

# DEVLIN'S DESCENT



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# **Chapter Seven: “Fortunate Son”**

Caroline awoke in a dark room. At first, she thought she was at home, alone in her bed. It was a comforting feeling, but it didn't last long. Her memory slowly crept back, and she remembered. Her head throbbed. She touched her temple, hoping her touch would make the pain go away. It didn't. She felt around in the darkness, looking for a light, but there was none. So, she lay back on the comfortable mattress and tried to remember what had happened to her.

She remembered The Little Man with the bright red hair. She remembered him crawling on top of her and having his way with her. She had not found him attractive — she'd found him painfully ugly, truth be told — but he had drugged her. She thought maybe that she was now The Little Man's sex slave or some such thing. The thought didn't seem to make sense to her, though. If he'd wanted a sex slave, he could have easily kidnapped a younger, prettier, better built woman. So, there was an ulterior motive in her capture, and she didn't know what it was.

She tried to rise out of bed, but her pounding head sent her falling back into the pillow. She didn't move for a moment. "What the hell did he give me?" She asked the dark, quiet room.

As if in answer, the lights came on.

And, they were bright.

Very bright.

She held her hand in front of her eyes, shielding them from the light, but it did very little good for her headache.

She heard a sound, and looked in the direction of the sound. The door to the room opened, and a man was standing there.

"Hello, Caroline," he said.

Caroline's headache was forgotten at that moment. She

recognized the man.

It was Joseph.

“What are you doing here?” she asked. She sat up on her elbows. It was only then, in the light, that she realized on a thin, white robe covered her naked body.

She didn’t bother to cover herself; Joseph had seen it all before, anyway.

Joseph stepped into the room further. In the brilliant light, he seemed almost angelic. He wore a white robe that coalesced with the light. It made him look like a disembodied, floating head. But, as he grew closer, she could make out the contours of his body.

He sat at the edge of the bed.

“I came to see you,” he told her,

“But, where am I?”

He reached out and laid his hand on her hand. “I need your help,” he told her. His expression was one of sincerity. “Will you help me?”

Caroline grasped his hand. “I don’t understand,” she told him. “What’s going on here? Where am I?”

“You’re in a lab.”

“A lab?”

Joseph nodded. “Yes.” He ran his hand up her arm and stroked it. “You may not believe it, but you are here for the betterment of mankind.”

Caroline pushed away from him. She moved back on the bed, trying desperately to crawl through the wall and out of the building. But, she was stuck there and there was nothing she could do. Once again, she recalled the previous night in snippets — The Little Man, the drugs, the way they had made her feel. How that was for the betterment of anything was beyond her.

And Joseph? Well, he had deserted her in her time of need, really. Sure, Devlin had beaten him to within an inch of his life, but Devlin was incarcerated and that freed her up to be with him. And, she did love Joseph. Why? Well, she wasn’t quite sure. He was the polar opposite of Devlin. Devlin had

his insecurities; Joseph was confident to the point of arrogance. Caroline had found that intriguing at first; but, now, she wasn't quite sure what to think. She knew that Devlin had loved her, that he would have done anything in the world for her, and she had betrayed that. Part of her felt immensely guilty for having destroyed Devlin. And, she had destroyed the man. She had taken his life and turned it upside down, then walked away and not looked back. She didn't even know where Devlin was these days.

She looked up into Joseph's eyes. They were such sincere eyes. How could she not believe anything the man told her?

"Why am I here?" she asked him.

Joseph flinched at the question, but only for a second. "You're special, Caroline," he told her. He touched her arm again. "Not just to me, but to the world."

"I still don't understand."

"I'm not exactly sure about it, myself." He smiled. "But your last doctor's visit reported something that makes you special."

Caroline regarded him. "My doctor? What the hell are you talking about?"

Joseph tried to smile. "I know," he said.

"You know what?"

"About the baby."

Caroline's eyes grew wide. Hardly a day had passed since the abortion that she hadn't thought about the decision she had made. At the time, it seemed to be the right choice. She had been in love with Joseph and he had deserted her. In a sense, she supposed, aborting their child had been her way of getting back at him for not returning to her. He had killed their relationship; she had killed their child.

Now, with time, she had come to understand that. She had aborted the child because she didn't want to be a single parent, didn't want the sole responsibility of another life in her hands. It had been a selfish act on her part but, then again, betraying her marriage with Joseph had been a selfish act, too, hadn't it?

Still, now that she sat there and stared into Joseph's hazel eyes, she found herself questioning the decision she had made. There were consequences for every action, and she was paying for her own actions now.

Joseph rubbed her arm. "I love you. You know that, don't you?"

"Then why did you leave?"

Joseph turned his head. "Guilt, I guess. After what happened.....well, I thought taking some time away from things might be a good idea. Get a new perspective on things. Give you a chance to think about us and what we meant to one another."

"That still doesn't explain why I'm here," Caroline said. "Why I'm locked in this little room and why that little red-haired man drugged me and....." She trailed off. She didn't know if Joseph knew what had happened after The Little Man drugged her. She tried to think that he would want defend her honor. She wasn't sure that was the truth.

Joseph bent forward and kissed her. At first, she did not return the kiss. But, he was such a good kisser. The moment he had initially kissed her, she knew that she would sleep with him.

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Slowly, she allowed passion to creep into her kiss. Then, there was no holding back.

"I've missed you," she said, whispering in between kisses.

"I've missed you, too," he said.

This time, the spider found no fetus to block its way, and swam unimpeded into her womb and nestled itself there.

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"I love you," she said. They now lay on the bed together, Caroline's head nestled in the junction of his shoulder and arm.

"I love you, too," he replied. His tone was sincere, but there was a certain hollowness to it that she did not pick up on.

"Why am I here, Joe?" she asked.

"Take a shower," he said. "Get dressed. There's something I need to show you." He pointed at her clothing, which had been neatly folded and placed on the dresser in the far corner of the room, just by the door. Caroline had not noticed them there before, and she found herself wondering if Joseph had brought them with him. She didn't ask, though. Instead, she stood. Her tall, sleek body glowed in the intense light and Joseph said, "You're beautiful."

She turned and smiled, her teeth shining. At that moment, regardless of how awkward the situation was, she felt content.

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She showered and donned the clothing Joseph had brought her. They were white surgical scrubs and the material felt coarse against her bra-less breast. Joseph watched her dress, then he got up off the bed and walked to the door.

"Come with me," he told her.

He opened the door and the light from outside was even brighter than it was inside the room. "Why's it so bright around here?" she asked him.

Joseph took her hand and led her out into the hallway, not bothering to answer the question. *Perhaps*, she thought, *he*

*didn't know the answer.* Or, perhaps, the answer was a secret. She thought that she trusted the man; He wouldn't put her in harm's way, would he? No, she didn't think so. Still, as they navigated through the hallway, she wondered.

They passed several rooms. The doors were all closed but there were windows and she managed to see inside one of them as they passed. It appeared to be something like a waiting room. It, too, was brilliantly lit, but she saw several people in the room walking about. In the light, they seemed to be floating.

Joseph led her further down the hallway, and the floor started to descend. It was a mild incline that she hardly noticed at first.

"Where are we going?" she asked him.

"You'll see," he told her. "It's not much farther now."

They walked on. With each step, Caroline felt less and less at ease with the situation. After all, she'd been brought here against her will, basically drugged and raped by the little redhaired man, and thrown into a room. Why or how Joseph was here still evaded her somehow, but she was thankful he was. He was a familiar face and smile in a strange world. In a way, he grounded her back into to reality.

*If you could call this reality,* she thought.

The hallway opened up into a chamber. She saw that there were several doors lining the walls and she thought of THE PRICE IS RIGHT. She fully expected Monty Hall to step out from behind some hidden curtain and offer her a prize behind one of those closed doors.

Instead, The Little Man did.

He walked out of a door to their far left. He was dressed in a jet black three-piece suit, and Caroline tried desperately to recall if it was the same one she had met him in the night before.

Or, had it been several nights? She wasn't certain now. She knew that the little bastard had drugged her and had sex with her. Now, looking at his ugly little redheaded face, she felt repulsed at the thought she had allowed him into the

sanctity of her womb.

"Hello, boss," Joseph said.

Caroline turned and looked at him. *He's your boss? The expression on her face said. How the hell can that be?*

"Hello, Joseph," The Little Man replied. "I see you've brought Caroline to the reunion."

"Reunion?" Caroline asked.

The Little Man smiled. "Yes," he said. "And it'll be a joyous one, I hope."

Caroline looked at Joseph. The expression on the man's face told her everything she needed to know. She'd slept with him almost daily for six months and she thought she knew the man well because of it. Now, she wasn't quite so sure. Part of her wanted to turn and run back along the corridor they had come down and try to escape. But, she knew that would not be allowed. She wouldn't make it very far before she was captured and dragged back here. She'd been brought there for a reason and, even if she didn't know what it was, she was there and that was where she was going to stay.

"I hope you two lovebirds had a chance to get reacquainted?" The Little Man asked.

"Yes," Joseph told him.

The Little Man nodded his head. "That's good. You'll be spending plenty of time together in the near future."

Caroline couldn't resist any longer. "Why am I here?" she asked.

The Little Man regarded her a moment, then smiled. "You're here, my dear, because of the choices you made in life. Those choices brought you to this place, to this point in time. Do you understand?"

"No," she said, and she didn't.

"Well, then, let me enlighten you," he said. He turned and walked to the second door from the left and keyed in a code into the touch pad there. He smiled at Caroline as he opened the door. "Ladies first," he said.

Caroline shot Joseph a glance. He, too, smiled at her, albeit nervously.

"What's inside?" she asked.

"The future," The Little Man told her. "Please," he motioned for her to enter. "You'll find the answers to all your questions inside. I promise."

*Yeah, like your promise means a lot,* she thought. She reached out and took Joseph's hand. He held it and, together, they walked into what appeared to be some form of airlock. The Little Man stepped inside, closed the door, then walked to another keypad and entered another code.

The door slid open.

Inside, the lighting was normal, and Caroline's eyes had to adjust before she could fully see what lay beyond. Joseph, still holding her hand, led her into the room.

The room was white and sterile smelling. It was as large as an aircraft hangar, and lined with large glass cylinders. It took Caroline a moment to register what was inside the cylinders. When she did, she gasped.

Each cylinder contained a body.

"Welcome to The Womb," The Little Man said. He walked forward, his arms spreading out as he did so. "At least, that's what we call it. The Womb."

Caroline walked up to one of the tanks. The body inside was that of a young boy, roughly ten years old, she guessed. But, there was something abnormal about the body. The face had no definition to it. There was no hair. Indeed, the child's body looked like it wasn't really covered in flesh at all...just something that remotely resembled flesh.

"I don't understand," Caroline said.

"Oh, you will," The Little Man replied, his perpetual smile still plastered on his face. "Follow me."

They walked further into the room and Caroline saw a handful of techs in white robes working at computer consoles. They did not look up as she passed.

"We've been following you with a certain interest, Caroline," The Little Man said. "We like to cover all our bases."

"I don't understand."

"You don't need to understand," The Little Man told her.

He motioned to Joseph, and Joseph grabbed her.

“What the,,,,,” But those were the only words she got out.

By that time, The Little Man had grabbed her chin and held it in a iron grasp. “Open wide,” he said as he lifted his free hand toward her mouth. In that free hand, she saw a vial of the green goo he had given her the night before.

She tried not to open her mouth, but he squeezed so hard she thought he might break a bone.

She opened up and he poured the bitter liquid into her mouth. It burned all the way down her throat.

Joseph held her until the Pus took effect.

“You see,” The Little Man said as Joseph released her from his grasp. “Isn’t that better?”

She felt woozy, but it was a good sort of woozy. A comforting sort of woozy.

“Yes,” she said.

“Well, now,” The Little Man said. “I know that things have been hard for you, that you’ve been uncertain of what you should do and who you are since Joseph here left, but you’re together again now, aren’t you?”

Caroline turned and looked at Joseph. There seemed to be an aura around him now. It glowed red.

“Yes.”

“Well,” The Little Man said. “I supposed today is a day for reunions. Follow me.”

Caroline followed The Little Man through the labyrinth of cylinders filled with unformed children. She no longer wondered what was going on; the Green Pus had made that thought irrelevant. The dosage The Little Man had given her was a lot stronger than the one from the previous night. Her head no longer hurt. Her mind seemed warm and fuzzy. Everything had a glow to it. It was the most amazing experience she had ever had—and she wanted it to continue.

She would do anything to make it continue.

They came to a cylinder that had been turned on its side. The top had been opened, and they had taken the boy inside and placed him on a gurney. But, this boy was not like the

others. He had hair and his skin looked normal. And, he was breathing. Caroline could see his chest rising and falling as the white robed technicians stood over the boy.

One of the men turned and spoke to The Little Man. "We're ready," he said.

"Good. Proceed."

The technician took a needle and injected the boy. For a moment, nothing happened.

Then, the boy opened his eyes.

He turned and looked at them. His gaze stopped on Caroline. Slowly, he smiled.

Caroline couldn't move. She recognized the face looking back at her. The resemblance was uncanny.

Devlin.

But not quite. It was her, too.

The boy's lips started to move. At first, he could only make small grunts and unintelligible noises. But, a moment later, he reached out his hand toward her and said one word that Caroline understood:

"Mommy."