

## Better Luck Next Time

by F.R. Southerland

He was insane, absolutely. From the first moment Sara met him, she had no doubts that his mental state was entirely fucked. Of course, that made it easier to slip in, twist this thought, or that thought to get what she wanted. At first, she'd done it subtly and secretive, making suggestions in a sultry tone of voice, rewording them so the other demon thought they were his ideas.

And it worked. She was smug with her success, feeling pretty good about herself and the results. Sara stretched out, long and luxurious, like a cat. She even purred, the sound deep in her throat.

The sex had helped, she figured. It always did where men were concerned. She rolled to her side, naked body pressing against his. His skin, she noted, was always a bit cold. It didn't bother her, usually. Now, however, she found herself annoyed with it. She reached for a sheet and drew it around herself.

"I do expect an answer." She traced her fingers along one of his scars—the big one that went across the shoulder.

Dylan didn't move, dark eyes watching her face. Sara, like some demons, had an aura. A small one, tight and muddy and close to the skin. It clung close to her dark hair. She didn't exactly have a soul, not by the definitions of a human soul, but it was something and he could feel it when their bodies were so close. His fingers danced against her shoulder, disturbing her aura, eyes shifting to watch the colors move. A smile pulled at his lips, but he didn't answer her.

Just as he expected, Sara grew impatient with his lack of response. Her hand came to rest against his bare chest. "Well? What will it be?"

She thought she was clever. To be fair, she was. She was ruthless and cunning and every bit of that he loved. She tried to play him. And he let her. It had been fun. Now that Dylan knew to what end her attempted manipulations had led them, he was comfortable letting his ruse fall.

"Mm, haven't decided yet. You make some compellin' arguments." He shifted his gaze back to her face, holding her stare. A grin slowly worked its way across his face. "But s'gonna take a lot more'n a tussle in the sheets to win me over."

The satisfied look on Sara's face vanished, replaced immediately with an icy facade. "What?"

Laughter bubbled out of him before he could stop it. "It's all well'n good. I had fun. I know you had fun—twice—but you think m'gonna give in that easily?" He clicked his tongue to his teeth.

How—? Sara's thoughts turned red with rage. Her long nails dug into his chest. The sharp scent of blood flooded her senses. She barely heard his gasp of pain.

"Rot."

She shoved him, the sound of his laughter following as she slid from the bed, sheet bunched around her lithe body. She was no fool and hated the insinuation that he'd bested her. She'd failed. With a huff, she stomped out of the room. The door swung back, slamming against the uneven door frame, bouncing on the hinge from the force.

Dylan's grin split his face, his fingers touching his chest where her nails had wounded him. It had already healed, but he ran a finger through the blood anyway, smearing it over his skin. "Better luck next time, love," he called to Sara's retreating form, then laughed again.

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