

# *The Demon Who Answered Her*

Elara woke to the sound of breathing that was not her own. At first, she thought she was still dreaming. The cottage was silent except for the faint creak of old wood settling in the night, but beneath it was something else, something close enough that her body sensed it before her mind could accept it. Her eyes opened slowly, her muscles stiff with instinctive fear, and that was when she saw him standing at the foot of her bed. He was tall and still, his shape unmistakably male, but nothing about him felt human. He did not shift his weight. He did not blink. He simply watched her with dark, endless eyes that reflected no light, as though the darkness itself lived inside them. His skin was pale in the moonlight, his face beautiful but wrong in ways she could not immediately name. Fear settled deep in her chest, sharp and real, and she pushed herself back against the headboard, clutching the blanket tightly in both hands.

He did not move toward her immediately. He seemed to be studying her, his gaze moving slowly over her face, her shoulders, the shape of her body beneath the thin fabric of her nightdress. The stillness of him was worse than sudden violence would have been. It suggested patience. Ownership. Certainty. Her throat felt tight as she forced herself to speak. "What are you?" The question came out quieter than she intended, her voice unsteady in the silent room. His lips parted slightly, and when he spoke, his voice was low and calm, carrying a weight that made it feel older than any human voice she had ever heard. "I am what you called." The answer sent a chill through her. She had never performed rituals or spoken spells, but she remembered the nights she had lain awake in this very bed, whispering into the empty room, begging for something to find her. Something that would not leave her alone in the endless quiet of her life.

He stepped closer then, his bare feet silent against the wooden floor. The air around her grew colder with each step, pressing against her skin until she could feel every inch of herself more sharply. He stopped beside the bed and reached for her leg, his hand pausing just above her ankle, as if allowing her the choice to pull away. She should have. Every rational instinct told her to recoil, to scream, to run. But she remained frozen, her fear tangled with something else she did not want to name. His fingers closed around her ankle, cold and firm, and the sensation shot upward through her body, making her inhale sharply. He was solid. Real. Not a dream or illusion. His hand moved slowly higher, pushing the blanket aside and exposing her leg to the cold air. His gaze followed his own movement, watching the way her body responded to him.

His other hand lifted to her shoulder, his fingers brushing the strap of her nightdress before sliding it slowly down her arm. The fabric loosened, exposing her breast. His composure shifted then, the control in his expression thinning as he touched her, his palm closing over her breast, his thumb brushing across her nipple. She gasped softly, her back arching into his hand before she could stop herself. He inhaled deeply, his

restraint visibly weakening at her reaction. She could feel the change in him, the hunger sharpening. Her hand lifted hesitantly, touching his chest. His body was cold but solid, his muscles tense beneath her fingers. He leaned into her touch slightly, his gaze locked on hers as if measuring her acceptance.

His hand slid down her waist and over her hip before moving between her thighs. He paused again, watching her face, allowing her the chance to refuse him. She did not. His fingers parted her slowly, finding her warmth, and he exhaled sharply at the sensation. His composure fractured further as his fingers moved inside her, careful at first, learning the way her body responded. She clutched his shoulders, her breathing uneven as sensation spread through her. He watched her face closely, his control unraveling completely as her body accepted his touch. She could feel his hardness pressing against her thigh now, unmistakable and deliberate. He was no longer simply observing her. He was affected by her.

He lowered himself over her then, his body covering hers as his hand slid beneath her thigh, guiding her leg around him. She felt him position himself between her legs, his hardness pressing against her entrance. He hesitated only briefly, his eyes searching hers, giving her the final chance to stop him. She did not look away. He entered her slowly, his body pushing into hers with deliberate control. She gasped, her hands gripping his shoulders tightly as he filled her completely. The sensation was overwhelming, intimate and consuming in ways she had never known. He groaned softly, his composure breaking as her body accepted him. He moved inside her slowly at first, his hand returning to her breast, his thumb brushing across her nipple as he watched her face.

His mouth lowered to her throat, his lips brushing her skin before his teeth grazed her pulse. "You belong to me now," he said quietly, not as a threat, but as a certainty. She could feel it in her body, in the way his presence settled into her, deeper than flesh. He was not simply touching her. He was binding himself to her existence. He moved inside her again, deeper, slower, until her body responded completely, until there was no space left between them. She realised then that he had never come to leave. He had come because she had called him, because some part of her had needed him, and now that he was here, he would never let her be alone again.