwood*

In the Dareville series...

*Truth or Dare
The Dares That Bind
Dare Me
Daring Young Man
Double Dare
Dare to Dream
Daringly Delicious
A Winter's Dare*

Also available...

*Jilted
Surveillance
Why, Why, Zed?*

and many more...



This is an explicit and erotic novel
intended for the enjoyment
of adult readers. Please keep
out of the hands of children.

www.Phaze.com

Don't Dare the Reaper

A Phaze Raven HeatSheet by

LEIGH ELLWOOD

Don't Dare the Reaper © 2009 Leigh Ellwood

All rights reserved under the International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

This is a work of fiction. Names, places, characters and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to any actual persons, living or dead, organizations, events or locales is entirely coincidental.



A Phaze Production
Phaze Books
6470A Glenway Avenue, #109
Cincinnati, OH 45211-5222
Phaze is an imprint of Mundania Press, LLC.

To order additional copies of this book, contact:
books@phaze.com
www.Phaze.com

Cover art by Debi Lewis
Edited by Denise Jeffries

eBook ISBN- 978-1-60659-189-5

First Edition – September, 2009
Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Warning: the unauthorized reproduction or distribution of this copyrighted work is illegal. Criminal copyright infringement, including infringement without monetary gain, is investigated by the FBI and is punishable by up to 5 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000.

Author's Note

Dearest friends of Dareville,

I thank you for taking the time to read this latest adventure of the small town with big passion. Since publishing *Truth or Dare* in 2004 with Phaze Books, I hadn't expected to expand the series as far as I have, and I'm far from finished! I hope you'll stay a while and enjoy the scenery.

Don't Dare the Reaper is an unusual story in that it really isn't meant to be part of the regular canon. Written as part of the Phaze Raven series, this adventure steps out of the comfortable contemporary universe and dabbles in the esoteric and paranormal. Regardless of your beliefs in the afterlife, I hope you'll enjoy this sexy little detour.

Therefore, the Dareville chronology remains untouched, with *Reaper* resting on the outer rim. If it must be put somewhere, however:

Truth or Dare
The Dares That Bind
Dare Me
Double Dare
Daring Young Man
Dare to Dream
Daringly Delicious
A Winter's Dare
Don't Dare the Reaper

And there's always room in town for more.

Stay daring, Leigh

Chapter One

“I swear to God, the first mention of needing ‘more cowbell’ gets you kicked out of this car and off the side of the road...and I won’t slow down to do it, either.” Sue Briscoe glanced quickly at the rear-view mirror, then over her shoulder before shifting lanes. Cal, tapping his knee and humming in tune to the radio, noted the twitching at the corner of her mouth as she threatened him. The words proved hollow—he knew she loved his goofy sense of humor, and after more than a year of marriage Cal loved that he could still push her buttons.

Eyeing her tight blouse, and the hint of cleavage exposed courtesy of a few undone buttons, Cal hoped to have access to more sensitive parts soon. He leaned forward and muted the Blue Oyster Cult song. “I was thinking...” he began.

“Yeah, I hear it hurts the first time.”

“Fifteen-love, still my serve.” Despite the quip, Cal maintained a serious edge to his voice. “What do you say we cancel tonight? Turn back and just spend the evening at home. I can call and give them some excuse.”

Sue shifted her gaze to hold his, but only for a few seconds. She turned back to the two-lane road to finish passing the slower car alongside them. “You’re not feeling well?”

“I’m fine.” Cal shrugged. “Dunno, just don’t feel like being with company right now.”

He sensed the mood dim somewhat within the compact confines of Sue’s car, and instantly the guilt seized him. Tuesday night, over the last thirteen months, marked regular play sessions with their closest friends, Brady and Ellie Garriston. Though the couple enjoyed a healthy sex life privately, the time spent in varied positions and combinations with the famed musician and his wife kept them in high spirits. Cal found it difficult not to

DON'T DARE THE REAPER

notice how Sue appeared especially giddy on Tuesday mornings, more so than usual.

Her eagerness to share didn't bother Cal—by night's end, everybody went home with the right spouse. If anything, the shared sexual energy served to strengthen his relationship with Sue. That this Tuesday happened to fall on Halloween, however, stirred some apprehension within him.

"What's wrong?" Sue asked, and reset the cruise control once they'd returned to the proper lane.

"It's Halloween, you know. I guess part of me hoped we could be a bit more...domestic tonight."

He glanced behind her headrest to see Sue's fairy queen costume hanging from the hook above the rear passenger window. The tip of a blue gossamer wing poked from the unzipped garment bag. She probably spent a fortune on the get-up, he realized—she'd at least put more effort into a costume than he did with the Mets jersey he wore.

"But I was looking forward to the party," Sue said. Her right hand rested on his thigh and squeezed. "Not to mention the after-party games," she added, her voice dropping to a low, sexy tone.

He chuckled at that. As much as the image of Sue bobbing for apples and coming up instead with her lips wrapped around his erect cock aroused him, he felt compelled to speak his piece. "You know, I don't think I've ever stayed home to give out candy," he said. "Lot of kids in our neighborhood..." He trailed away, distracted by the scenery passing in textured, dark-hued ribbons of green and gray.

"I left a bowl of Tootsie Rolls on the porch, Cal. The kids know what to do." The tense silence lasted several seconds before Sue rejoined with, "Is there something else you're not telling me? Do you not want to *be* with Brady and Ellie anymore?"

"It's not that, it's just—damn." A flash of diamond white exploded from the rear view mirror, making Cal wince. "Did the mother ship land behind us? That's bright."

Sue squinted as well and tapped the brakes. "Some asshole in an SUV has his bright lights on. Where the hell did he come from?" The road was clear ahead of them, so Sue slowed and

rolled down her window. The roaring wind blew her hair into a frizzy halo, and she motioned for the tailgater to pass. “Come on, guy,” she muttered, “get where you’re going.”

Cal checked his side mirror. The SUV neared, so close Cal could read the reversed logo on the grill. *What the fuck, guy?* What was it about holidays and crazy drivers? “I don’t think he gets it, hon.”

“If I go any slower we’ll be under his hood.”

No sooner were the words uttered than it nearly happened. A rough, loud *thud* and a jolt from the back indicated they had been hit. Cal lurched forward in his seat but thankfully didn’t get far as his seatbelt held him firmly in place. Sue, however, looked back with widened eyes and creased worry lines. Her knuckles whitened around the steering wheel, and Cal touched her shoulder to assure her.

“Just pull over, hon.” *God, he’s probably drunk.* “We’ll get a license number and call the cops.”

“Right.” Sue clicked on the turn signal and moved to shift the car, but the SUV struck them again, this time with more force. Cal kept talking in hopes of soothing Sue’s nerves, but the hit must have panicked her, for she pumped the brakes. Cal heard tires skid underneath them, then give way and slide in the wrong direction. The car drifted into the oncoming lane...and into the path of another car.

“Sue,” was all he managed before the impact, and the immediate fade to black.

Chapter Two

“Sue?”

She knew that voice—though it sounded distant and full of static. Probably a faraway temptation to rejoin the waking world, but she wanted none of it. Just a few more minutes of sleep, she decided. She had no pressing appointments at her photography studio. The people of Dareville could wait for their portraiture.

“Sue, baby, come on.”

No. Behind her eyelids came into focus a clear image of ice, stretching for miles before her. Her skates laced and tied, she took to the endless rink with all the poise of an Olympic champion, twirling and gliding with ease. Figure eights, figure sixty-nines—no number proved too difficult to etch on the hardened surface. She contemplated starting pi as well, right after a double axel.

The landing she flubbed, and Sue landed face down on the ice. The dry cool of the surface numbed her skin and left a lasting impression as that insistent voice guided her back to consciousness.

“Sue!” Cal shook her now, and she finally opened her eyes to discover they weren’t in their bed at home, but lying on a dark floor.

The entire room was pitch black, in fact. Yet, there had to be some light source since she could clearly see her worried husband.

She looked down at herself, then at Cal. Neither wore a stitch of clothing, yet it seemed natural in this situation. She experienced neither a chill nor embarrassment.

“Thank God,” he said, and drew her close.

“Where are we?”

“Hell if I know, are you okay?”

“I-I think so.” Nothing hurt. She tried her legs and stood without any problems, as did Cal. She studied their surroundings, or rather lack thereof. “Nice place.”

“Could use a window or two, but sure,” Cal said.

Sue smiled, happy to know her husband’s sense of sarcasm hadn’t suffered whatever had befallen them.

What *had* happened, exactly? She closed her eyes to recap the events of the day, but recalled nothing unusual. They’d made love that morning, then an early run and breakfast. Grocery shopping at Jake’s and lunch with their friend Kate at the Dareville Inn. Tiny Jack O’ Lanterns lined the lattice work of the small hotel—there was to be a Halloween party for the kids there...

Halloween party. Brady and Ellie. They were on the way to the Garristons’ house when they were hit.

“We crashed,” she said out loud. “The car.”

“Yeah, but where is it?” Cal loosened his hold and stepped away. Each footfall echoed an odd sound, as though they stood in a large, empty soundstage.

“We couldn’t have been thrown, we’d be all bloody and cut,” he added. He looked about to say more, but his face paled. Sue realized he shared her very thoughts.

Perhaps, they hadn’t been ejected from the car because they were still in it—their corporeal selves, anyway.

“We’re dead, Cal?”

He shook his head, bewildered. “I don’t know, babe. I don’t know. Come here.”

She gladly eased into his embrace and pressed against him, then gasped when she confirmed her worst fear. “I can’t hear your heart beating.” She trembled in his arms, trying to sob but tears didn’t come. Cal kissed the top of her head, but beyond that she detected no other movement. His breath didn’t caress her skin. His pulse didn’t race. He, like her, just was.

At least her sense of touch remained intact, and she assumed the same for Cal. That provided some comfort in this uncertainty. She savored the scratch of a light tuft of chest hair against her cheek, and how his hand smoothed over the swell of her backside. Any other time, this would arouse her, and she felt

DON'T DARE THE REAPER

sad. Had they lost the ability to truly enjoy intimacy in this place?

“This is too weird. Cal, you don’t think this is Hell, do you?” Despite seeming to have no major working organs, Sue managed to sense a chill shiver down her spine after all. She thought of everything she and Cal had done, the earthly pleasures enjoyed since they fell in love, and wondered how much of it counted against them in their final judgment.

He didn’t answer right away, and part of her hoped for a joke to lift her spirits. Finally, he looked up and said, “This can’t be Hell.”

“How are you so sure?”

“If it were, I’d be the only one here.”

He looked down at her. In this state—death, near-death, whatever—his eyes maintained their lively hazel color, and she saw the desire flickering within them. Cuffing the back of his neck, she pulled him down for a long, slow kiss, relieved to know not everything ended in death.

Their lips moved together in familiar rhythm, tongues twined and danced with little urgency. Where could they go? Obviously they had no way to get to the Garristons’ home.

At that thought, Sue pulled away, her mouth agape. “Brady. Ellie,” she said, her voice weak.

“I know, babe. They’re probably worried sick, and we have no way to get word to them.”

“If we did, what could we say?” Sue cried. “That we’re dead? That we might not ever see them again? We don’t even know *we’ll* be together much longer.” She trembled in Cal’s arms, a thousand questions left to ask crowding her mind. “What is going on? You’d think there’d be people on the ‘other side’ telling us where to go.”

“You’re not dead.”

Sue squealed and they separated, turning in unison toward the strange voice. Only inky black surrounded them.

Could one be scared in the afterlife? Apparently so. “What was that?” she whispered.

Cal held up a finger to calm her and called out, “Where are you? Who are you?”

“I’m right here, and I’ll say it again. You. Are. Not. Dead.”

LEIGH ELLWOOD

From the dark emerged a tall figure dressed in black—jeans and a turtleneck, not exactly the attire Sue expected of an angel or deity. Whoever he was, he was damned good-looking with short black hair and a strong jaw line, broad shoulders, and a smile that belonged in the movies.

Sue silently cursed herself for all the years she idled away Bible classes, looking out the window and wishing to be somewhere else. She could swear being taught, however, that the Dark One could take on even the most attractive form.

Had the devil come down to Dareville, looking for a few souls to steal?

Chapter Three

He approached them slowly, hands behind his back and nodding a greeting. He looked non-threatening, but Cal kept Sue close to his side nonetheless. For all the good it might do, they were naked and defenseless—yet weren't embarrassed by it. Cal doubted, too, he'd acquired any superpowers in this state, and he didn't know that this guy wouldn't morph into a multi-fanged, drooling demon and devour them both.

"Cal, Sue," the man said. Well, at least somebody knew what was going on here.

"Lucifer?" Cal tried.

The man chuckled. "No, you're not there, either. Relax. You can call me Gil, though it's not really my name."

Cal arched an eyebrow, but Gil continued, "I go by so many, seems every culture calls me something different. I don't believe there is a Western moniker attached to what your society refers to as the Grim Reaper."

The Reaper? "But you just said we weren't dead, why would you be here? And where is here, exactly?"

"Is this Purgatory?" Sue asked.

Gil shook his head. "No, you'd definitely know if you were there. Here," he rocked on his heels and craned his neck upward, "I suppose you could say you are in Limbo now."

Cal scoffed. "How could this be Limbo? If you put things in Limbo, it isn't Limbo anymore. It's a place."

Gil brought his hands together in front of him and clasped them loudly. "You know your Carlin. Bravo."

"Yeah, big fan. He was an atheist, I understand. Where did he end up?"

Gil didn't answer, but instead extracted a switchblade from his back jeans pocket. He chuckled when Cal tightened his grip around Sue's shoulders and back.

“Don’t panic, I’m not here to rumble,” Gil assured them. “I just thought you’d like to see what’s going on right now.”

Gil cut wide swaths into the air—parallel lines up and down. Cal swore he could hear fabric sliced and sensed Sue stiffen in his embrace when Gil reached to one side and pulled away a patch of black.

The darkness fisted in Gil’s hand and crumpled into a thick veil, revealing an active screen. No longer intimidated by the so-called Reaper, Cal stepped forward to better see the events played before them.

Onscreen, strobe lights illuminated the two-lane highway where they had crashed. Sue’s modest sedan resembled a demolition derby victim, with detached front and rear bumpers, cracked headlights, and a destroyed cab. The impact at both ends had created an obvious accordion effect, and assuming either one of them lived, driving the car home would definitely not be an option.

“Cal, look.” Sue pointed to the right corner of the screen. Through the spider web pattern of shattered glass still held in the rear windshield, he saw a body slumped in the driver’s seat. Beyond that, a hole in the front glass implied the fate of the other passenger—him.

Sue’s belt held, apparently, but he had been ejected. Cal softened his touch and stroked his wife’s back. Surely if he could feel a heart beat now, it would have stilled in fear. No way in hell would anybody survive something like that.

They watched firemen pry apart the twisted metal, and EMTs prepare stretchers and equipment. Yet, before Cal could better see the extent of damage done to their bodies, the view panned to one side to reveal the other cars involved. Both appeared equally, if not more, destroyed.

From behind the SUV rolled a stretcher, carrying a shrouded body.

“That, my friends, is what dead looks like,” Gil said without humor.

“What about the other car?” Sue asked. “The one we hit head-on.”

“They’re both still conscious, enough to remain in the mortal realm. It’s not their time.”

DON'T DARE THE REAPER

“Why isn’t the SUV’s driver here?” Cal asked.

Gil raised an eyebrow. The look on his face spoke volumes of his irritation, which rankled Cal. The Reaper addressed them as though they were children. “I told you, the man is dead. His fate is decided.”

“And ours isn’t,” Sue said.

“Now you get it.”

With a sudden snap of his fingers the screen went blank, and the pervading blackness reigned.

“That doesn’t make sense.” Cal shook his head. “How long does it take to figure out what happens to us? You’re Death, for fuck’s sake. If anybody should know—”

“What do you think happens when you die, Cal?” Gil asked. This time his expression took on genuine interest. He sounded neither condescending nor angry.

Cal shrugged. “Depends on what you believe. Personally, I’ve always thought if God existed He’d send you to one place or the other.”

“Heaven or Hell,” Sue whispered. “I didn’t think I’d have to face it this soon. I didn’t get to say goodbye—”

Cal kissed the top of her head, and that quieted her. At the very least, they still had each other. He didn’t want to think this...being had been sent to string them along only to initiate a painful, eternal separation. If God played like that, Cal decided not to feel too guilty about the life he’d led.

“Yes, well...” Gil turned and walked away, prompting Cal to guide Sue and follow him. “So many have differing views of how the afterlife works. Funny, none of them are aware of the bureaucracy involved in crossing over.”

Before either of them could remark, Gil turned swiftly around and offered an apologetic smile. “Yes, I am the Reaper, but my job isn’t as simple as you might think. I see people from one realm to the next, and even in eternity there is...uncertainty. Do I make sense?”

“God doesn’t know what to do with us,” Cal said, conclusive. “To be honest, I wouldn’t, either.”

“God loves all His children, even you, Cal.” Gil rolled his eyes. “It’s not yet been determined if either or both of you are to

come with me to the other side. Until I hear, you will remain here.”

“For how long?” Sue cried. “If we’re outside of time, that could be forever.”

Or one second from now. Cal didn’t want to say that out loud, for fear the words took form and his wife suddenly vanished, never to behold again. He’d gladly take forever in Limbo while God twiddled His thumbs.

“When I know, you’ll know. Yes, it’s a terrible answer, but the only one I can give you. For now,” Gil waved a hand and another slip of black fell away to reveal a passageway, “I’ll give you some privacy.”

Cal sensed the unspoken innuendo as Gil crossed the threshold into a dark void, and looked back with a wistful glance. This was their chance to say goodbye, in the event their fate warranted a separation.

“Cal,” Sue said softly, gliding the palm of her hand over his chest. She brushed one nipple, and relief washed over Cal as the skin tightened in response. Not everything had been lost in stasis. If this one erogenous zone reacted, he knew not to waste anymore time.

He cupped one of her breasts and thumbed the soft, dusky skin surrounding the bud. Taking it between his teeth, he worried the tender skin to full attention, imprinting in his memory the pleased whimper Sue release as she threaded her fingers through his hair.

Send him to Hell or wherever, he’d fight to play that one high note over and over in his consciousness.

“I love you, Cal.” Sue’s voice reflected her anguish. “I don’t know what I’d do if—”

He released her nipple and silenced her with a kiss. “Don’t say it, babe,” he said. “Let’s just take advantage of what we have now.” The angels and demons would have to pry them apart, or else join in until they finished.

In a place where time held no meaning, that could be forever. Fine by him.

Chapter Four

Thank the Lord, or whoever, for small favors. Despite the absence of working circulation and respiratory systems, they could function sexually here. Cal lay flat as Sue knelt beside him and gently stroked his cock to erection. She wondered if Gil, the Reaper, had some power over what they could do while they remained here.

She certainly wouldn't question it. She wanted to enjoy her husband while she could, hopefully for a long time to come if the fates allowed them to stay together—on Earth or anywhere else.

Her fingers caressed the long, thick shaft, tracing the raised veins from root to crown, then smoothing over the circumcised tip. "I don't think I've ever seen anything so beautiful," she told him.

Cal eased one hand behind his head to prop himself at a slight angle. "You don't look in the mirror often enough."

"I wish we had one here to use." She bent low to take him into her mouth.

Good, she retained a sense of taste here, and now she could produce saliva and allow his cock to slide further down her throat with ease. With one hand caressing his scrotum and the other twined with his fingers, Sue closed her eyes and slowly worked his cock. She took the moment to appreciate every ridge and bump, and the feather soft brush of pubic hair against her face. In the time they'd been together—how short she perceived it now—she'd tried to take things slow during lovemaking, and it pained her to realize this possibly marked their last time.

"Babe, please."

She sensed Cal trying to lift her, but she wanted to continue orally pleasing him. Yes, she enjoyed other aspects of loving her husband, but taking his cock into her mouth proved to be her favorite activity, alone or during group play. Rather than let him

disengage her, she blindly straddled him so that she bent opposite his reclining frame. She didn't have to look back to know her pussy hovered close to his face.

"If you insist," she heard him say just before his tongue touched down on her aching nether lips.

They may very well have remained in the sixty-nine position for several hours, by earthly standards. Sue nibbled Cal's reddening tip and licked the length of him, leaving no inch ignored, pleased to see the occasional drop of pre-cum bubble up from the narrow slit.

Soon, then, came that familiar tingle of an oncoming orgasm, made more intense the harder Cal worked her clit. When two of his fingers pumped her core and sought out her spot she came hard, crying out her release with his cock muffling her voice.

He nearly threw her off of him as she tried to come down from the high. "Babe, come here," he said with urgency, and pulled her back to top him, right side up this time.

"What's wrong?" she asked, frowning at the wild look in his eyes. To say he looked as though he saw a ghost might spoil the mood.

"Right here." He moved her hand to splay over his chest. His body rose and fell gently, his skin flushed, and then Sue realized his heart was beating.

She stilled, and sensed it within her as well. "What does it mean, that we're whole here?" she wanted to know. "Have we truly died now?"

"I don't know, but I don't want to think about it right this second." He grabbed and flipped her onto her back. "Open for me," he begged, reaching down to position his cock at her slit.

Sue didn't hesitate, and obliged, relishing the sensation as Cal filled her. With her heels hooked around his legs, she arched her body upward and pulled him deeper inside her. She cupped his backside, guiding his gentle strokes, and moaned as he nipped at her breasts.

"I love you so damn much," he groaned between kisses. "Maybe they'll forget we're here and we can just do this forever."

I wish. "Then this would be Heaven."

DON'T DARE THE REAPER

“No arguments here.” Cal kissed her, hard, on the mouth, and Sue opened to receive him. They moved in a familiar, loving rhythm, with Sue’s backside gliding easily against the cool surface of the floor, if it could be called that. Perhaps they floated in stasis, their minds cognizant enough to produce the sensation of feeling hard ground underneath them, a hard cock inside her pussy...

No. She shook her head and moaned, steering Cal’s kiss into a sharp right turn. No analyzing anything, she needed this moment to love Cal and create a lasting memory...or else renew what they had for a second chance at life.

She hoped for the latter.

Cal lifted his head and gasped. She felt the warmth—so much for having their breath taken away. His familiar scent, the salty musk of sex, had returned, and she inhaled quickly before it dissolved.

“Gonna come, babe.”

“Do it.” Would it echo in the expanse around them? Would God hear and remember He had to deal with them?

Cal grunted, his face contorted with his pleasure, and finally cried out his orgasm. He shuddered atop her before the heels of his hands, planted on either side of her, gave way and he collapsed. His entire body pulsed in time to his heart and each thud vibrated through her.

Sue smoothed down his hair and caressed his back and shoulders. “Wonderful.”

“Yes.”

* * * *

He rose back onto his hands and, stretching his arms, hovered and studied her face. Her eyes, dark green and glassy with tears—tears—reflected the love for her that burned within him. He stroked one cheek and brushed away a droplet that couldn’t form just a short while ago. The changes pleased and frightened him, because he couldn’t be certain what they foretold.

“I want to make love to you again,” he said. Already his cock stiffened, ready for more attention. He frowned. “What’s wrong?”

“Nothing.”

“You don’t enjoy it.”

“I love it,” Sue said quickly, and reached up to brush the seam of his lips with her thumb. “Always have. It’s just...”

He watched her, willed the confession to come. He imagined he’d know soon enough.

She smiled. “I wouldn’t trade eternity with you for anything, but there’s still a part of me that wishes we could share this.”

Cal nodded. “I understand.”

Her face darkened a bit, a trick of the mysterious light around them, he surmised, or perhaps indicative of her concern. “That’s what you were trying to tell me earlier, before we crashed. You didn’t want to play anymore?”

“No, not like that.” He eased himself beside Sue and pulled her into a spoon position, hooking one leg over hers. He enjoyed the couple’s play as well, and the occasional third party planned to satisfy her craving for another woman, or his for another man. Above all, though, he preferred being exclusively hers, and said as much.

“Just seemed like for the last year, that’s all we did. Three-way, four-way, every which way,” he added. “It’s fun, yeah, but it’s like Groucho said, ‘I love my cigar, but I take it out of my mouth once in a while.’”

Sue laughed out loud. “So what’s that supposed to mean? You’re putting your cigar back in its box?”

“Am I supposed to make a comment about *your* box here?”

She caught her breath and turned serious. “I see what you’re saying. I guess hearing your stories, about you and Brady and all the stuff you did, made me want to experience it myself. I guess I wanted too much of it.”

“I don’t mind it, Sue, please know that,” Cal said, and kissed her shoulder. “I love that I married an incredibly sexy woman. I don’t want to stop playing, either. Or, I didn’t.”

DON'T DARE THE REAPER

He looked around at the inky black and wondered if they might see color again. Instead, they met the smile of the Grim Reaper.

“I’m glad to hear you say that,” Gil said.

Chapter Five

Sue sat up as Cal leaned back on his elbows. “So uh, Gil, when did you come back?” she asked.

Gil rocked on his heels and offered a simple grin. “Actually, I never left. Just pulled some of the darkness overhead so you couldn’t see me.”

“Ah.” The look on Gil’s face told her easily that he had seen plenty.

“Are you upset?” he asked.

She shrugged. “Wouldn’t be the first time we had an audience. Though, we usually know they are there.”

“I know. It’s my business to know everything about the people I claim.” Gil gave them some distance and paced the ground near their feet. “It’s rare for people to come here while their fates are sorted out, but I have to say...you two have been the most *constructive* during your stay.”

“Do we have time to be more constructive?” Cal asked, scooting closer to her. Sue’s nipples tightened with the slight touch of her husband’s hip against hers.

“I think so.” Gil nodded, and looked as though he had more to add. Sue couldn’t mistake the look of longing in the Reaper’s eyes. She glanced at Cal and realized he’d noticed it, too.

Damn. He had to be good-looking, too. Right after their heart to heart about too many bodies crowding the bed.

She turned away, trying not to watch the Reaper lick his lips. “Can you tell us why it feels now like our bodies are functioning like when we were alive?” she asked. “We didn’t have beating ‘hearts’ earlier.”

“Yes, actually that’s a good sign, depending on your definition of good,” Gil said, and Sue chanced another glance at him. The Reaper, while he hadn’t appeared fazed by their nudity earlier, now looked as though he viewed them with new eyes.

DON'T DARE THE REAPER

She followed what she surmised was an appreciative gaze at her husband's erection.

Cal stroked the small of her back, sending chills up her spine. A fleeting vision of Gil's mouth pursed around one of her nipples while Cal took her from behind faded as quickly as she conjured it. The vision distracted her enough to require Gil to repeat his revelation to them.

"I said it's not yet time to die, for either of you," he said. "The reason you're feeling more, ah...*complete* is because you're slowly regaining your life force."

"How long before we're back?" Cal asked.

Gil shrugged. "I can send you back right this second, it's just..."

Sue arched an eyebrow.

"...when you return you're both going to be roughed up rather badly. It could be a while before you're able to resume the level of sexual activity you're used to."

"So, you're giving us time to finish, is what you're saying," Cal finished the thought.

"You've had one hell of a night, no pun intended." Gil smiled. "You're entitled to some pleasure."

"That's very generous. Thank you."

Sue let Cal ease her back down to a lying position, and she arched her back as her husband kissed her breast and delved his hand between her thighs. He didn't appear embarrassed to put on a show, but Sue knew her husband. The Reaper had admitted to watching, and by Cal's estimation he could keep on doing so.

When Cal buzzed her ear, kissing her jawbone, she leaned in and whispered, "I think he wants us to be generous, too."

"I can see that." A quick crook of Cal's head toward their audience alerted Sue to Gil's proximity, and the enlarged bulge in his pants.

"What do you think?" Sue asked, biting her lip. To suggest company after discussing slowing down group participation seemed rather hypocritical, yet she hoped Cal might consider their present circumstance. This was Death, personified, watching them make love! Would refusing him permission to play penalize them in the afterlife?

“I know what *you’re* thinking. And no, I don’t mind it. We just got a second chance, babe, let’s live it up.” Cal’s voice hummed low in her ear. “He *is* good-looking.”

“You got that part right, at least.”

“I’ll assume, too, we don’t have to deal with protection in Limbo.”

“True.” Sue hissed with pleasure as two of Cal’s fingers entered her.

“And it’s not like we’ll see him again...until the next time.”

May that not happen for many years yet, Sue thought, though she had to admit she wondered when they would have another opportunity to share a handsome stranger, immortal or otherwise.

She eased Cal away so she could sit. “I suppose we should—”

Before she could say more about inviting Gil into their personal space, a light tap on her shoulder prompted her to turn. Gil apparently had received the message—he reclined behind her, one hand propping him, naked but for a wide grin.

“You don’t waste time, do you?” Cal said, his tone mirthful.

“I don’t get to do this often, even with one person,” Gil said. “Most times people come through here, their fate is secured. I send them on quickly because, truthfully, I find nothing there that intrigues me. With you,” he took Sue’s hand and kissed the back, “I’m reluctant to let you leave so soon.”

“You can’t have some fun while you’re on Earth?” The question came out on a contented sigh spurred on by Cal massaging her pussy. Gil followed suit with a gentle hand caressing her backside.

“Do you know how many people die every day?” Gil winked. “I’ve no time to play on Earth, I’m the hardest working man in show business.”

“I suppose you are, now that the original one is gone,” Cal said. “So, where did *he* end up?”

“I’ll tell you next time you come visit.” With that, Gil pressed his lips against Sue’s, and the bodies all tumbled backward together.

Chapter Six

When they returned to their mortal lives, Cal wondered how much of this he would retain in his memory. Living for the day hardly afforded him time to research near-death experiences, so whether or not their tryst with Gil would be repressed forever or linger in the mist of his mind as a vivid dream remained to be seen. If he could bring any of this back with him, though, the stories he could tell.

For one, who knew the Grim Reaper switch hit? Next time Death took a holiday he'd do quite well at a swing resort.

Kneeling behind Gil, Cal watched as the other man stretched over Sue, covering her body with his. With her thighs spread to accommodate his girth, Gil undulated his hips and eased his cock into her pussy without needing his hands to guide it. They were too busy anyway, as one kneaded Sue's breast while other cradled her head.

"Damn, that feels nice," Gil said on a moan, and gently moved within her. Cal watched the hypnotic movement of Gil's ass and stroked his cock to the same beat. If memory did fail him, it was because it had been forever since Cal had topped a man, so long he couldn't remember faces or names. When they partied with the Garristons, Cal knew Brady didn't like being on the receiving end, which suited Cal fine. He enjoyed the sensation of a cock hitting that special spot near his prostate, and in their private moments Sue would don a strap-on to stimulate him anally.

Now, as he prepared to take Gil's backside, he realized his reluctance to visit Brady and Ellie might be related to an imbalance during play. Had he and Brady switched more often during their time together, would he have not minded as much?

He watched Gil pump into Sue, and noted her pleasure etched in her smile and in the flutter of her eyelids. Despite Gil's

rapt attention to her breasts and collarbone she fixed her gaze on Cal, as though waiting for him to completely join them so she could truly enjoy the experience.

“Looking good, babe,” he said, and let go of his cock. He’d reached full mast now. But before he positioned himself, he realized he had no lubrication. Surely he’d need it even in this place.

Gil lifted his head and craned back to Cal, beckoning him closer. He pushed himself on locked elbows but continued to thrust into Sue. “Let me help,” he offered, crooking his head to guide Cal closer. Once he moved to Sue’s side, Gil bent over Cal’s erection and took the tip into his mouth. Cal hissed at the first contact of tight, wet heat and walked on his knees a few steps to give Gil better access.

“Fuck, yes,” he growled, feeling his balls tighten with the threat of imminent release. The Reaper clearly was no stranger to sucking cock, he did it so well, and as Cal watched his shaft disappear down Gil’s throat he noticed how well the other man coated him. He’d be able to slide into Gil’s ass now, assuming he didn’t explode in Gil’s mouth first.

He let the Reaper get in a few more good rounds, including a long, torturous lick up the underside, before pulling away. “Get ready,” he warned the man, and started back.

Gil stopped pumping into Sue, instead picking her up to press against him while he raised his ass higher to Cal. “I’ve been ready for centuries.”

“I thought time had no meaning here,” Cal teased, and pried apart Gil’s buttocks. He licked a finger and traced the puckered hole.

Gil tapped the side of his head with a free hand. “It does here. For God’s sake, fuck me!”

“So He does exist.”

“Do it!”

Cal chuckled, enjoying the gentle torment, but quickly turned serious as he entered Gil. Slowly at first, he savored the vise-like grip. The man provided a tight channel for fucking, and Cal tensed to keep from coming too soon. If indeed Gil had gone without, he at least deserved to fully enjoy the sensation.

DON'T DARE THE REAPER

“So good,” Gil cried softly, and anything else he had to say was muffled in the valley between Sue breasts as the Reaper fell forward.

Cal reached his limit, grasping Gil by the hips for balance, then slowly worked his cock in and out of the tight hole. As he fucked the man, he leaned to one side to make sure Gil didn't lose his cadence with Sue. Soon they synchronized and Cal closed his eyes to better enhance his pleasure. Yet instead of darkness he detected a swirling kaleidoscope of color which quickly gave away to a familiar scene.

The picture seemed so vivid in his mind: a play session with Brady and Ellie. He watched from an aerial view as though outside his body, delighting in the sight of tangled limbs and exploring hands and tongues. They kissed and sucked and stroked in various combinations, lost in the heat of loving passion.

He smiled.

Just as quickly, the scene changed. Cal and Sue remained together, entwined around a third body, only this scene rolled like somebody had pulled a gauzy veil over his face. Facial features blurred, and once clear flesh tones appeared out of focus, yet Cal felt no more distant from the action than earlier. He willed himself to see better, and as the view sharpened so did the realization of the vision.

His eyes opened wide, and his gaze locked with Sue's. He noted the amazement—she'd seen the same thing.

Gil continued to thrust into Sue's pussy. “You saw it, yes?”

Cal assumed the Reaper meant both of them, and they nodded in unison.

Gil arched his neck back and exhaled a contented sigh. “Harder, fuck yes.” When Cal complied, he added, “You see why it's important for both of you to return?”

Cal slowed his pace and pulled away slowly, just so the tip of his cock remained pinched inside Gil. “How soon before that happens?”

“I can't tell you. It's not for me to choose when, only to guide them over when it's time.”

Right. He slammed forward, a bit roughly from his growing anger. He wanted to swear, for all the good it would do. Gil

enjoyed it like this, so he couldn't even take out his frustration on the Reaper. To think he and Sue would go home, only to eventually lose a loved one...and he couldn't even see who. Brady and Ellie came to mind, but their sexual activity occasionally extended beyond their closest friends. The third person they comforted in the vision could be somebody else, too, missing a lover.

He switched his attention back to Gil when he heard the other man cry his release. The urge to come himself faded somewhat in the wake of the disturbing vision, but he realized he couldn't blame Gil. Don't shoot the messenger. Fuck him all you want, yes...

Gil collapsed on top of Sue and Cal followed him part of the way, slipping out as Gil panted in his afterglow. "Damn, I needed that," the Reaper said, sounding out of breath, then moaned his appreciation as Sue caressed his back and buttocks.

Cal stroked himself back to life. "Turn onto your back, but stay inside her," he said, nudging Gil until the man got the idea. "You got enough left so Sue can ride?"

"Oh, yeah. I'm still hard."

Cal rolled back on his heels. Sue hooked her legs around Gil's and laughed as they tumbled to the left. In one swift movement she righted herself over Gil's hips and began to squirm on his cock. She let Cal press against her back to lower her torso and raise her ass. Turning back to him, she blew him a kiss.

She liked this position, this sexual combination, Cal knew, and she deserved to enjoy herself before returning to an undetermined period of physical rehabilitation.

As soon as she stilled, he moved forward and eased his cock into her ass. Sue responded with a whimper, then let her legs extend behind her to better leverage the two cocks inside her. He moved as she moved toward her pleasure, and found new strength in her cries of pleasure. Cal watched Gil lean up far enough to capture a nipple between his teeth, then snaked his hand around Sue's waist, down to her pussy where he found her clit. He rubbed slowly, guiding her orgasm to completion.

"Yes!" She must have repeated it for a solid minute. Her body tensed and slackened with her ecstasy, and as she pinched

DON'T DARE THE REAPER

his cock Cal felt his own release fast approaching, and remained inside her when he did come. One, two, three final thrusts into her ass finished him, and he hooked an arm around his wife and pulled her away from Gil to spoon on the floor.

“I love you,” she whispered as they fell together, both bathed in sweat.

“Love you, too, babe.” He kissed her shoulder and neck, savoring the tang of her skin, happy for the opportunity to continue doing so. He had to wonder, though, if Sue realized what the future held for them back home.

She rolled in his arms to face him, and Cal noted the shadow across her smile.

“Did you see who...?” she began, then stopped. Apparently the look on his face answered her, and her smile fell. She looked back at Gil, who now reclined on his side to face them.

Amazingly, or perhaps not so much—he *was* an immortal being—his clothes had returned.

“Thank you,” Gil said, his voice serene. “Seriously, I don’t think I’ve enjoyed myself like this in many of your years.”

Cal snorted. “We talking since ancient Egypt or World War II?”

“Somewhere in between.”

“Anybody we know?” And as Gil answered, Cal mouthed him in unison.

“I’ll tell you next time.”

Chapter Seven

“She’s waking. Oh, thank God.”

Sue saw nothing but fuzzy light at first, and it seemed as though an eternity passed before the world returned to focus. When it did, the first thing she noticed was the white, smooth ceiling, soon interrupted as several heads came into her line of vision. They frowned and studied her. Fingers rolled over her pulse and touched her forehead. Cold objects pressed and poked and prodded, yet her voice could not come to expel them from her personal space.

She moved her head, trying to get a bead on her location. This wasn’t home, and the sheets of the bed in which she lay felt crisp and unfamiliar. In her peripheral vision she caught a glimpse of railing, and suddenly her memory flooded back to the front burner of her consciousness.

The car...they had crashed. She was in the hospital, but where was Cal?

“Sue, how are you feeling?” asked one man with blond hair, presumably a doctor.

Like shit, she wanted to say, but in a strangled voice she managed, “Fine.”

“Do you know your full name?”

“Susan Carmichael Briscoe.” *Where the fuck is my husband?* “Cal...”

He seemed to ignore her unfinished plea. “Can you tell me who the President is?”

“The one I didn’t vote for. Where’s my husband?” Her voice found new strength, enough to evoke merriment among the people surrounding her.

The blond man stood up straight and chuckled. “You gave us quite a scare, Sue. For a moment there we thought...” He must have seen fear or worry, because the track changed quickly.

DON'T DARE THE REAPER

“Your husband’s condition is stable, Mrs. Briscoe. There was no internal bleeding. Your husband, however, suffered some very serious injuries, but he pulled through surgery. So, you both should be fine. But you were in a pretty bad accident—”

“I know, I was there,” Sue grumbled. “Can I see him?”

“Soon,” he promised. “You need to rest now, and recover. There are people waiting outside to hear how you are, so I’m going to let them know.”

She wondered if he meant Brady and Ellie, as Sue had no immediate family in the state anymore. Of course, who knew how long she’d been out of it? “Can I see them?” she asked, her heart lifting.

“Soon,” he repeated. “Rest now.”

“Don’t want to,” she began, but her body apparently took the doctor’s orders better than her brain, for she quickly drifted into sleep.

* * * *

On waking from an induced coma set to see him through extensive, life-saving surgery, Cal learned he had been under for several days. Two days after regaining conscious, he was moved from ICU into a private room, and finally allowed human contact outside of the hospital staff. Bandages still covered parts of his head, and the occasional glance in the mirror revealed the scarring on his face, his only treats from Halloween.

He had just finished breakfast when the door opened to reveal a large bouquet of fall flowers, behind which Brady Garriston grinned.

“You shouldn’t have.” Cal batted his eyelashes.

“I didn’t.” Brady moved into the room and set them on a far table. “The delivery man arrived when we did and I offered to take ’em up. So,” he crossed to the bed and clasped Cal’s hand in greeting. “How you holding up?”

“I feel fine. Damn lucky there’s no paralysis considering what they said happened. There’s a plastic surgeon coming later to consult, too.”

“You’re lucky you didn’t end up like the driver of that SUV.” Brady grimaced. “Paper said he had a point-two blood alcohol level.”

Cal whistled, then shuddered at the thought that either he or Sue, or both of them, could have died. The more he thought about it, however, something in the back of his mind nagged at him. He closed his eyes to jar his memory, but Brady’s chatter made that difficult.

“Your dad’s flying in from London,” he was saying. “His plane comes in later tonight. I’ll pick him up and bring him straight here.”

“Thanks.” Cal hoped his friend hadn’t gone too much into detail about the accident to worry his father. “Where’s Ellie?”

“Right here.”

Through the open door came Brady’s wife, holding a teddy bear, followed by his lady. Sue, beaming despite her weary expression, had been discharged days earlier. “Thought you might like some more company,” Ellie said.

“Damn straight. Hey, babe.” He yearned to slip from the bed to hold his wife, but the various aches and soreness kept him at bay. He had to settle for taking her hand as Sue pulled a chair up next to the bed.

“How are you?” he asked.

Sue nodded. “Good. I was just talking with the police about the accident. They gathered enough evidence from witnesses, and it turns out I won’t be charged for hitting the oncoming car.”

Good news indeed, yet sobering. It meant the burden of the accident would be placed on the lone death that resulted from it. Grateful for this second chance at life, Cal decided they should help the others involved regardless. Sue would agree.

The brief, awkward silence that ensued broke when Brady cleared his throat. “Ellie, let’s get some coffee,” he suggested, then to Cal, “We’ll be back.” The unspoken words reflected in his eyes told Cal to make the most of his reunion with Sue, and that he and Ellie would take the scenic route to the cafeteria.

“Thanks, man.” Once they left, he leaned over to meet Sue halfway as she stood to kiss him. “I love you so damn much.”

DON'T DARE THE REAPER

"I love you, too," she said. "I don't know what I would have done if you—" Her voice cracked with a sob, and Cal shushed her with a finger to her lip.

"It's okay now, babe. We're fine. Gonna be that way for a long time. Though I'll admit I wondered for a moment there..."

He looked into her eyes and saw it—that same uncertainty he felt as he tried to sleep at night. Bits and pieces of odd scenery filtered into his dreams since the accident, as though revealing a puzzle where most of the tiles were one solid color. Seeing the expression on Sue's face, he had to ask.

"You remember something, too."

She shook her head, hesitant. "It's weird. I don't recall how long I was out after we crashed, but I do remember feeling safe at one point, and loved." Her eyes shone with unshed tears. "I was with you, but not here."

That pretty much summed up his thoughts over the past few days. He drew Sue closer for a half hug, and looked past her to the flowers on the table. "Who sent these?" he asked.

Sue pulled back, and then reached for the vase. "Brady and Ellie didn't get them?"

"No, they just took them from the delivery van."

"Huh." Sue took the card from the plastic fork sticking up from the vase and opened it. Her face paled as she glanced at the small card, enough to concern him.

"What is it?" He reached for the card without waiting for an answer, then felt faint himself as he read the words:

Get well. Looking forward to our next meeting.

Gil

He looked at Sue, who bit her lip.

"When do you think we'll meet him again?" he asked.

She shrugged. "I don't know. As long as we're together when it happens."

And together afterward, forever, Cal thought, smiling.

LEIGH ELLWOOD

About the Author

Leigh Ellwood writes spicy romances and sassy mysteries. She is the creator of the award-winning Dareville series for Phaze Books, as well as numerous shorts for Phaze and other small publishers. Readers are invited to visit LeighEllwood.com for more information on Leigh's books, and to follow Leigh's writing adventures via her blog at leighwantsfood.blogspot.com or through her Twitter at [Twitter.com/LeighEllwood](https://twitter.com/LeighEllwood).