

DEVLIN'S DESCENT



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Chapter Five
"Itsy Bitsy Spider"

Devlin awoke.

In the thin twilight creeping into the room, he saw Daniel. The boy was standing by a boarded-over window, thin, hazy rays of light shining through his body. The air itself was filthy with dust, and Daniel seemed to be moving through the dust without being touched by it. There was an aura surrounding him that seemed to deflect the filth and light and made him seem more whole.

Devlin watched as the boy moved. He sat down on the dirty floor and started mumbling something. At first Devlin could not make out what it was; but, as the boy sang, he realized the child was singing a nursery rhyme. It was *Itsy Bitsy Spider*.

"Itsy bitsy spider went up the water spout," the boy sang with a glee Devlin no longer understood. "*Down came the rain and washed the spider out....*"

Then, Daniel stopped.

He turned and looked at his father. His head moved in a robotic, unnatural way. It gave Devlin chills.

"Hello Daddy," he said.

Devlin said nothing in reply. The experience in the shower at the Texaco station had been hours ago. He had come to think of it as a delusion, something he had conjured up in his mind while on a Pus High. Now, looking at the boy, he was beginning to doubt his own sanity. *How could a boy, aborted six months ago by his mother, be sitting on the floor in front of him, looking all of six or seven years old, singing a nursery rhyme that Devlin hadn't heard in decades?* It didn't just seem insane; it was insane.

"You wanna sing with me, Daddy?" Daniel asked. He didn't wait for his father's reply; he started to sing. "Itsy Bit-

sy Spider, la la la la la la." He smiled at his Dad. "I forgot the words. Do you remember them?"

Devlin did remember the words. There had been a time, many years in the past now, that he and Caroline had sang karaoke at a neighborhood bar. Caroline would get drunk on red wine and insist on singing. Devlin always let her. He loved the sound of her voice, even if she had a slight perchance for tone deafness. And, one of Caroline's favorite performers was Carly Simon. Carly had done a rendition of "Itsy Bitsy Spider" on one of her albums and, by chance, it had been on the roster of karaoke songs.

Caroline had been delighted to discover the song on the roster, and she insisted on singing it.

Devlin could still remember Caroline, wobbling half drunkenly, singing "Itsy Bitsy Spider."

"Yes, I remember the song," Devlin told Daniel.

"I thought you would," Daniel replied. He stood and strolled toward his father, little huffs of dust blowing up from the floor as his feet feel onto the hardwood. In his passage, Devlin could see the imprints of his tiny little feet. "It was one of her favorite songs. She sang it every chance she got."

Devlin nodded. "Those were good times."

Daniel stopped in front of him. "You can still hear her singing, can't you?"

"Yes."

"Some souls have songs," Daniel told him. "Did you know that?"

Devlin had no response to the statement. It was something so weird, so unorthodox, that he had never considered it. But, then again, there were many things he had not considered or thought of before the Green Pus had come into his life. Part of him wished the Pus had never opened up his mind. He had liked being naïve, knowing only his small little world, even if that world had come crashing down on him in a moment of betrayal. But, the Pus had changed all that. It had created a monster where a man had been. A monster that Devlin wasn't quite certain he could control.

It scared him.

And, it thrilled him at the same time.

"Yeah, I knew that," he told Daniel. And, he supposed he did know that. His own soul had a song in it. He had once read a quote by Henry David Thoreau that had stayed with him through the years. It said: "*Most men lead lives of quiet desperation and go to the grave with the song still in them.*" It rang as poetic and true when he had read it, and it still rang true today. He could think of very few things that stayed true over the course of one's life (certainly not love in his case) but the words of a long-dead environmentalist had clung to him when everything else had failed him.

In a way, he found a certain comfort in that.

"Souls have colors, too," Daniel said. "Can you see mine?"

Devlin looked at his aborted son. At first, he saw nothing. Then, he realized that the aura that surrounded the boy did, indeed, have a color. It was a soft red color and, in the twilight of the room, had been practically undiscernable to him. It was only when he concentrated, looked for it, that he saw.

"Yes, I do," he told Daniel.

"It's red," Daniel replied. "Do you know why it's red?"

"No."

"I never had a life. Red is an angry color. I have anger in my heart." Daniel stood up from the filth floor and dust fell from his body in wispy clouds. "I was torn from the womb, though, and the pain of that gave my soul this color. Do you understand?"

Devlin thought about it. He could see the red aura around his son clearly now; it had always been there; but, like so many other things in life, Devlin had ignored its existence until it had been thrust upon him.

"Yes," Devlin said. "Pain causes anger, and pain made your aura red."

Daniel smiled. "The funny thing is, though — I'm not angry anymore. Once I met you, realized how weak a man you are, I knew there was no reason to be angry at you. You're a

puppet. How can I be mad at a puppet? You were used, just like me.”

Daniel walked to his side and touched his father. Devlin felt a chill run down his spine at the boy’s cold touch. He turned and saw Daniel’s hand on his shoulder. The fingers were sunk into his flesh a good quarter of an inch, and his red aura was now overpowered by the bright red aura that Devlin realized he possessed, himself.

He looked up into Daniel’s face.

“They have her, you know?” Daniel asked.

“Yeah,” Devlin replied. In his sleep, he had dreamed. But, it really hadn’t been a dream, had it? Devlin wondered these days if anything going on in his mind was a fantasy. There was a thin line he had crossed, a mental barrier that far too few people had ever traveled beyond. He found himself wondering if he was an explorer, the first of his kind to make it this far. He thought, maybe, he was. It didn’t scare him. The Pus had taken away any fear he had. That, and life. Life had turned him from a loving, caring husband into something he hardly recognized in the mirror. There was still some humanity behind those eyes, but there was also something else now. He wasn’t for sure what that something else was; but, whatever it was, it had given him the power to see things without actually being there, and the power to manipulate the minds of others.

And, that wasn’t all. He had only begun to grasp through the thin veil that clouded his consciousness the things that lay beyond. He could almost see them, but they remained just out of his reach and sight.

Another dose of Green Pus, he told himself. *Undiluted*. It would open up those dark regions and release whatever lay beyond that veil.

He knew that the knowledge that lay beyond would forever change him, but he didn’t care anymore. The only person he had ever cared for had deserted him, aborted their child, and destroyed whatever semblance of a normal future that might lay ahead of him.

And, still, The Little Man mocked him.

He had seen The Little Man with his wife, Caroline. He saw what The Little Man did to Caroline. His wife. His love. And, now, now that he was as wide awake as a Pus Head could get, he realized he had seen an aura around Caroline and The Little Man as well. The Little Man's aura had been a dark, rich red. Evil, Devlin thought. Red is evil. Everyone knows that.

But, when he had looked at Caroline with his mind's eye, he saw a green glow about her. It didn't take a rocket scientist to know that The Little Man had given her a dosage of Green Pus. Devlin knew the effects of Green Pus on the sex drive, having been subjected to several Pus orgies by The Little Man. He could still feel The Little Man's eyes as he observed the orgy, the sinister smile as he realized that his drug could make people do things they normally wouldn't do. It gave him power over people, and that was what The Little Man was all about. Megalomania had found its way into his soul, and he would not surrender that power without a fight.

Devlin hoped to bring that fight to him.

"Fuck her," Devlin said. "She betrayed me."

He looked up at Daniel after that, the thin aura about him changing from red to pink to yellow. He illuminated the room like a small, failing sun.

"You know you won't leave it at that," Daniel said.

"Who says?"

"I do."

Devlin looked at the boy. He still wasn't quite sure if the child was a figment of his drugged imagination or not, but the boy was right. No matter how hard he tried, how much he wanted to, he would not leave Caroline to The Little Man. *Why?* Well, he wasn't quite for sure about that. He knew that there was a part of him that still loved Caroline, but it wasn't just that. At least, he didn't think so. The Little Man didn't deserve the power that he had over people, and Devlin knew that he was the only person on the planet would could combat the little bastard with a remote chance at winning. Devlin

would fight him because it was the right thing to do. Left unchecked, The Little Man would continue his experiments with the Green Pus, perhaps finding another subject like Devlin who had survived it in its purest form. If that happened, Devlin knew, trouble would follow. Devlin knew the scope of the power that he possessed — even if he didn't completely understand it — and the thought of another person on the planet with the abilities he possessed was frightening. And, what was even more frightening — The Little Man would figure out a way to combat those powers. He would become the puppet master to the puppet, and that scared the living hell out of Devlin. If he could figure out how to control that person, he would eventually try to control Devlin as well. It was something he could not allow to happen.

That was the foremost reason Devlin would challenge The Little Man.

Or, at least, he told himself that.

But, looking into the face of a child who had been denied existence because of his and Caroline's inadequacies, he knew there was another reason as well.

"You see it, don't you?" Daniel asked.

"Yes," Devlin replied. "But how?"

"How doesn't matter," Daniel told him as he stepped back. "All that really matters is that we are together, father and son, and that is how it was meant to be."

Devlin stood. The Pus had run its course and he would be jittery with the need for more soon; but, for now, he was all right.

He walked to Daniel and looked at the boy. There was no denying the boy was his own flesh and blood, so to speak. His eyes were like a clear blue sky, shining at him. He reached out and tried to touch the boy. His hand passed through him.

"I'm not solid," the boy said. "I'm not on the same plane of existence that you are. It's only because that green stuff opened up your mind that I can speak to you at all."

"I know," Devlin said.

Daniel shook his head. "No, you don't. You think you

know, but you don't know the half of what you're capable of. I found you. You didn't find me. You'd sit here and let your life slide by you if I hadn't come along. Maybe Mom was right; you are pathetic."

Devlin felt a wave of warmth flush his face. Anger surged through him, but he channeled it. The Pus had given him so many abilities. It also opened his mind to possibilities that he would not have previously explored.

"She said that?"

Daniel nodded. "While that asshole Joseph was prodding her," he said. "They were laughing at you. He was having sex with your wife while I was inside her and they were laughing at you!"

Devlin sat back down on the mattress. Part of him felt nothing. That was the part that wanted nothing more than a good Green Pus buzz and some Pus whore straddling him. It was what he had become since he'd left Caroline. But, the other part, the part that remembered that he had loved the woman felt ashamed. Ashamed not only for himself, but for his unborn son who had been subjected to the experience.

"I need to feel it," Devlin told him. "Can you show me?"

"You won't like it," Daniel replied.

Devlin scoffed at that. "There are a lot of things that I don't like in life. I've been kicked around a lot recently. I can handle it."

"Okay," Daniel said, "but don't say I didn't warn you."

Daniel reached out his hand and touched his father on the forehead. Devlin was not surprised that the boy was able to physically touch him. For some reason, it made sense. He had not been able to do that, but Daniel's powers were different. They came from somewhere else completely.

Daniel looked into his father's eyes. "Are you sure?"

"Yes," was all Devlin could say.

"Hold on then."

Daniel's blue eyes peered into his father's blue eyes and nothing seemed to happen for a moment. Then, very slowly, Devlin felt a pressure in his frontal lobe. At first, he thought

Daniel was gripping his skull tighter; but, he quickly realized that was not the case. Daniel's physical being had dissipated into a thin, white haze.

Daniel had slid inside Devlin's mind again.

And his memories flowed.

Devlin gasped as he found himself in the cool comfort of the womb. His eyes were closed, but he could feel everything. The darkness was complete. He could hear Caroline's voice. It wasn't muffled, as he had thought it would be. He could hear her quite clearly.

"We don't have much time," she was saying. "He'll be home soon."

Devlin could detect movement. There were sounds, soft and almost indiscernible. He knew what was happening, though. He had probably been standing outside the window of the bedroom at the time, or at least on his way home to stand there. Caroline was taking her clothes off. Her lover was undressing as well. He felt more motion and then a small pinhole of light came streaming into the darkness. Devlin turned his attention to that pinhole.

Devlin knew that he was looking through the placenta and down the corridor of Caroline's vagina.

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Caroline stood and gravity did its work.

The spider slid down her legs with the rest of what Joseph had deposited in her.

Devlin saw it fall onto the floor and scurry off.

Then, Daniel broke the link with Devlin. "You know what happened next," Daniel told him.

"Yes," Devlin said. The whole experience bewildered him. How did The Little Man know about Daniel? Devlin hadn't even known. Part of him was happy that The Little Man had not been able to get at Daniel. The other part was angry that Caroline had destroyed the child.

"He didn't love her," Daniel told him. "The Little Man sent him to her to seduce her. The spider was supposed to burrow into me."

"But why?"

Daniel shook his head. "I don't know....but you need to find out."

"I will," Devlin told him. "I promise."

"I know you will. And you'll save her, won't you?"

"I'll try."

"That's all I can ask," Daniel said. He stepped away from Devlin and looked out the window. "It's a crazy world out there, Dad. Be careful."

He turned and looked at Devlin. Slowly, like a morning mist dissipating in the sun, Daniel faded away. As he faded, he began to hum "Itsy Bitsy Spider" again.

Then, he was gone.

Devlin sat alone on the mattress. There were so many questions he had. He knew that The Little Man had taken Caroline, and that he had done it to draw him back into his lair.

Like a spider, The Little Man was spinning a web, hoping to catch a fly.

Devlin was that fly.