

# *Whisper Me to Dust*

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**E**than had never fancied himself a passionate dreamer. His nights normally ebbed away in a haze of muted hues and barely audible sighs that vanished with dawn. But everything twisted the night he encountered Lila.

The encounter quickly began in an endless lunar field, a vast, moonlit bedroom under a silver sky that shuddered with deep desire. The sharp velvety grass whispered gently over his bare feet as a teasing breeze slowly caressed him, wrapping him in a sultry embrace that was both eerily familiar and provocatively inviting. Rooted at the field's center, Ethan felt the pulsing earth beneath him, alive with an almost sexual rhythm.

And then he saw her.

The undeniably gorgeous Lila emerged like a forbidden masterpiece. She was a ravishing spectral vision. Her hair flowed down her back like a dark ink cascade that seemed to move with terrifying elegance. Her face appeared as if sculpted by shadows and moonlight and her high cheekbones combined with full crimson lips promised irresistible temptation. Ethan was irresistibly pulled towards her dark and endless eyes which contained an unfathomable

abyss. Every heartbeat in his body accelerated as an uncontrollable electric craving grew within him and he found himself unable to understand or resist it.

Her cool fingertips moved across his skin causing a forbidden fire to surge through him while they disappeared from the world in the quiet darkness. They kissed and the world exploded into a blazing sensation that felt dangerously addictive and enveloping, pulling them both into a state of ecstatic pleasure that consumed the entire night. Each heartbeat echoed with desires beyond waking life. When he finally awoke, breathless and heart pounding, the horrifying truth stung. Lila existed only in his dreams.

Yet that intoxicating sensation lingered. Night after night, his visions of Lila grew deeper and more carnal, weaving an erotic tapestry that left him aching for sleep. In those nocturnal trysts, Lila transcended mere figment and became his universe, a seductive sanctuary from which he never wished to escape. She whispered against his skin, her delicate, sinuous fingers mapping his pulse while her warm breath sent shivers cascading over him. With every encounter, the borders between their world and reality blurred.

Lila was everything, and Ethan surrendered without resistance. He even thought about her when not dreaming, drew perfect pictures of her without ever having drawn before. Ethan even wrote her name with his last name behind it. He was obsessed with her at this point.

“Stay with me,” she murmured one evening.

Her voice had a delicious blend of satin and smoky allure.

Ethan’s soft chuckle melted into the darkness as he nestled further into her grasp.

“I wish I could,” he breathed.

“You can,” she purred.

Her words, laced with sweet venom, entwined with his thoughts and seduced him deeper into the realm of dreams, dissolving the bitter weight of the waking day. In that maddening dance, he felt his very essence merging with hers into an erotic unity.

But with every morning came a painful awakening. He would awaken, his body heavy and dazed as if depleted of its vitality by the excesses of the night. One morning, opening his eyes to the searing light of the bathroom, he flinched from his own face. His skin was deathly pale, dead gray, as if drained of life that formerly had filled it with a warm glow. A rough face wash flaked off a thin layer of dead, crumbling skin.

“What the heck?” He gasped in disbelief.

Panic stirring in his veins, though he tried to chalk it up to exhaustion, to the intoxication of his consuming dreams. Yet the unsettling truth lurked in the shadows of his mind.

“Lila.” He whispered in shock.

Even as his body withered, each night Lila returned, her arms outstretched, her smile a beckoning flame that tantalized him over and over. When she kissed him, the rest

of the world fell away until there remained solely her, the sweet, erotic tension that surpassed any waking pleasure.

Days slithered into weeks, and Rebecca, Ethan's sister, began to sense the creeping horror. Although she prided herself on being perceptive, familial affection had long blurred the edges of her intuition, and initially, she dismissed her worries.

"You look awful," she said straightforwardly during muted family discussion at dinner, her shaking hands holding a steaming coffee cup.

Instead of a warm reception, the air was thick with an unnerving tension.

"Just tired," he evaded, shoving his food around his plate.

"You haven't touched your dinner," she pressed, worry etching her brow.

"You're always exhausted these days," Rebecca countered, scrutinizing him.

Their mother interjected politely. Her voice was thick with concern.

"Ethan, darling, you're losing weight. Well and..." She reached out, her gentle touch rebuffed as though burned. "...your skin. Ethan, it's peeling."

He automatically jerked his hand back, keeping it hidden under the table.

"It's dry." He growled, weakly giving an excuse that concealed not at all the fear.

Rebecca's eyes grew brighter with increasing fear.

"Are you doing something?"

"What? No!" Ethan said.

His heart aggressively pounded against his ribcage. He remained on high alert.

"Then what in the world is wrong with you?" she asked nervously, her voice strained to a point between frustration and fear.

Ethan's jaw locked, his burning anger contrasting with the truth. They would, or could, never comprehend his bond with Lila. It was more compelling, more real than his solitary existence. They would take her from him.

Coaxing a grimace of a smile that only served to obscure his anguish.

"I'm fine, just stress. Work. It's been intense." He murmured.

Together, the reality was crushing, and Rebecca's discomfort remained. That night, starved for solace but exhausted, Ethan fell onto bed, starving to escape reality's asphyxiating vice. Lila returned with sleep. This time, she called from the darkness, her hand tracing up his arm like vows stroked, a brushing touch that ignited a searing, deadly desire.

"I can feel you slipping," she breathed, taunting, warm breath dancing his ear.

Ethan quietly moaned, his arms deeply enfolding her in a lover's hold, they both were overwhelmed with a burst of passion.

"I don't care," he bellowed, his ecstasy-plunged voice raw and raspy.

Then the dream burst apart. He did not wake up. When he did his body was taut, pinned down by some unseen force. In the faint light, he could see himself and another mirrored in the mirror: white, waxen, his breathing a whisper, his one turmoil the slow, shuddering rise and fall of his chest that had handprints tastefully indented in it. He was full of horror as he struggled to move against the stifling pressure. He was floating, trapped in a cold, alien emptiness, supported by nothing greater than a flimsy thread of will.

"Lila?" he breathed, and terror writhed in his stomach.

"Shhh," came a soothing yet menacing voice, weaving through the silence.

A familiar essence closed in around him, thick, heady, and deeply intoxicating. Weeks passed, and Ethan's reality unraveled. His once vibrant form dwindled into a mere shadow, an echo doomed to decay. The truth revealed itself. The sensual dreamscape was feasting upon him as the waking world drained his life, leaving behind a hollow husk. He knew it and at this point he was too addicted to stop. He walked to his bed as if he was a man on death row after his last meal. He could just imagine Lila slowly curling her pointer finger beckoned him to come to her. Was he imagining it? Or was she actually there at this point?

Meanwhile, Rebecca could no longer ignore the creeping horror. Each encounter with her brother deepened the dread knot within her. His evasions turned into brittle half-truths as his form succumbed to relentless decay. Guilt gnawed at her

for her inaction, but how could she rescue him when he refused to acknowledge his suffering?

Arriving one evening at his apartment, Rebecca's heart pounded as she knocked on the door. When silence replaced any answer, she retrieved the spare key and slowly pushed the door open. A fetid stench greeted her, a stale, oppressive silence that seemed to suffocate laughter and life alike.

"Ethan?" she called.

Her voice echoing in a space no longer home but haunted by lost memories. Dusty dishes lay in mildewed abandon. The drawn curtains created a dim gloom that wrapped the room and clawed at her nerves. Her breath stopped when she saw Ethan.

He was covered in crumpled sheets while his body emitted an unnatural stillness which broke her heart when she saw him. For a fleeting moment, she feared the worst: that he had become utterly lifeless. The feeling of desperation swept through her as she sped toward him.

Shaking him with frantic urgency she shouted "Ethan!"

His face displayed a grim waxy gray appearance with prominent cheekbones that seemed to defy the decay taking hold.

"Jesus, wake up, Ethan!" she yelled out.

He opened his eyes since his gaze expressed utter bewilderment mixed with a chilling void and his shoulder blades cracked sharply with each small movement.

“Becca?” he rasped, his voice shattering into fragments like brittle glass.

She kept insisting that he needed medical attention which came from deep emotional pain. “You’re deteriorating. What’s happening? Are you hurting yourself?”

“Everything’s okay,” he rasped in defiance while his eyes revealed signs of inner conflict and pain.

“You’re not! Ethan, you look like you’re dying!” Rebecca pleaded.

She gripped his arms as his soft, decaying flesh slipped through her fingers like fragile parchment. In that desperate moment, her hand hooked his radius forearm bone, her skin clinging to a huge stray clump of skin. She gasped in horror.

A thin, dead layer had clung to her nail.

Her scream was raw and unfiltered, shattering the silence as Ethan winced, his gaze vacant and distant as if she were witnessing a mournful memory.

"Leave, Becca," he growled, venom and desperation thick in his tone.

"No! I'm not going to leave you like this!" she exclaimed, desperation and anger mixed.

"Leave me!" he commanded.

As his weakened frame trembled with unmistakable vulnerability as his lip split and flapped loose due to his brutality.

Rebecca's hands trembled as she stepped back, her appeals hanging in the dense air.

"Ethan, please, talk to me."



He rolled over, pressing his face into the pillow like a wounded, defiant child, excluding her from the evil that had possession of him. She could almost sense something caressing his back. She scented the stagnated air turn into a musical perfume. She could barely discern the sound of a woman whispering to him. Her eyes stung with tears as the evil truth burst upon her. There was something ungodly that had a grip on him, something monstrous and seductive. She ran from the apartment and home to recover from the experience.

Later that evening, tortured by worry, Rebecca sat alone, the quietness interrupted only by the constant ticking of the clock until 3:07 AM when the silence was disrupted by her phone.

"Ethan?" she answered, her voice trembling with anticipation.

Instead of her brother's familiar tone, a distorted, ragged breathing answered back, a sound echoing like a distant, tormented howl. Almost close to the sound of a lawn mower.

"Ethan, say something!" Her heart pounded. "Please!"

After a long, agonizing pause, his voice slithered through, strained and watery.

"I think she's inside me now."

Rebecca grasped her stomach as it churned with dread.

"What?"

"I feel—I feel her when I breathe," he confessed in trembling tones.

And beneath the distortion, a sultry whisper slithered into her ear.

“Let go, love. Just sleep.”

Rebecca’s blood ran cold.

“Ethan? Ethan! Stay with me!”

A ghastly gasp reverberated, then silence.

“...stay away or I’ll get you too.” Lila said with a sharp attitude disconnecting the call.

With insomnia-fueled haste, she grabbed her keys and bolted out, pounding on Ethan’s door, demanding urgently,

“Ethan, open up!”

Only muffled echoes answered. With the spare key, she flung the door wide, and an unimaginably foul wind—not air—more like a solid wall of rancid fog, colder than any earthly winter, struck her full in the face. It was the stench of open rot that nearly gagged her.

"Ethan!" she cried into the darkness.

Within the room, she discovered an almost skeletal form bound within the confines of a tangle of blankets. It staggered her. It angered her. It transformed her heartbreak into something dark and sharper and more dangerous.

"What have you done to him?" she gasped at the figures in white. ...

"Ethan! Get up!"

The room's urgent, suffocating atmosphere matched her panicky tone.

His eyes opened, and for not quite a moment but not quite an eternity either, something unearthly took over them, an abyss of blackness that made her shudder.

"Help me," his voice whispered, twisted and gurgling, echoing nothing like the brother she knew, then reverting with a hauntingly innocent, "...Becca?"

He began to tremble like a person having a fit. In a horrifying display of flesh separating and pulling in a million different directions, the skin began to pull away from his body in strips that looked like those art projects where you paint in layers and then dissolve one of the layers to reveal what's underneath.

"Ethan!" she hollered, her voice strangling on the intolerable vision.

He let out a choked, guttural keening that pierced the fills of chopped, raw meat all around him. The sounds then closed around him and dived into the flesh-mired depths for another anguished, chop-socked phrase before finally breaking free of the thick sound heaving over and into his ears. The next sound he tried to make was another grunt of a laugh, half in

astonishment, half in relief. This time he was free of the massive, meat-holish membranes and tight skin clamping around him.

"Stop!" she begged, stretching forth, hopelessly trying to rescue him, but her hand encountered only rotting succulence.

And then he fell silent. His muscles slackened, and his face twisted into a smile, a smile that was not his at all.

It was Lila's smile.

Her voice, dripping with cruel seduction and dark desire, emerged from his lips.

"He's mine now."

Rebecca's insides convulsed with horror.

"No! No! You can't have him!"

The entity laughed, its tone a mockery that echoed through the desolation.

"Oh, but love, he chose this," it sang, each word a caress laced with sadistic joy.

Frozen by terror yet driven by a flicker of defiance, Rebecca's body refused to obey her desperate desire to flee. The darkness coils around her throat, a living noose tightening with every trembling breath. It slithers and oozes, thick with an unseen hunger, dragging at her very soul. Shadows convulse in the suffocating black. Their grotesque forms twist and writhe, bloated things with gaping mouths,

their agony frozen in eternal, soundless screams. They watch. They wait. When she blinks, they creep closer. They were watching her. Waiting. Hungry.

“Join us, Rebecca,” the voice purred, sickly sweet, as if savoring her torment.

It crawled into her mind, a serpentine whisper that promised no escape, only inevitable consumption.

Her fingertips tingled with cold decay. A deathly creeping, suffocating numbness slithered through her body, sinking into her bones like a hungry parasite. The marrow curdled, turning to ash, brittle and useless. Her skin was no longer her own. It cracked, split, and crumbled, peeling away in jagged, curling strips that dissolved before they touched the ground. Her flesh was unraveling, sloughing off like dead leaves in a wind she could not feel. She watched in wide-eyed terror, her breath shuddering as she fought against the slow, agonizing disintegration consuming her piece by piece. Her heartbeat, once frantic, now dragged in sluggish, uneven thumps, each one weaker than the last. The air thickened, pressing in, smothering. Even time itself seemed to wither, drained into the hungry void swallowing her whole.

“No,” she tried to scream.

Her lips moved, but the only sound that emerged was the dry, rasping of dust slipping through her throat.

And then she saw him.

Ethan.

But it wasn't Ethan. Not anymore.

His once normal body was now a grotesque patchwork of rotting flesh, stretched too tight over brittle, splintering bones that jutted at unnatural angles. The horrid stench of decay violently seeped from every screaming gaping tear, thick and overwhelmingly suffocating. His eyes were hollow pits, endless voids that did not see but consumed, drinking in the light and swallowing everything in their abyss. Staring into them was like staring into nothingness itself, a darkness that did not just watch, but hungered. His mouth moved, lips peeling back in a silent, voiceless scream. No words escaped, only the sickening crack of bone grinding and shifting beneath his withered skin. His hands trembled, fingers curling like withered claws, twitching as if controlled by something unseen. The void clung to him, devouring what little remained and twisting him into something that was not quite dead but far from living.

“Rebecca,” the whisper was soft, like the rustle of dry leaves in a graveyard. “Give in.”

A shiver ran through her, colder than the darkness that surrounded them. Her heart tried to beat faster, but her body was betraying her, crumbling faster with every agonizing second. The pieces of her life, her very self, slipped away in the wind, her legs, her arms, her very soul, falling apart in a slow, irreversible dance toward oblivion.

“Let us take you.” Ethan’s voice came again, but it wasn’t his anymore.

It was a whisper of his voice, buried in layers of something darker, foul. His ruined face grinned at her, but it was no

smile, just a terrible, hollow mockery of one, stretching wider with every passing second.

She wanted to look away, to close her eyes, but the shadows pulled her gaze back at him, to the decaying remnants of what had once been her brother.

“It doesn’t hurt,” he crooned, voice trembling like brittle paper.

He tilted his head, his eyes blazed with a hunger that made her stomach twist.

“Not at first.”

He reached out, fingers brushing her skin, and where he touched, the flesh peeled away like old paint, leaving only a faint trace of what had once been. The skin beneath cracked and disintegrated, wisps of smoke curling into the air.

“Don’t touch me,” Rebecca tried to beg, but her voice was a dry, rasping breath, nothing more.

Lila’s laugh echoed through the blackness, cold and sharp, a bitter reminder of the trap Rebecca was caught in.

“She never lets go, you know. Not once she’s claimed you.”

Ethan’s head tilted to a more unnatural angle, his grin widening, too wide, stretching beyond the limits of the human face. His words became a chorus, a thousand whispers woven together, all saying the same thing.

“She took me, now she’s taking you.”

And as her body turned to dust, as her very essence unraveled, Rebecca knew there would be no escape. She was part of the shadows now, a broken echo in an endless void, her name lost to the abyss.

Her last thought was a whisper into the dark, a flicker of defiance before the end: Please, let me go.

But the shadows did not answer. They only laughed, cold and hollow, their chorus rising and rising, drowning out her pleas until she was swallowed whole.