

Immortal Sin

by Jennifer Pelland

It's easy to dispose of a dead body when you're a doctor.

There was no way Alex could let Cassie live after she'd humiliated him so completely. He'd even divorced his wife for her, and the penance his priest had laid on him had been steep. But when he told Cassie this, she just blinked and said, "But sir, we're not even dating."

"Alex. My name is Alex Denton. I'm a surgeon and researcher at the New England Medical College, remember?" A small whimper crept into his voice, and he hated himself for it.

She demurely bent at the knees to set his whisky sour down on his mahogany table, the small gold cross around her neck glinting as it caught the light. "I think it's kind of sweet that someone your age would have a crush on me, but I have a boyfriend already."

"Is it the divorce?" Alex asked, the plush seating beneath him suddenly feeling like shards of glass. "Because I'm getting it annulled, so our marriage won't be a sin. It's easy. We had to arrange one for my first wife, but—"

"Marriage?" Cassie's eyes widened, and her shocked expression quickly flowed into laughter. "Oh sir, that's funny. You had me going there." She wagged a finger at him and shook her head, her long, brown ponytail swishing behind her.

Alex felt the blood draining from his face. "No, I—I'm not joking. We should be married before we—" He looked down at the hands twisting in his lap. This wasn't going how he'd planned. The Church had rules for a reason. Cassie was Catholic, she should know that. Then again, when he was her age, he hadn't cared much about the rules either. But now that he was older and couldn't ignore his mortality, he'd had to work hard to make up for his earlier lapses so he could lessen his time in Purgatory and keep out of Hell. And this time, he'd get married before having sex. With Cassie.

When he looked back up at her, her elegant eyebrows were raised high, and small furrows marred the corners of her perfect red lips. "You're serious, aren't you?" she asked. "You left your wife for me? We don't even know each other."

He struggled to breathe, struggled to get words through

his too-dry mouth. "But...we talk. When I told you that my wife didn't respect me, you understood. And when I said I wanted kids and she didn't, you—"

"Small talk, sir. It's part of my job." She gave a one-shouldered shrug. "Honestly, the tips are better that way. I'm trying to pay for grad school."

"But—" His hand shot out for her wrist before he realized what he was doing.

She startled back before he could connect with anything other than her cuff, shot a quick look over her shoulder, caught another waitress' eye, and edged away from his table. "I'm really sorry," she said. "I have to go bring someone else his drink. Why don't I have Marlie take over your table, okay?"

Alex watched her walk away, his porcelain-skinned angel, the woman who was supposed to bear his children, the bitch who'd misled him all this time just for tips. All this time she'd been listening to his problems, laughing at his jokes, wiping up when he spilled, and never once troubling him with her own problems—all things that sloppy, selfish Alison had refused to do. How could she treat him like that for money? What kind of a whore was she?

Alex left immediately. He never went back to the Teardrop Lounge again. Not for drinks. But two days later he hid in the shadows behind his car, a chloroform-soaked rag in his hand, waiting for her shift to end. As usual, she left ten minutes before her coworkers did so she could catch the Night Owl bus. He had her all to himself. When she passed his car, he darted forward and covered her mouth and nose with the rag, holding her tiny body tight while she briefly struggled, then sagged unconscious in his arms. Quickly, before anyone could see them, he stuffed her into a body bag with practiced motions, checked to make sure he'd left no sign of their struggle behind, carried her to the backseat of his car, then injected her with lidocaine to stop her heart.

No one saw him sneak in the New England Medical loading dock door and stuff her body in the basement incinerator at two a.m. No one noticed him when he snuck back out two hours later with a paper sack. He dumped her bone chunks in Boston Harbor, then walked six blocks to St.