

## Chapter Five

# The Maid

The smell of fresh coffee and cooked bacon, permeate the air as Draper walks into the kitchen. Charlie is serving up breakfast as Rosalie and Sammy watch the sun rise from the eastern hills. He tells Charlie that he appreciates the effort he is putting in and walks out on to the deck. Sucking in a large breath of the fresh morning air and stretching his arms above his head, he then says to Sammy;

“Isn’t it just the most beautiful view in the daylight?”

“It sure is Draper, I think I can get used to this very quickly,” he replies.

“Unfortunately, we have a very busy day ahead of us and won’t be able to enjoy it for all its glory. So eat up my friends as we need to make a move,” says Draper who is quite excited about getting the day started.

Charlie brings out the plates full of bacon, scrambled eggs, fried tomatoes and mushroom. A nice hearty breakfast for a group of spiritual warriors about to embark on an adventure that none of them could foresee until only a day ago. As they sit down to eat, Charlie brings out some sketches he has made of the layout of Sanchez's house. He explains how there is a vacant block of land across the street that has some natural bush land on it, which will give some cover for Sammy to take aim. With the help of Rosalie's visions of the interior of the house, he is able to set a distinctive plan of attack to extract the two children without them getting hurt. But all will rely on Drapers ability to get in there and take out the two guards without being seen.

Sammy says that if they can get one to the door, he can take him out, but it is all up to the reaction of the second that could be an issue. Rosalie asks about the old woman she saw cooking in the kitchen, as she wants to know about the safety of her. Charlie attempts to tune into the energy that Rosalie is giving out about this woman, but seems to be getting stonewalled in his thoughts.

"We will just have to play it by ear with her I think Rosalie. I can't seem to pick up anything about her, so for the time being, we will just

have to treat her as if she is just as dangerous as the others,” says Charlie.

“Fuck ‘em all!” screeches Sammy, as he receives a glare from Rosalie for swearing. He returns a smile to her because he is sitting across the table this morning, and knows he can avoid another smack.

“It’s not often I agree with you Sammy, but in this case I feel no mercy should be shown to any of them,” says Draper looking quite serious.

“Let’s not get ahead of ourselves boys,” says Charlie. “We may be confronted by more resistance than we expect when we get there. These crews generally work with a larger team, so we should plan to counter that.”

“You’re absolutely right Charlie,” says Draper. “So I will take Rosalie to Sammy’s apartment to get their things and then I will go and meet Fairweather. Sammy, you can stay here and ready up the fire power we need, and also get the coms organised. Charlie, I recommend that you start working on some passports, as I feel we might have to head on a trip after this. This is definitely a global issue, and we will need to go in an instant if we find any evidence of where they are taking the children.”

“I agree Draper, you can take the Land Rover,

and Sammy and I will prepare everything from this end,” replies Charlie.

The four of them finish up their breakfast, and start to organise themselves for the day. Rosalie puts her empty suitcases in the car, ready to be refilled. Sammy heads straight down to the bunker and with a sense of excitement, searches through the cache of weapons and accessories to prepare for the attack. As Draper and Rosalie drive off, Charlie proceeds to the kitchen to start cleaning up before the maid arrives.

In the car, on the way to the city, Rosalie starts asking Draper questions on what he thinks will happen to the children if they don't save them. As harsh as he finds that scenario, he explains to her that whatever it is, it will be devastating to the children's future. She then pulls up the articles about them on her phone and starts reading about them and also watches some news bulletins showing the parents despair. It brings a slight tear to her eye, as she watches the mother break down, pleading with the abductors to bring young James and Theresa home. Draper then turns to her, and reassures her that they will get the children home safe. He then asks her if she is able to find her way back to the house as he might drop himself off at the train station and let her drive the car

home to pick up her things. This way it may force Fairweather's hand to drive him back. She says she may have a problem with that as Draper pulls up outside the station. He gives her a kiss on the cheek as she moves into the driver's seat and tells her he will call when he is ready to go back and will guide her back to the house.

Meanwhile, back at the house there is a knock on the door as the key is turned and the maid walks in with her trolley. Charlie enters the foyer area and startles the maid as he greets her.

"Oh Mr Charlie," she says. "You scared me; I am not used to anyone being home."

"Sorry about that Gloria," he replies. "I just want to warn you that I have some people staying with me at the moment. So if you find any belongings in some of the rooms, it's okay."

"But Mr Charlie; I thought that Mr Corella didn't like you to have anybody stay here, as this was his secret house, for his precious things," says Gloria.

"It was Gloria, but Lou is dead, and this will be my house now. So I hope you don't mind cleaning around a few extra people. I will pay

you extra if that is okay with you?” says Charlie.

“Yes, I heard about Mr Corella,” replies Gloria “It is a very sad time for me. I knew Mr Corella for a very long time. I went to his house and the police said that it was in their hands now and told me not to go back.”

“That’s alright Gloria, I will pay you whatever he gave you plus double what I normally pay you to clean up this house,” says Charlie.

“You are so kind Mr Charlie; I will clean this house very well for you,” she replies.

“I will leave you to it as I have to go downstairs into the bunker to do some work with my friend. If I am not back before you finish, let me know when you are about to leave and I’ll bring up your money,” says Charlie.

“Thank you Mr Charlie,” she replies as she starts to rustle around her cleaning kart.

Charlie heads down into the bunker and checks out what Sammy is doing, he is like a kid in a candy store as he burrows into his nest of weapons, having trouble making decisions on what to use as he is confused by a multitude of choice. Charlie then heads into the vault and workshop area to start producing some passports and various other ID’s.

At the railway station, Draper meets up with Detective Fairweather and they walk across the road to a hidden away little coffee shop. Draper enlightens him on the contents of the previous day and asks if he can shine any light on the case of the missing children. Fairweather explains that the police have no leads what so ever and believes that it was done very professionally, because the parents were asleep when they were taken. Draper then explains to him that his team was preparing to go and get the children, but needed him to be there to hand them over, so they could get a clean getaway afterwards.

“You’re not going to leave a mess of dead bodies like you did last time?” asks the Detective.

“Possibly,” Draper replies.

“I thought you might say that,” says Fairweather. “But if you can save these two children and a couple of bad guys are disposed of in the process, then I’m in.”

The two of them finish off their coffees and drive over to Rosalie’s house to help her pack up her gear. When they get there, she is already loading up the car. Draper helps her with the final suitcase, then jumps into the

driver's seat and tells Fairweather to follow him.

Sammy is laying out equipment on a large stainless steel bench, when Charlie comes over and asks him if he would like a drink. He accepts his offer and Charlie starts to make his way upstairs. Gloria is in the kitchen cleaning, and notices some empty glasses on the deck. She walks out with her cleaning cloth to wipe down the glass top table when she notices Draper's staff leaning up against the wall. A chill runs down her spine as she goes to pick it up. As her hand gets near, a spark of static electricity bolts out from the stick and burns the palm of her hand. She lets out a scream as Charlie is exiting the lift. He hears her scream and runs out to the deck, to see Gloria with a pair of rubber gloves on, throwing the staff over the balcony rail into the garden.

"What are you doing?" cries out Charlie.

"This is very evil," she exclaims. "Look it burnt my hand, this belongs in the fire, or buried in the garden Mr Charlie. It is very, very bad."

"Actually, it is very good Gloria," retorts Charlie. "This could be very important in taking a lot of evil away," he explains.

"I don't like it!" states Gloria firmly. "And I don't



like you having people in the house either. I think Mr Corella would be very upset with you.”

“But there is no more Mr Corella, and I will decide who comes and goes from this house Gloria. I think you need to get back to duties now,” scowls Charlie.

“Yes Mr Charlie,” says Gloria as she skulks off mumbling inaudible words.

Charlie, who is now a little agitated, walks down the stairs to pick up the staff of Bukhara. As he picks it up, he is feeling a sense of danger from it. He tries to understand the message he is receiving, but it seems really clouded and can't quite work out what it is he is being told. Placing the staff back up against the wall, he looks inside to Gloria who is giving him a stare of disdain. Ignoring her insolence, he then proceeds back down to the bunker, with a couple of glasses of orange juice for Sammy and himself.

About thirty minutes later, Gloria comes down the lift with her cleaning trolley and starts to tidy up around the kitchenette area. She is keeping a close eye on Sammy as he toils in the armoury looking for the right ammunition that matches the rifles he has chosen for their forthcoming mission. Charlie walks in from the

workshop area and notices Gloria cleaning in the bunker.

“That’s alright Gloria, you don’t have to clean down here,” he says.

“It’s okay Mr Charlie, I do down here all the time, and if you are paying me more now, then I must do a really good job,” she replies.

Sammy hears the conversation and walks out to introduce himself. The maid looks him up and down, and then covers back a little before bowing her head to greet him. Her timid voice crackles as she says to Charlie again that she is not happy with others being in the house. This begins to agitate her as he again explains that it is none of her business. She then turns her back on him and continues cleaning.

Charlie then calls Sammy into the workshop to help him with some of the identifications he is making. He needs to find current photos of him and Rosalie to put on their new passports. Sammy grabs his phone and heads out to the back room with Charlie who closes the door behind him, so as not to be disturbed.

“So can you trust her?” asks Sammy.

“Before today Sammy, I would have said yes at the drop of a hat. She has been working for Corella for as long as I have known him. But

for some reason she is acting really weird and I can't seem to work out why. Maybe it is the loss of Corella, but I seem to think there might be more to it than that," replies Charlie.

"Well I don't have the super senses like you and Rosalie do, but from a salesman's point of view; I am definitely not getting a very good vibe off her at all," says Sammy.

"We'll just leave her to her cleaning for now Sammy as we have got work to do." says Charlie.

Once the door is closed by Charlie, the maid Gloria heads straight into Corella's room. She looks at the shrine in the corner of the room and notices that the skulls are missing. This infuriates her as she sees them in the pillow case on the bed. She starts to breathe heavily and her eyes begin to turn a deep shade of green as the whites glow with a dull red. Pulling each skull out of the bag and placing them on the bed, she whispers to them that she will bring him back home. Stroking each skull across the top of the cranium, she then picks them up one by one and gives them a kiss on the mouth before placing them back into the pillow case. She then pokes her head outside the door to see where Charlie and Sammy are before taking the bag full of skulls and placing it in the bottom of her cleaning

trolley. Continuing to clean around the dorm rooms, she hears the other two men talking about heading upstairs to have some lunch, so she quickly puts her trolley into the lift and closes the door. As they come out from the workshop area, the two men in unison notice the lift heading up.

“Do you think she might be trying to avoid us Charlie?” asks Sammy.

“I am not too sure, but something is just not right. Wait here for a moment please Sammy as I go and grab some money for her,” he replies.

While Charlie is in the vault getting some cash for Gloria, he hears Sammy call out;

“Did you move those skulls that were on the bed?”

Charlie quickly puts the money in his pocket and walks out to see if he heard correctly;

“Did you say the skulls were gone?” he asks anxiously.

“Yes Charlie, I think she has taken the skulls with her. Didn’t you say that they possessed some sort of residual power left from the reptilian Kryxarn?” inquires Sammy.

“I certainly did Sammy, and we don’t want them getting into the wrong hands, as anything

could happen, and my bet is it won't be anything good," he replies. "So we better get up there and see what is going on."

They quickly get into the lift and run toward the front door to find that Gloria is already loading up her van. Charlie casually strolls over to her and says;

"Why are taking off in such a hurry Gloria? I haven't paid you yet."

"I have another house to clean Mr Charlie, you can pay me next week if you like," she says.

"Before you go Gloria, I have something I would like to ask you first. Why did you take the skulls from Mr Corella's old room in the bunker?" asks Charlie.

She begins to get agitated with him again, but this time raising her voice a bit more as she exclaims that it is not his old room, but is still his room. Just as this heated discussion is starting to get a little louder, the two cars with Draper, Rosalie and Fairweather pulls up in the driveway. They all notice the animated discussion between Charlie and the maid. Rosalie turns to Draper to exclaim;

"That's her! That's the woman I saw in the house with the kids! And that is also the van I saw in the driveway."

“Are you certain?” asks Draper.

“Yes I am absolutely positive,” she says. “And she has the skulls in the back of the van.”

“Now that can’t be good,” says Draper. “We’ll have to see what is going on here.”

The two cars pull up to a stop and Draper gets out and heads straight over to Charlie and Gloria. Fairweather gets out his car and walks over to Rosalie asking if she knows what is going on. She tells him to just hang back for the moment as she feels it is going to get a lot more heated now that Draper has arrived. Sammy also stands in the doorway of the house, very hesitant to get involved as well.

Charlie tries to grab the pillowcase holding the skulls from the back of Gloria’s van as she screams out; ‘No!’ She then starts to chant some kind of incantation that is completely not of any language from this planet. The pillowcase starts to rattle and glow. As Draper reaches the van, he sees what is happening with the bag of skulls and cries out;

“What the hell is going on here Charlie? Aren’t you paying her enough? I think we need to start a fire and burn these skulls for good.”

The maid looks Draper right in the eye; her gaze gets darker as she starts to quiver;

“It was you!” she says “You were the one who killed my brother.”

Draper feels curious, though he doesn't know who the maid's brother is. In the events that have occurred over the previous few weeks, it is highly likely he did. His mind is trying to place who might have been related to her, but came up short every time till he finally had to say;

“I'm sorry, but who is your brother?”

Her voice suddenly becomes a lot deeper and her eyes roll back, so you could only see the white, as she replies;

“For killing my brother, you must pay retribution.”

Draper is not fazed by the idle threats of a little old cleaning lady, but he is interested in why she was at the house where the two children are held captive.

“So why were you at Sanchez's house with the stolen children? What part do you play in the taking of these kids? Do you work for Corella?” he asks.

Her voice now is getting more grainy and agitated as she says;

“All these houses belong to Mr Corella; Sanchez was but a pawn. And I don't work for him, he is

my brother.”

Draper looks toward Charlie and asks him if he knew that Corella had a sister. He just shakes his head and says that he had only ever known Gloria as the maid who used to clean his houses. He has no idea about her involvement regarding any of Corella’s activities. Draper then grabs the pillowcase with the skulls in it and tries to take it away from the maid. She grabs his arm and throws him across the lawn with ease. Everyone watching is agape with awe of the strength of this little old lady.

Her eyes begin to turn green, and the whites become red. Her height and stature begin to grow and fill space, as her skin starts to scale and a tail begins to form. She turns and looks at Charlie with an eerie gaze of disappointment and she says to him;

“Corella was not my brother, Kryxarn was. I am his sister Kryxeal, and you Charlie were the only human he ever trusted and now you betray him. This cannot go unpunished and now you must pay also. She picks him up and tosses him into the garden bed about ten metres away. He lets out a whimper of how he is getting too old for this. Draper gets back to his feet, and stands facing Kryxeal in her full reptilian form. He begins to transfer energy he is generating from the Universal force and



sending it down to his hands when he realises that this lizard being seems to be a lot larger than that of Corella, or Kryxarn as he called himself. He then stares her down and says;

“I have been through this before lizard lady, and last time I kicked your brother’s butt. But I do notice that you are a bit bigger than he was, so I might just have to kick yours twice as hard.”

He throws two bolts of energy at her, which she evades with ease, and smiles as she says to him;

“In my world, the female is the dominant species. We are bigger and more ruthless than the male. They are merely our servants of need and to procreate. Corella never really ran the empire; it was all down to me. So this house is mine, Sanchez’s house is mine and the children are mine, and you will never get to see them.”

Draper starts to increase his thoughts of channelling more power down through his arms and out through his hands to try and combat the lizard beast. This time he hits it in the chest and sends her flying back against her own van. This doesn’t seem to have much effect as she quickly picks herself up and bounds toward Draper. He keeps firing bolts of energy

at her but she either evades them or seems to be able to deflect them with her hands. Draper is starting to get a little nervous as last time he had to fight a reptilian beast, he had his Angel guide Dave with him, but this time he has to try and work it out for himself. He sends another blast of energy toward Kryxeal, and again she deflects it off as if it were nothing. She then grabs Draper by the scruff of his neck and again throws him across the yard toward Rosalie and Detective Fairweather. He picks himself up again and turns to Fairweather and says;

“This is starting to hurt; I’m not made to fly.”

Rosalie then says to him; “Why not Dennis? You have wings don’t you?”

“He has wings?” asks Fairweather of Rosalie.

“Yes I have fucking wings!” yells Draper. “But the only problem is I don’t know how to use them properly yet”

He spreads his wings at full breadth and shakes them out. Charlie looks across the yard and can see the apprehension in his eyes. He yells out some encouragement telling him that he can do it. Draper yells back that he doesn’t know how to use them, but Charlie reminds him to think it and it will happen. So he

imagines himself flying straight at Kryxeal, and that is what begins to happen. As he gets closer to the reptilian, the thoughts in his head are of swooping down on her, wrapping his arms around her and crashing her into a brick wall. But just as he gets close to her, she raises her hand and sends out a type of force field at him and knocks him out of the air and he goes crashing into the water feature. He looks to Charlie for advice, but all he can do is shrug his shoulders. He then looks over to Fairweather and Rosalie and receives exactly the same response. Kryxeal seems to be smiling at him as she realises he is not used to such resistance. Bringing himself back to his feet, the maid moves toward him firing bolts of energy which send him flying back further and crashing into the cars in the driveway.

Sammy walks out of the house holding an assault rifle and takes aim at Kryxeal as he begins to fire. The first couple of shots hit the reptilian in the shoulder region, and a blue coloured blood and greenish grey flesh splatter across Drapers face as she is about to swat him to the ground again. She turns and glares at Sammy before sending a burst of energy his way which sends him flying backwards into the foyer of the house, crashing into a precious vase which smashes onto the floor into hundreds of pieces. Rosalie panics and runs to

see if Sammy is alright, but before she can get a few metres toward him, Kryxeal fires a bolt of energy at her and sends her crashing up against the Land Rover and lying on the ground next to Draper.

“Are you alright Rosalie?” asks Draper.

“Not really Dennis,” she replies. “I need to see if Sammy is alright.” At that precise moment, Sammy struggles to the doorway and gives the thumbs up.

“Well, at least he is okay for now,” says Draper. “But I’m not sure if I have enough power to beat this thing. It tends to overpower me at every turn.”

“Yeah, she seems to be quite a lot stronger Dennis, and you certainly don’t have the whole flying thing down pat yet. How about you try your staff,” says Rosalie.

“Yes, the staff, why didn’t I think of that?” says Draper.

“The staff, yes the staff. Do you want me to get it for you?” yells out Sammy.

“No need Sammy,” cries out Charlie. “Just think about what you want it to do Draper, and it should obey your commands.”

“What sort of commands Charlie?” asks Draper.

“I don’t know Draper, how about you just ask it to come to you for starters and work out the rest from there,” screams Charlie as he ducks to evade the swinging tail of Kryxeal.

Draper starts to imagine the staff of Bukhara flying over the roof of the house and into his hand. Before he could even finish the thought, the staff is travelling through the air, and implanted into his right hand within a second. The rest of his crew clap and cheer, as they call out for Draper to destroy Kryxeal. But she is not quite as convinced about the power of Drapers stick and taunts him as she moves closer to make that killer blow.

Draper holds the staff pointed toward Kryxeal with one end under his arm. He imagines the energy flowing through him and out through his arms and hands into the staff. The staff begins to glow a golden colour. Kryxeal seems to smile at him as she swings her arm around like a softball pitch and sends another ball of energy at him and sends him flying back again. As he attempts to get to his feet again, Kryxeal sends a continuous bolt of energy toward him which lifts him up into the air and keeps him in a hovered state.

“Use the staff,” cries out Charlie.

“Use your wings,” screams Rosalie.

“For Christ’s sake guys, I haven’t worked out how to use either of these things properly yet,” says Draper frustratingly.

Kryxeal then slams him onto the ground and treads on his chest with her razor sharp toe claws pressing against his throat. As she pins him to the ground, ready to take her final blow, Draper pushes his staff up into her chest area to try and relieve some of the pressure on his ribs. She looks at him with those killer eyes and leans into him and whispers;

“Your Christ is not going to be any help to you now.”

“Not a big fan anyway, but maybe you can tell him that when I send you to meet him,” replies Draper in his shortness of breath.

He again starts to think of transferring energy into his staff to finally eliminate this reptilian creature. She notices the staff starting to glow again, so she raises her hand, ready to submit the final blow. As she does, Draper tries to focus harder on trying to send the amount of energy needed to at least catapult this beast into the sky. As the staff starts to shine brightly, she says to him;

“Say goodbye to your human friends Mr Draper. Because you are about to meet up with some

old ones on the other side, you may even meet up with your savior Jesus Christ.”

“I told you before,” replies Draper. “He is no friend or savior to me.”

Then there is a loud bang, and all of a sudden, the head of Kryxeal explodes, with blue and green slime and brains showering all over Draper’s face. She falls forward and the staff pierces through her chest as she falls on top of him. He gets into a slight panic with all her weight bearing down on him as he shrieks out a mighty scream;

“Get the fuck off me you crocodilian bitch,” as an almighty burst of energy is released from his staff which sends the beast flying into the stratosphere till it was completely out of sight.

“What the fuck happened there,” says Draper as he picks himself up off the lawn covered in reptilian slime. He looks toward Sammy in the doorway holding onto an armour piercing assault rifle. Sammy gives him a wink and smile, as Draper looks at him and returns with an acknowledging nod.

“You know I could’ve taken her out Sammy,” says Draper with some significant arrogance.

“Yes I know Draper,” replies Sammy. “But we have got some children to save and you were

just taking too long.”

“Point taken Sammy,” he replies. “Her henchmen are going to wonder where she is if we don’t move fast.”

Charlie then starts to direct everyone as he tells Draper to go and get himself cleaned up. As everyone starts heading inside, Fairweather pipes up wanting to know what their plan of action is.

“You can’t just go in there all vigilante,” he says. “Our first priority is to protect the kids.”

“Absolutely,” says Charlie. “Come on in Detective and I’ll show what we know so far.”

Charlie guides him through the house as he looks at all the artifacts in awe. They get to the kitchen and Charlie pours everyone a large glass of water. He shows Fairweather the layout of the house they are heading to, and the positions they will hold in the street. He explains how Sammy will be perched across the Street, and now that they have Gloria’s van, Draper will drive it straight into the driveway and hit them at point. Fairweather then asks what his role is in all of this, to which Charlie explains that he is purely there for the handover of the children to the police and that himself and Rosalie would be in the



communications van together giving direction.

“It sounds like you have got it all worked out Charlie, but what if something goes wrong?” asks Fairweather.

“Then that’s when we will have to put trust in our improvisational skills Detective, but hopefully we will be able to return the children to their family without too much fuss,” replies Charlie.