

A MURDER OF CROWS

by

Bruno de Vinck

The contract was set up in the usual way: a phone call stating the object of the quest and the location of the down payment. The standard fee was \$30,000. with half now and half when the job was done, always in cash. This assignment was different. The meeting was arranged as a blind date, and the contract could not be executed until the day after the initial evening of dining and dancing at the best club in the city.

All he had been told about Diane Reficul was that she was very powerful, very dangerous and very beautiful. He was not prepared for the last attribute. Diane arrived in a limo. She wore a skin tight sheath of unusual black fabric. To say she was stunning was an understatement. She was the center of attention at all time. She basked in her position and made every bite of food a sensual act. He danced with her until well past 2:00 A.M. when she whispered:

"Let's get out of here".

"Come to my place" he blurted. "It's only about an hour to the country."

NEVER had he ever invited anyone to his home, his domain, his "safe house". He seemed to be fully under her domination. Diane did not speak, but only followed him without any doubt who was in the lead.

Upon turning down the long driveway, he pressed a remote control button which activated the walkway lights, the garage lights and the interior vestibule lights. The house was of a tudor style with stark white rooms. Very little suggested the character of the owner. It was almost like an expensive suite at a casino resort. Shortly, he and Diane were retired to the master bedroom with two chilled glasses and a bottle of Asti Spumanti. They lay across the oversize double bed in front of the fireplace. The roaring flames dried the perspiration from their naked flesh, acting as a source of energy to continue their mating ritual until well past 5:00 A.M. As the sun started breaking through the mist, they both collapsed in a near coma.

It was about 10:00 A.M. when he woke up, alone in the bed. From the large palladium window he saw Diane standing naked at the edge of the terrace, her back towards him.

"It wasn't a dream" he thought.

"She is flesh and blood!"

He walked down and stood beside her in the same attire. He had not forgotten the business arrangement that had brought them together. This was the day after their first encounter, but he was sure the job could wait a few hours. Several large crows flew into the tall pines that bordered one side of the stone terrace. Though the boughs were strong, they hung down in a weeping fashion from their own weight. The addition of just one crow would make it sway in response to the bird's agitated call.

"I have never seen such a large congregation of crows in this place before", he said.

"It's not a congregation - it's called a murder" she corrected.

"A murder? A murder of what?"

"They are called a murder of crows!"

He turned to face them thinking how appropriate that a murder of crows should witness the conclusion of the contract. Just as he turned to face Diane again, he felt a razor sharp slashing motion to his throat!He could not speak for his vocal cords were severed. He instinctively placed his hands over the gash to stop the pulsating gush of blood, but he only prevented the external loss and felt the blood flowing into his lungs. His legs were weak, and he fell to his knees, losing his balance and consciousness, falling on his face, still clutching his throat. He had not witnessed Diane's transformation while he felt life leaving him as a cooling sensation. Her close cropped blonde hair turned jet black, almost becoming part of her skull. Her skin turned black and silky. Her full breasts shrank to less than a quarter of their original size, while three additional identical pairs formed directly below them. The pupils of her eyes changed from blue to yellow slits. She was now walking on all four limbs with great power strides, purring as the large cat mockingly stalked her prey. Diane Reficul had gone through an amorphous state and become Diane: Lucifer's daughter, and the murder of crows waited for their mistress to leave her fresh kill.

THE END

Note: This story was based upon a challenge by my youngest brother to come up with a story with the above title. He said it would probably be a cross between Edgar Allen Poe and Stephen King.

July 6, 1992