

Tentative title: **THE CROW**

**1.**

**I was running.** I was running as fast as I could. I didn't care about the pouring rain or the fact that I was damp from head to toe as I ran across campus. I didn't want to look behind me but I would take quick glances to see him there, chasing me.

I was a good distance away from him but just seeing him made my heart jump; my fingers were frozen, my legs going numb. I didn't have time to think so I just ran. It seemed as if no one else really saw him, it was as if he was a figure of my imagination. Everyone could see me running and they didn't say anything.

This time, my flip-flops slipped off, so I rapidly got them off the ground and kept running barefoot. My short blonde hair was completely flat and wet, water dropping from the ends. I kept looking ahead of me until I found my apartment building. I was trembling, I could feel ice under my feet and it was drizzling now. I could see my own breathing, my heart still beating millions of miles per hour. I stopped and looked behind me but without hesitation got my keys and fob out of my pocket and while shaking I made it to the stairs and to my apartment door.

I dropped the bag I had been carrying and everything on the ground and started to scream his name, kicking the door desperately. I hit the door with my fists, water dropping from my gray long sleeved shirt that now stuck to my body. My jeans felt heavy against my skin. Alex finally opened the door, his olive eyes widened with surprise. He looked at me up and down probably wondering why I was covered with water. My arms didn't give him a chance to say anything because I was too weak and all I wanted was for him to hold me.

I didn't want to talk about whoever was chasing after me; maybe I was just paranoid from the past events. As he held me there, I listened to his heart beat. He seemed calm, maybe glad that I was home.

"Sam, are you gonna tell me what's wrong?" he asked holding my face between his hands. I looked into those deep olive eyes that I knew so well. For some reason I saw something different in him. He wasn't that same guy I had fallen in love with months ago.

I didn't say anything. He only reached for the door behind us to close it. His dirty blonde hair was long and shaggy, his skin tanned from all the sun we'd gotten this past summer.

"You're shaking. What happened?" he asked standing in front of me. He started to say some other things but I couldn't keep my mind off the balcony behind him. It was still storming, lightning took over the sky.

Earth was revolting. A black bird, a Raven, got on the balcony's railing, standing there as if watching me. A blur ran though my eyes. It was Alex's hand trying to bring me back to reality.

"I," I let out a breath while looking at the strange bird.

*Nevermore. Nevermore*, whispered the crow.

Alex was holding my hands now, following my gaze.

"What are you looking at?" he asked curious.

"I thought I saw something," I continued while trying to regain the strength that I had lost. "Alex, Jack was running after me. I'm scared."

"Wait, what are you talking about?" he looked worried now.

"I don't know where he came from but I thought everything was okay or maybe I'm imagining things but he was there and he was running after me and I'm just so scared," I said starting to cry, cold tears running down my cheeks. I quickly wiped them away with my frozen fingers "Don't you think maybe he..."

"Shhh, you're just traumatized," he said pulling me into his arms and holding me there.

"I'm just scared," I said placing my arms around his neck. I could still see the black bird by the balcony staring back at me with evil eyes. I took a deep breath and considered how wrong I was to think that maybe *he* was back.

When I opened my eyes, I noticed something different. Black gloves were now holding on to the railing. Those strange black gloves now shoved the bird away as it flapped its wings and relocated itself on the other side of the railing. My heart fell to the ground and I blinked several times before I saw his figure in front of me.

He climbed the railing and got to his feet. His jeans were ripped and wet, his face dirty with mud, his hair black and short. I recognized those blue oceanic eyes as they looked back at me. I was in panic and cold shivers ran down my spine. I blinked several times making sure this was just a nightmare and that I would soon wake up too but every time I opened my eyes again, I could see him staring back at me.

"We need to get out of here!" I shouted untangling my arms from Alex and screaming as loud as I could. I headed to the door but I couldn't open it. *What was happening?*

Then I heard Alex laughing. His laugh was evil, the kind of laugh you only heard in movies. His loud laughter echoed in the room and made my body shake with fear.

"Jack is back!" Alex exclaimed with laughter, looking at me with a smile. Alex could see him; it wasn't a figure of my imagination!

The guy with the gloves and the ripped jeans opened the glass door and with wet shoes made his way into the apartment. It was as if Alex knew what was happening. All I wanted to do

was run but my feet stood frozen against the ground and I wasn't going anywhere. The worse feeling of it all was how stuck I felt.

*"I need to get out!"* I screamed from the top of my lungs, my throat dry and raspy.

"You're not going anywhere," Alex's arms extended towards me and grabbed me by the waist, covering my face with a cloth that smelled funny.

"And we reunite," Jack stood right in front of me, all those terrible memories I had pushed away came back to haunt me.

As much as I tried to fight Alex with my fists, I couldn't do much. I felt weak and useless in his arms. All I could feel was the betrayal that swamped my heart. I didn't have any more strength, my head exploded with pain. Jack's hands traced patterns on my cheek but before I could fight against them one more time, black spots covered my vision, my heartbeat slowing down, my skin cold, my tears drying up. It was as if I was a corpse, not dead but alive, like the Raven that stood there looking back at me. It was frozen in time, with nowhere to go and no one to turn to.