

The Righteous Woman: 1.06 – Skin

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The SWAT team was careful, concise. It was both a blessing and curse that this sicko liked to work at night. More cover for the both of them, but also more of a chance to let this nutcase slip through their fingers.

But they wouldn't do that, no. There's a limit, and each and every team member's blood was sizzling with the desire for a catch.

Once the lock was broken, the captain pointed members in opposite directions. They went towards the kitchen, the living room, and the stairs. It was the team members who made their way up the stairs who found the girl, beaten and bloody, tied tightly to a chair. Around her, there were knives and scissors and a length of rope, all dripping with blood; the gruesome evidence to what she'd had to endure.

All she could do as they untied her was motion weakly, over and over, towards the side door, indicating where her attacker had gone. She fell into a heap of sobs, and a few members stay back to watch her, while the rest slid out of the room and into the hall.

There was no sight, not yet, but they checked off rooms quickly, and then, the commotion. They turned the corner to see someone banging on the sliding door to the balcony, blade in hand.

“Freeze! Don't move! Drop the knife. Keep your hands where I can see 'em. Drop it! Hold it right there! Do it!”

Her hands went up, but she didn't let go of the blade, not even as she turned to look at them, and they saw the face of the monster they'd been after: Deanna Winchester.

THE RIGHTEOUS WOMAN

ONE WEEK EARLIER

It was a bright afternoon when they pulled in to the gas station, empty save for a few trucks parked and some locals sitting outside the attached convenience store.

“Alright, I figure we’d hit Tucumcari by lunch, then head south, hit Bisbee by midnight.”

No response from Sam.

Deanna rolled her eyes.

“Sam wears women's underwear.”

“I’ve been listening, I’m just busy.” Sam was frowning down at his phone as Deanna tapped her fingers on the dashboard, trying and failing to get his full attention.

“Busy doing what?”

“Reading emails,” he muttered as she got out to refuel her baby. Deanna leaned back and watched the price climb steadily as she let the gas flow. *Thank God for stolen credit cards. Shit was expensive.*

“Emails from who?”

“From my friends at Stanford.”

“You’re kidding.” She raised her eyebrows when Sam glanced over at her.

“You still keep in touch with your college buddies?”

He frowned and went back to scrolling. “Why not?”

Deanna shrugged. “Well, what exactly do you tell ‘em? You know, about where you’ve been, what you’ve been doing?”

Sam rolled his eyes. “I tell ‘em I’m on a road trip with my big sister. I tell ‘em I needed some time off after Jess.”

“Oh, so you lie to ‘em.”

Sam huffed in response. “No, I just don’t tell them...” He grimaced, “...Everything.”

Deanna scoffed. “Yeah, that’s called lying. I mean, hey, man, I get it, telling the truth is far worse.”

Sam finally looked up from his phone, exasperated. “So what am I supposed to do, just cut everybody out of my life?”

Deanna shrugged.

“You're serious?”

She gestured vaguely towards the car. “Look, it sucks, but, in a job like this, you can’t get close to people, period.”

Sam shook his head. “You're kind of antisocial, you know that?”

“Yeah, whatever.” Deanna pursed her lips and turned back to the gas panel as Sam kept reading his emails in silence, catching his sister's attention again only when he muttered under his breath.

“What?”

Sam held up the phone, worry evident in his tone as he responded, “It’s this e-mail from this girl, Rebecca Warren, one of those friends of mine.”

Deanna wasn't going to push him to talk about school if he didn't want to, so she played it safe and didn't press for details.

“Is she hot?”

Sam ignored her and started scrolling again. “I went to school with her, and her brother, Zack. She said Zack’s been charged with murder. He’s been arrested for killing his girlfriend. Rebecca said he didn’t do it, but it sounds like the cops have a pretty good case.”

Deanna clambered back into the Impala, curiosity piqued. “Dude, what kind of people are you hanging out with?”

Sam shook his head. “No, Dee, I know Zack. He's no killer.”

She half-shrugged. “Well, maybe you know Zack as well as he knows you.”

Sam finally put the phone away. “They're in St. Louis. We're going.”

Deanna laughed, incredulous. “Look, sorry about your buddy, okay? But this does not sound like our kind of problem.”

“It's our problem. They're my friends.” Sam started going into full-on pout mode, and Deanna knew she was in trouble.

“St. Louis is 400 miles behind us, Sam.”

And there was the damn puppy dog face.

Shit.

She rolled her eyes and pulled out of the gas station; it looked like they were making a detour.

ST. LOUIS

Rebecca was cute, blonde and tan, and Deanna stared innocently as she and Sam caught up, until he gestured her forward to introduce herself.

“Deanna. Older sister.”

“Hi.”

Deanna grinned. “Hi.” She caught Sam grimace.

“We're here to help. Whatever we can do.”

Rebecca gestured to the open door. “Come in.”

“Nice place,” Deanna noted. She didn't really listen to the girl's response or to her small talk with Sam; it wasn't like they would be sticking around for long.

She perked up when beers were offered, only for Sam to shoot them down. *Whatever.*

It wasn't worth it to keep an ear open for their schmoozy old friend crap. It burned her in a way she couldn't quite pinpoint, aside from a sour stomach to see Sam so attentive and instantly invested in this hunt that they didn't have any proof was a hunt at all. For every lecture he doled out about finding John, *Sam* was the one who sidetracked them across the country because someone who barely knew him had some trouble. A real monster, or Dad, or *something* was waiting for them, and here they wasted time.

She tuned back in as Rebecca started to talk about the situation.

“...Zack came home, and he found Emily tied to a chair. And she was beaten up and bloody, and she wasn’t breathing—” She sniffed and started to tear up.

“So, he called 911, and the police—they showed up, and they arrested him. But, the thing is, the only way that Zack could’ve killed Emily is if he was in two places at the same time.” She looked between Sam and Deanna, determined. “The police—they have a video. It’s from the security tape from across the street. And it shows Zack coming home at 10:30. Now, Emily was killed just after that, but I swear, he was here with me, having a few beers until at least after midnight.”

“You know, maybe we could see the crime scene,” Sam suggested, “Zack’s house.”

“We could,” Deanna added.

Rebecca frowned, puzzled. “Why? I mean, what could you do?”

Sam smiled sheepishly. “Well me, not much.” He grinned and jabbed a thumb at his sister. “But Dee’s a cop.”

Deanna laughed. “Detective, actually.”

“Really?” she looked hopeful when Deanna nodded. “Where?”

“Bisbee, Arizona,” she responded, “But I’m off duty now.”

Rebecca glanced between the Winchesters, looking conflicted. “You guys, it’s so nice to offer, but I just— I don’t know.”

“Bec, look,” Sam grew serious, the sympathetic puppy look “I know Zack didn’t do this. Now, we have to find a way to prove he’s innocent.”

That seemed to convince her, and she smiled. “Okay, I’m gonna go get the keys.”

Deanna smirked as Rebecca walked away. “Oh man, you’re a real straight shooter with your friends. It’s funny to you that your sincere voice and your sympathetic witness voice sound an awful lot alike?”

Sam stiffened. “Look, Zack and Becky need our help.”

“I just don't think it's our kind of problem,” she responded.

“Two places at once?” Sam was almost pleading. “We've looked into less.”

Deanna stayed silent as Rebecca came back and started to chat with Sam on the way out of the house; she hated that her brother's wide-eyed puppy dog gaze worked so well, sometimes. Maybe it wouldn't hurt to poke around a little.

They entered Zack Warren's house, and Deanna wandered away from the other two as she took in the surroundings. Drifting over to a window, she noticed the dog next door was barking loudly, clearly agitated.

“You know, that used to be the sweetest dog,” Rebecca said, coming up behind her.

“What happened?”

“He just changed.”

Interesting, she thought. Animals were good at picking up supernatural disturbances; maybe something really *was* going on. “Do you remember when he changed?”

Rebecca thought for a minute before she answered, “I guess around the time of the murder.” Deanna looked at her for a moment and walked back over to Sam.

“So, the neighbor's dog went psycho right around the time Zack's girlfriend was killed,” she commented as he turned towards her. Sam nodded in silent agreement.

Deanna nodded. “Yeah, maybe Fido saw something.”

“So you think maybe this is our kind of problem?” Sam asked, crossing his arms.

“No, probably not,” she answered, shaking her head. “But we should look at the security tape, you know, just to make sure.”

“Yeah.”

She echoed his assent as Rebecca walked back over. “So, the tape,” Deanna started, “The security footage—you think maybe your lawyers could get their hands on it? ‘Cause I just don’t have that kind of jurisdiction.” She hoped that sounded like a good enough excuse.

“I’ve already got it,” Rebecca replied, “I just didn’t want to say something in front of the cop.” Deanna laughed as Rebecca continued, “I stole it off the lawyer’s desk. I just had to see for myself.”

“All right then, let’s see what we’ve got.”

The three of them watched the tape later that night, noting that the timestamps did make implausible Zack could be the one onscreen. Rebecca assured them the tape had been sent to an expert, it was definitely authentic.

And then Sam suddenly asked Rebecca for the beers she’d offered, and Deanna threw him a look. He’d seen something, Deanna recognized that face, and Rebecca was thankfully oblivious.

Sam rewound it once she was out of the room and paused on Zack heading up to the apartment building, where he’d angled his head just right to be caught by the camera. His eyes, or, rather, the thing’s eyes seemed to glow on the tape.

“Well, maybe it’s just a camera flare,” Deanna suggested.

“That’s not like any camera flare I’ve ever seen,” Sam argued. “You know, a lot of cultures believe that a photograph can catch a glimpse of the soul.”

“Right.”

Sam went on. “Remember that dog that was freakin’ out? Maybe he saw this thing. Maybe this is some kind of dark double of Zack’s, something that looks like him but isn’t him.”

Deanna nodded, thoughtful. “Like a Doppelgänger.”

“Yeah,” Sam agreed. “It’d sure explain how he was two places at once.”

It was Sam who decided to investigate Zack’s house early the next morning, far too early for Deanna’s tastes. She’d climbed out of bed with a few choice curses

and slammed the bathroom door too hard, and conveniently forgot her coffee on the way there, even as he ignored her pissed act.

“Alright, so what are we doing here at 5:30 in the morning?” Parked at the back of the house, she was tired and hoping for a simple ending to the case.

“I realized something,” Sam began. “The videotape shows the killer going in, but not coming out.”

“So, he came out the back door?” She wrapped her hands around her coffee as Sam continued. “Right, so there should be a trail to follow.” He started to glance around. “A trail the police would never pursue.”

Deanna nodded. “Cause they think the killer never left. And they caught your friend Zack inside.” She leaned against the Impala and grumbled, “Still don't know what we're doing here at 5:30.”

Sam started to walk toward the house before noticing something and turning to her.

“Blood. Somebody came this way.”

“Yeah, but the trail ends,” she noted. “I don't see anything over here.”

They both looked up as an ambulance tore past, exchanging a look before heading back towards the car.

Not far from Zack's, the ambulance had stopped next to a few police cars and a sizable gathering of onlookers. Deanna wasted no time asking one of them what was going on.

“He tried to kill his wife,” the woman responded, “Tied her up and beat her.”

“Really?” Sam asked as he made his way over. She nodded. “I used to see him going to work in the morning. He'd wave, say hello. He seemed like such a nice guy.” The man in question was led out to a waiting police car, and Sam took the chance to slip away from the crowd.

Deanna, though, stayed close to the action. She'd wormed her way to the edge of the police tape and scanned the officers nearby. One was an older cop, looking hard and busy at work as he took notes, and there was another at the other end

with dead, but authoritative eyes who was keeping the civilians out of the marked off area. And then she spotted the third cop. *Bingo*.

He looked young, maybe her age, and professional with just the right amount of fresh-facedness. A tall, tanned drink of water with almond eyes that lit up when she came to stand beside him. She folded a piece of hair behind her ears, calling attention and seeming just a slight more innocent.

“My God, what happened?” she asked, finally turning to him to see he'd been checking her out from the side of his eye the whole time.

“A woman was attacked, Ma'am.”

She really hoped she hadn't read him all wrong. “Really? Here? I was looking at moving into this building, that's just—” She wrapped her arms around herself, furrowing her brow just enough to seem upset. “It's so awful.”

He seemed to hesitate for a second, but his eyes went soft, and he nodded. “It's okay, Miss...”

Jack-frickin-pot. “Stevie, call me Stevie.”

“Well, *Stevie*, you don't have anything to worry about. The victim was killed by her boyfriend. I was the first one here, he said he was on his way home from a business trip, but it was obvious. So, I don't want this weighing on your mind,” he said with all the confidence in the world.

Deanna nodded, blinking away what he was supposed to think were nervous tears. But her mind was running away. Another guy who couldn't have done it because he wasn't there, except he was. Well great, now she'd have to tell Sam he was *right*. “Thank you so much officer. Really,” she said to the deputy.

“It's my job to keep people safe,” he replied, and Deanna had to stop from rolling her eyes.

She nodded thankfully to him and went to find Sam. *Idiot*, she sighed to herself, and scrubbed a hand through her tousled hair. Sometimes it was too easy.

When she found Sam, he was around the back of the house, looking through the garbage cans, though it didn't seem like he had found anything. “Remember when I said this wasn't our kind of problem?”

“Yeah?”

“Definitely our kind of problem.”

Sam turned, curious. “What'd you find out?”

“Well, I just talked to the patrolman who was first on the scene, heard this guy, Alex's story.” Deanna crossed her arms. “Apparently the dude was driving home from a business trip when his wife was attacked.”

“So, he was in two places at once,” Sam responded.

“Exactly.” She nodded. “Then he sees himself in the house, and the police think he's a nutjob.”

They mused over what could've been behind identical attacks before settling on the idea of a shapeshifter; it was a common enough legend that it seemed possible, and a trail leading to a manhole left them with a pretty good idea of where it could've gone.

They had to go down into the sewers. *Great.* Deanna grimaced as she quickly folded her hair into a tight braid, checking her reflection as she worked in the side window of the Impala. There was a difference between dirty and shitty, and she wasn't exactly raring and ready to jump into the latter.

Deanna climbed down first and Sam followed. “I bet this runs right by Zack's house, too,” he mused. “The shapeshifter could be using the sewer system to get around.”

The sewer was cave like in appearance. Every thing was damp, the odor permeated, their footsteps splashed, a rat skittered, pressing itself to the wall to escape the brightness of the flashlight. It was creepy and disgusting, to say the least. The shifter would love it.

Deanna stood a few feet away from him, at the mouth of one of the multiple tunnels. On the ground was a pile of what she could only categorize as shifter goo. Skin and hair and blood, all in a foul smelling pile.

“I think you're right,” Deanna responded. “Look at this.” They both grimaced as Deanna took out a pocketknife to get a closer look.

“Is this from his victims?” Sam sounded like he didn't really want to know the answer.

“You know,” Deanna tried to get a better look without actually bringing the ick closer to his face. “I just had a sick thought. When the shapeshifter changes shape, maybe it sheds.”

“That is sick,” Sam declared as Deanna set the remains back down.

Sam got a phone call from Rebecca while Deanna was stocking up on silver bullets. A shot to the heart was sure to knock out the shifter, whatever kind it was. He had actually seemed content about the hunt for a while. It had always been easier when they were enjoying themselves. But it didn't last long.

From the way Sam's face pinched, she knew something was up. Deanna's suspicions were confirmed when he wandered back over, disappointed. It didn't take a genius to figure out their claim of Deanna being the family detective hadn't held up under scrutiny, especially when the real cops were involved.

“I hate to say it, but that's exactly what I'm talkin' about,” she said as Sam rested on the side of the car. “You lie to your friends because if they knew the real you, they'd be freaked. It's just—it'd be easier if—”

“If I was like you,” Sam stated with a frown.

Just way he said it. As if it was *bad* to be like Deanna. She went through a million other arguments in her head before she settled on not fighting back at all. It boiled in her, of course, like a terrible volcano, but maybe this was Sam's wake up call. His fairytale outlook had been in place too long, and she'd taken enough of the brunt for telling the truth. His friends finally seeing him for what he was, well, she couldn't say it was all that bad. So she shrugged.

“Hey man, like it or not, we are *not* like other people,” she argued. “But I'll tell you one thing. This whole gig—it ain't without perks.” Deanna held out a loaded gun, which he took with reluctance. She only hoped he'd get over it before they had to

fight the shifter. She didn't need the distraction when they were going up against a cold-blooded killer.

Back in the sewer, armed and on the job, they didn't say much unless they had to. It was better for the both of them.

Deanna knew they were getting close by the piles of human residue dotting their path. She paused when a pile of clothes in the corner came into view. "Looks like it's lived here for a while."

"Who knows how many murders he's gotten away with?"

Suddenly, Deanna saw him, but only for a split second. His eyes glared in Sam's flashlight, and then pain bloomed in her cheek, a hard punch connecting with her face before her shoulder slammed into the sewer wall. Sam fired a few shots in the small space, which left Deanna's ears ringing, but the shifter had gone, barreling down the tunnel away from them.

"Get the son of a bitch!" she yelled, cursing as Sam helped her to her feet.

They exited to the street and scanned the area, hiding their weapons and trying to seem as inconspicuous as two people coming up from a manhole could in a well-populated park. They decided to split up, hoping to find the shifter faster that way.

Deanna cut across the lawn, taking the alley with her gun drawn, but kept low, as bums shrunk away from her. She'd tracked enough things they thought they were badass through dark woods and homes, places where even a flashlight wouldn't have helped her. So she felt no unease about cutting into another alley, this one empty, untouched by streetlights. If the son of a bitch tried to get back to the sewer they would definitely get him. *Fuck*, was all she could think as a blow to the back of her head knocked her to the ground. The feeble attempt to grab for her gun was interrupted by another hit to the face, and she was out cold.

Deanna was in and out for what felt like hours. Every time her head throbbed, she felt like she might vomit, until the darkness crept up again, and she was nowhere.

"Where is she?"

Sammy? Sam-

"I had to stay home. With Dad. You don't think I had dreams of my own?"

"See, deep down, I'm just jealous. You got friends. You could have a life. Me? I know I'm a freak..."

"Hell, I did everything Dad asked me to, and he ditched me, too. No explanation, nothin', just poof. Left me with your sorry ass. "

Deanna blinked against the darkness. Something was over her head. She was sat in a chair, but her arms were bound behind her around something bigger, which felt like steel.

It had been Sam's voice she had heard, but also her own voice, as well, saying all the things she didn't dare think in Sam's presence. The things that made her skin crawl and left her unsettled. They were...*true*, harsh and true and things she felt, but didn't say. Deanna was convinced it was all due to a terrible fucking concussion-induced dream, for which she was going to give that asshole an extra shot in the heart.

Faint sounds of movement let her know she wasn't alone, and she shook to get the blanket off of her.

"That better be you, Sam, and not that freak of nature," she called hopefully, relief flooding her when she heard her brother's laughter in response. So he was okay. *Thank God*. Sam was also tied up across the dark and dingy room that had to be the shifter's lair.

"Yeah, it's me," he responded. "He went to Rebecca's, looking like you."

"Well, he's not stupid," she called, working to untie her own ropes. "He picked the hot one."

Minutes passed as they struggled with their restraints before Sam cautiously started to speak again.

"That's the thing, he didn't just look like you, he *was* you. Or was becoming you."

Deanna went cold. Sam knew. It was real, not a dream, and it might as well have been a punch in the stomach. She had to deflect, the fear rising steadily in her spine as she tugged away the last of her ropes. “What do you mean?”

Just stay stupid.

“I don't know, it was like he was downloading your thoughts and memories.” He grunted, pushing against the tightness of the ropes, and blissfully unaware of the revenge storm brew inside of his sister.

“You mean like the Vulcan mind meld?”

“Yeah, something like that,” Sam responded. “I mean, maybe that's why he doesn't just kill us.”

Deanna walked over and started to loosen the ropes binding Sam. “Maybe he needs to keep us alive,” she mused. “Psychic connection.”

“Hands,” was his only response. “Come on, we gotta go.” She helped Sam to his feet. “He's probably at Rebecca's already.”

They followed the labyrinth of tunnels until they reached the street.

“We gotta find a phone, call the police,” Sam urged.

“Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa,” Deanna placated. “You’re gonna put a fucking APB out on me?”

Sam just shrugged, mostly, she knew, because it wasn't his face about to be broadcast to the city as a psychotic serial killer. “Sorry.”

“This way,” she grunted and swallowed the things 'she' had said in the sewer.

Just minutes later, they stopped in front of a store window full of TV's to watch the emergency bulletin on the news. A reporter was describing an attack at “a home in the Central West End, where a S.W.A.T team discovered a local woman bound and gagged.” Deanna groaned as the report continued, knowing what was coming next.

“Her attacker, a white female, approximately twenty-four to thirty years of age, was discovered hiding in her home.”

A rough sketch of Deanna flashed up on the screen. She was offended just looking at the damn thing. “Man! That's not even a good picture!” she complained, as Sam glanced around cautiously.

“It's good enough.” He tugged on her arm softly to direct her towards the empty alley, ignoring her grumbling about the rendition of her.

“Come on,” he started as they entered an alley. “They said attempted murder. At least we know—“

“I didn't kill her,” Deanna bit out. She hated the implication alone.

Sam looked apologetic. “We'll check with Rebecca in the morning, see if she's all right.”

“All right, all right,” Deanna dismissed. “But first I wanna find that good lookin' bitch and kick the holy crap outta her.”

Deanna realized they had no weapons of any kind, and, when Sam suggested they check the car, she pointed out that the shifter most likely took it to get to Rebecca's house.

“The news said he fled on foot,” Sam noted, “I bet it's still parked there.”

I swear to God if he fucked up my Baby, he's not going to have to worry about a silver fucking bullet.

“The thought of him driving my car!” Deanna moaned as Sam waved her on, “It's killin' me.”

“Let it go,” he said, jostling her shoulder.

The Impala sat parked beside Rebecca's house, safe and sound, so much to Deanna's relief that she sighed as if she'd seen a lover. *Baby. At least something's going right.*

The relief was short lived, however, as always, when she cursed as police cars started to pull up nearby.

Sam urged Deanna to run. “You go, I'll hold 'em off!” and without an argument, she hopped the nearby fence as cops started yelling in Sam's direction.

She had to get back to Rebecca's. She stayed in the shadows for a while, waiting for the police to back off of the house so she could get to the Impala.

First things first: the bitch who's wearing my face. Sam had told her to stay out of the sewers, but she wasn't going to wait around. He was being too cautious and he wasn't the one whose face was wanted for murder. She was out for more than just the rush of taking down a monster. Personal fury had raised her up, and she knew how to use it just the right way.

She hadn't exactly expected to find the shifter in the lair again. It was too easy, and as much as she wanted it to be true, this thing wasn't stupid. But she was there anyways, once again traversing the maze, side stepping more piles of goo, to come into the dimly lit room.

It really was a hellhole. Candles barely illuminated what she could see, and roaches scurried along the surfaces she steered clear of. She kept her flashlight trained on shadowed corners, hyper aware of every little shuffle. There was a clink of chains to her right, and Deanna stopped, shining the light to her right.

Hesitance didn't exist for her; she ducked under a dripping pipe and approached the tented blanket, waiting a second to poise herself before she pulled it off in one swift motion. What she wasn't expecting was Rebecca, who shrunk away from here like a scared kitten.

And Deanna's body shook. If Rebecca was here, kept alive, then it could only mean...

She quickly untied the ropes restricting Rebecca. "What happened?"

The other woman let out a sob. "I was walking home, and everything just went white." She sniffed as Deanna struggled to loosen the ropes. "Someone hit me over the head, and I wound up here just in time to see that thing turn into me. I don't know, how is that even possible?"

Deanna tried to soothe her worries, but god there was nothing to be calm about.

“Okay, okay. It's okay,” she murmured, pulling away the last of the ropes. “Come on, can you walk?” Rebecca nodded, and let Deanna help her to her feet. “Okay, we've gotta hurry. Sam went to see *you*.”

Deanna led them out of the sewer, up and to the spot where she'd parked the Impala. Just as soon as she's helped Rebecca in and slammed the door, it hit her, a flash like a memory, but it shook her to the core.

A view from above of Sam, unconscious and tied up, and a slew of sudden, awful, damn near painful thoughts stabbing at her brain, trying to escape through the backs of her eyes. Half of them her own memories. And then, nothing, her own sight as she leaned against the Impala.

It was taunting her, reversing the psychic link and challenging her.

Deanna slammed the driver's side door and gunned away from the parking spot.

You picked the wrong fucking day.

Deanna made Rebecca stay behind, but ran into the house as quick as she could. She followed the sound of a struggle, only to see *herself* sitting on top of Sam, hands grasping tightly around his neck and squeezing.

“Hey!” she yelled, and the shifter jumped up, edging close to the window, but staring daggers at Deanna.

Two pulled the trigger twice, hitting it square in the chest each time, and relishing entirely in both. The shifter flew back and slammed into the wall, landing on a side table, stone cold dead.

Deanna took a few tentative steps towards it, and Rebecca came running into the room, falling to Sam's side to make sure he was alright. Deanna sighed. Even killing the thing hadn't calmed the surge of anger enough to mellow her, and she crouched next to it to snatch her amulet from around its neck.

Enjoy hell, motherfucker.

A hot shower had taken away some of the tension in her shoulders, but she knew none of it was going away. Deanna had gone quiet, responding with a smile when Rebecca thanked her, and made her way outside to find the fastest way to Bisbee on the map.

She tried not to notice as Sam said his goodbyes, and, although Rebecca and Sam promised to keep in touch, Deanna had a feeling they wouldn't be keeping that promise for long. Sam didn't listen to her; he looked down on her, he forced her to look at herself...differently, but she wanted him to be happy. And hunting, well, hunting was not a happy line of work.

"So, what about your friend, Zack?" Deanna asked as he came over to join her at the car.

"Cops are blaming this Deanna Winchester chick for Emily's murder," he responded as he made his way over to the passenger's side. "They found the murder weapon in the guy's lair, Zack's clothes stained with her blood. Now they're thinking maybe the surveillance tape was tampered with. Becca said Zack will be released soon," he grinned, and Deanna rolled her eyes as they clambered into the car and pulled away.

"Sorry, man," she said after they'd made it out of town.

"About what?"

"I really wish things could be different, you know?" she commented as they sped down the road. "I wish you could just be....Joe College."

"No, that's okay," Sam assured her, continuing when she shot him an unimpressed glance. "You know, the truth is, even at Stanford, deep down, I never really fit in."

Deanna smirked, letting him push it away. For now. "Well, that's 'cause you're a freak."

"Yeah, thanks."

"Well, I'm a freak, too," she said. "I'm right there with ya, all the way."

Sam laughed. "Yeah, I know you are."

“You know, I gotta say, I’m sorry I’m gonna miss it,” she mused suddenly.

Sam tilted his head, confused. “Miss what?”

Deanna grinned. “How many chances am I gonna have to see my own funeral?” she joked, trying to make light of the fact that, however briefly, she had been a wanted woman.

When she turned to Sam, and he smiled back, she felt something settle deep in her chest and turned back to the road.