

Good Bones

by David Hofmeister

"As you can see, she's got great bones."

No matter how hard Pim grinned, Raz could not help but feel like he was being sneered at by the realtor. His pale skin was as oily as his hair. Worse yet, he possessed a rather annoying, habitual need to stroke the overgrown scruff sprouting from his chin.

More off-putting than his sales tactics, though, was his invasiveness. He was like an old-school Ringmaster scanning the crowd for rubes to fleece, spewing any oratory vomit necessary to line his pockets. Raz had never been subjected to a colonoscopy, but he imagined it was a lot like listening to Pim's sales pitch. Pim was a slippery little shit like all his caste were, and Raz had no intention of getting conned by the pudgy bastard.

"This place definitely has a lot of potential," Nilly added. She continued her inspection, no doubt envisioning the various knickknacks which would accompany the inevitable remodel.

She cracked her patented, crooked smile. The same one which had melted Raz's heart the first time he saw her, all those years ago.

Raz knew he was in trouble.

"Like I said--good bones," Pim reiterated, a subtle note of smarminess present in his voice.

"And I love the color of the place. We won't even have to repaint. Just a light touchup."

"Yeah, it's great. Not exactly sold on the price, though..."

Raz was feigning his dissatisfaction, though. Truthfully, the place was a bit of a steal. Market value in the area being what it was, when all was said and done, they could end up making out like bandits if they ever decided to sell one day.

Still, best to be pokerfaced in these situations.

"Well, what if I were to knock two percent off my commission?"

"Five sounds a lot better."

"*Five*. Are you fuckin' serious, right now?" Pim's beady black eyes narrowed with disdain. "Who do you think you're

dealing with here? Fuckin' five. I should flay you for trying to pull that bullshit with me."

"Don't come at me with that," Raz fired back. "You're not nearly high enough in the hierarchy to be hurling insults at me."

Raz ground his granite fists together, prepping for a fight.

"Okay, okay. Calm down, already. No need to get your panties in a bunch."

"What was that?!"

"Baby," Nilly interrupted. "Breathe."

Realizing his mistake, Pim began walking his comments back a bit: "Look, I'm sorry if I spoke out of turn, alright? Wasn't my intention. But," he said, licking his slimy lips with his forked tongue, "here's what I can do. How about I go ahead and knock off three percent for you, yeah. Best I can do."

An ambiguous expression crossed Raz's face. Whether he was coming around to the offer or conveying his general disgust for Pim was anyone's guess.

"Alright, then. You've got a deal," Raz said, extending one of his enormous hands.

Pim followed suit, meeting Raz's hand with his clawed hand. He grimaced in pain at the power behind the raw power behind his client's handshake.

"Damn. You Nephilim really got a grip on you, don't ya?" Pim said, flashing two rows of needle-pointed teeth.

"Yeah, I guess so. Tell you what, though--it pales in comparison to an imp's silver tongue.

The pair shared a brief laugh.

"So, where'd you find the place?" Nilly asked.

"Saoirse? Oh, she was out jogging late one night," he answered, waving a cool hand towards the young Irish woman bound naked to the wooden table. Ancient runes carved into the oak burned with orange hellfire.

"Humans are so frail. It's almost not worth bothering to possess them," Raz said.

"Actually, Saoirse put up quite a fight. As you can see from her muscle tone, she's much more capable than your average beer-gutted American. Trained in jiu-jitsu, too. Took forever to subdue her."

"Seriously?"

"Carved right into her muscle memory. It's a brave new world, my friend," Pim answered. "Still, once I cast the curse, she went out like a light,"

"When can we move in?" Nilly asked.

"Well, it depends on how long it takes to harvest her soul. These younger models can be tricky. So, I'd say you can take possession in about, oh, two weeks, if that works for you?"

"Sounds good. Just give us a call when she's all cleared out."

"No problem," Pim said, reaching out to shake their hands a final time. "And thanks again for choosing Hellbound Homes for your relocation services."