

(Every character depicted in the story below is a consenting legal adult over the age of 18)

A/N: Raven has had it rough...

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For the first time in her life Raven doesn't hear *his* voice. It seems impossible. He's been present every moment of every day for as far back as she can remember. Always lurking in the back of her mind. Always waiting for her control to weaken so he can try and push her over the edge.

Her nights have been filled with torture, him taking her dreams and turning them into nightmare without fail. Everyone she's ever gotten close to, shown in horrifically gory states... when he's not trying to use the ones she finds attractive as evidence of why she should give in to him so she can enslave them and have them 'serve' underneath her.

She was lucky to have had a mother who raised her right, lucky to have a place like Azarath to grow up in. If not... Raven would have likely succumbed to her father's maddening whispers as a child. It was only thanks to her mother and their people that she'd stayed strong, fortified by the magics of the mystic society of Azarath.

Unfortunately, even Azarath could not contend against Trigon forever. That Raven had made it to adulthood before the destruction of her home was quite frankly a feat in and of itself... but now she was all alone, a woman adrift in a world that she didn't fully understand.

Earth was nothing like Azarath. Its people were disparate, the sense of community felt so much... thinner. Despite how many humans lived in this one city she found herself in, they all moved among each other without truly seeing one another. Passing each other by and going about their lives without ever truly registering one another's existence.

It was too much. Raven was all alone and Trigon, her father, had been taking advantage of that fact as much as possible, steadily bombarding her ever since she was forced to flee Azarath and come to Earth. She was weakening and they both knew it... Raven hadn't been sure how much longer she could hold on by herself.

And then... *salvation*. Raven could think of no other way to describe it. She'd been curled up in a ball crying when a voice had called out to her. Raven had tensed up, having had others feign concern before. They'd had... less than stellar intentions and she'd been forced to defend herself from them.

But this voice... this voice was different. He sounded rather reluctant to be talking to her in the first place. Like he was checking on her more out of obligation than anything opportunistic. And ultimately, he'd seemed to talk himself out of helping her and had sounded like he was preparing to leave her alone again.

Only... before he'd left, he'd done something. He'd cast a spell on her, one the likes of which Raven had never felt before. Even Azarath with its purging incantations designed to remove all evils from its denizens bodies hadn't been able to do the same for Raven. No matter what rituals she took part in, no matter what magic the Azarathians cast on her, none of it kept Trigon's voice from her head.

So what was this? How had this young man, who couldn't be much older or younger than Raven herself, silenced the voice of evil with barely a wave of his hand?

"I-I'm sorry! It was just a simple cleaning spell! I was just making your cloak nice again!"

Raven blinks as his panicked words wash over her. Only then does she realize how she must look, how she's acting. Here he is, her salvation... and she's holding him by the shirt, all but threatening him as she shouts in his face.

Immediately, she lets go. And then she thinks to herself 'but what if he runs away?' and she reaches out, grabbing onto him again. The man yelps at this, even as Raven makes sure not to grip so hard this time... instead, she just... holds him. So he can't go anywhere.

Then, she turns his words over in her head. A simple cleaning spell? That sounded utterly ridiculous. How could a simple cleaning spell possibly hold back the-

Daughter. You thought you could escape me so easily? What is this pathetic mortal you've discovered?

In an instant, Trigon's voice returns and Raven's eyes bulge as she shudders in horror. Immediately, she looks to her salvation.

"C-Cast it again! Please!"

Daughter, you-!

Thankfully, he does as she asks, another wave of his hand silencing Trigon's voice once more. Only temporarily though... the magic lasts for mere minutes at best. Almost as much of a curse as it is a blessing, really... because now that she's had said minutes of blessed silence, hearing his voice again had brought Raven closer to breaking than she'd been in years.

Panting, chest heaving with every breath, Raven lowers her head.

"Thank... thank you. Please, um... please continue to cast that on me every so often if you would. It... helps."

"Err... sure, but could you maybe let me go? You're still holding onto my shirt."

Lifting her head back up, Raven bites her lower lip for a moment in thought.

"Will you... will you run if I do?"

The young man glances back to the mouth of the alley from whence he came and grimaces.

“... Fuck it. No, I won’t run.”

She believes him. He’d considered it for sure, but ultimately he decides to stay put. And so Raven lets go of him, taking half a step back. She’s hesitant to put distance between them honestly, because what if she goes outside of his range and she has to wait for him to get closer before casting his spell again.

Thankfully he takes her previous request seriously and almost absently casts another spell at her once she lets him go. Then, he straightens out his clothes.

“Thanks. I’m Cole by the way, just in case you were wondering.”

She hadn’t been, admittedly. She’d been far more focused on what he could do over who he was. Still, Raven knows her mother would be ashamed in her for being so impolite...

“Ah... I’m Raven. W-Well met, Cole.”

Cole nods, even as he shoots off another spell at her. Each time Raven tenses up just a little bit... it’s certainly not in her nature to allow someone to cast magic on her over and over again like this. And yet... she’ll let Cole do whatever he wants to her, so long as he keeps Trigon’s voice at bay.

That doesn’t mean she’s not still curious, however.

“What... what *are* you?”

Cole’s face scrunches up in adorable confusion and consternation, his eyes drifting up and down her figure.

“Err... human last I checked. Shouldn’t I be asking you that, really? No offense but... you’re clearly not from around here...”

Raven stiffens, glancing down at herself. Yes, she knew she did not look... native to Earth. Her grey skin aside, she was still clad in the attire of an Azarathian, her midnight blue cloak and leotard both setting her apart from what she'd seen most Earthlings wearing.

"... I am technically from here. On my mother's side. She was born on Earth before being taken in by the people of Azarath."

Cole furrows his brow, even as he casts another of his spells.

"Azarath huh? Never heard of it..."

No, that doesn't surprise her. Or maybe it does. On the one hand, Raven was well aware that Azarath was not known to most of the denizens of Earth. On the other hand, if anyone was going to know about the other dimension, then it would be a mystic practitioner would it not? And that seemed to be what Cole was...

"Who taught you your magic, Cole? Who showed you how to cast these... 'cleaning spells'?"

He was too young to be a Master of any sort. Which meant he almost certainly had a teacher, right? And if Cole was capable of silencing Trigon's voice for minutes, what might a mentor of his be capable of? Could they perhaps silence Trigon... indefinitely?

Raven foolishly allows herself to feel a flicker of hope in that regard, only for Cole to stare blankly for a moment before shaking his head.

"Sorry, nobody taught me anything. I just... had this power one day and I've been using it ever since. Bit of trial and error involved of course, but luckily I'm not throwing around fire balls or lightning bolts so the property damage has been kept to a minimum... can't exactly do much harm with cleaning magic, now can I?"

Nobody taught him anything. He was... self-taught? No, more than that, he had awakened into his power rather than being trained. It was innate, much in the same way her own power was. Unfortunately, that meant that there was no Master of Cole's magic for her to go to and beg for their help.

It wasn't the end of the world though. It just meant that...

"Please, let me come with you."

Cole blinks, before flicking out his hand again to cast another spell on her. Then, he focuses on her request.

"Uh... sorry? I'm not sure that's possible..."

Raven nods. She understands how ridiculous her request is. But maybe if she can explain...

"You are right to question my origins, Cole. My mother was human and born here on Earth. But my father... my father was not of Azarath as you might have assumed. My father is Trigon the Terrible, an extremely powerful Demon Lord who wants nothing more than to break through into this dimension and harvest the Earth for his own ends."

Cole's eyes get progressively wider as Raven continues her explanation.

"... He hopes to do so through me. All my life, he's been in my head trying to break me down, trying to turn me towards his purposes. If I give in, if I surrender... he'll use me as a portal to Earth and everyone on this planet will die horribly."

Raven flicks her gaze down to Cole's hands pointedly... and he casts his spell on her again before her father's voice can come through once more. Letting out a sigh of relief, she gestures to him.

"You are the first person I've ever met who can silence him, Cole. Not even the most powerful mystics of Azarath could block my connection to my father. But

you... you can shut him up with a wave of your hand. You aren't casting 'cleaning' magic... you're casting something much stronger than that. Purifying or Cleansing would be a better word for what you're capable of."

Cole's face scrunches up again as he shakes his head.

"But that... that doesn't make any sense. I can't even conquer the dinginess of a laundromat yet. And you're telling me I'm capable of no-selling a Demon Lord?"

Raven shrugs... which naturally causes her chest to bounce and jiggle a little bit. Cole's eyes are subconsciously drawn down as a result, something she most definitely makes note of. Her body... she's never had cause to use her body for such things before... but she's also never had someone like Cole in front of her before either.

"I cannot explain how it is you do what you do, Cole. Only that you are doing it. You and you alone are keeping Trigon from my mind."

DAUGH!

Trigon's voice suddenly blares in the back of Raven's mind, but fortunately Cole sees her start to react and shoots out his hand again, silencing the increasingly infuriated Demon Lord once more.

"... He's furious..."

Raven's words come in a whisper, even as she stares off at nothing in particular. A shudder runs down her spine and she shuts her eyes for a moment before opening them again with a sigh.

"Perhaps you're right. I cannot ask this of you... to throw away your life just to help me. If we stay together, Trigon will send his agents after both of us. He will do everything he can to see you dead. Right here and now is your only chance to escape. If you go, he will no doubt forget about you soon enough as he returns to tormenting me without delay."

Silence stretches out for a long moment until Raven eventually looks over to see Cole staring at her wordlessly. Finally, he finds his voice.

“But you... you’ll be stuck with him in your head. Trying to break you down. And you said... you said if he succeeds he’ll use you to come to Earth and wipe us all out?”

Raven grimaces but nods all the same. Cole takes a moment to think about that even as he casts another spell at her. Until finally...

“Fuuuuuck me. This is what I get for sticking my nose in other people’s business...”

She feels a glimmer of hope, even as he groans and looks up at the rapidly darkening sky overhead for a beat. Until finally, he looks back to her.

“Alright. You can come with me.”

Raven’s eyes widen and she can’t help but make a noise of surprise in the back of her throat.

“T-Truly?”

Huffing, Cole shrugs.

“I’ll... we’ll figure something out. I’m not just going to let you face your demon father on your own, not when it’s the fate of the goddamn world at stake. I happen to live here, you know?”

Reaching up and scratching his cheek with a finger, Cole looks around for a moment.

“... I assume you don’t have anywhere else to go right? No stuff to pick up? What I see is what I get?”

Blinking, Raven slowly nods.

"I... yes. I have nothing but the clothes on my back. I am ready to depart when you are."

Absently, Cole throws out another cleaning spell... before glancing down at his hands with a frown.

"This is going to get ridiculous if I have to keep waving my hands at you every couple minutes..."

Raven bites her lower lip... and then impulsively steps forward, grabbing one of Cole's hands in her own. He stiffens at the contact, even as she intertwines their fingers together.

"Try... try just a trickle of magic. Rather than casting the spell, just send a bit of your magic through my hand."

He frowns at that but focuses all the same, trying out what she's suggesting. After a moment, Raven feels something... a shiver down her spine as a foreign sensation washes through her body. Then, she keeps feeling it even as they stand there in silence for a couple of tense minutes. Cole doesn't cast his spell again... but Trigon's voice also doesn't come back either.

"Is it working?"

Blushing slightly at the concern she hears in his voice, Raven nods.

"Y-Yes... yes, it's working."

"Alright then. I guess this works... so let's get going, it's getting dark."

"Ah... yes, let's."

And with that, hand in hand with her savior, Raven finds herself walking out of the alley and down the street. This time, the hope that builds within her is not so easily extinguished. Maybe... maybe everything will work out after all.

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A/N: Remember to Vote, leave a Like, and let me know what you think!