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Games



# The Dreadwyl

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Rosalyn shook her head. *"He's kind, and the match is good, but it's not what I want. I want more than... than a kitchen and fields."*

The old woman's expression softened, and for a moment, Rosalyn thought she'd say yes. But the woman sighed and shook her head. *"I won't use my gifts for that. Magic meddling in love rarely ends well, and this is a path you should walk with courage, not shortcuts."*

*"Please,"* Rosalyn begged. *"If I tell my mother no, she won't listen. I'll have no choice."*

The old woman stood, brushing off her hands. *"You always have a choice, child, but that doesn't mean it will be easy. Go home. Think on it. Marek's not so bad, surely."*

The rejection stung like a slap. Rosalyn felt her fear boil over into something sharper, uglier. *"You'll help, or I'll tell the constable about your... work."*

The woman's head snapped up, her dark eyes gleaming with sudden malice. *"You think you can scare me, child? Fine. If you insist on stepping into darkness, I'll show you the way. But don't expect to come back unscathed."*

The clearing was quiet except for the crackling fire. Rosalyn knelt beside it, her breath visible in the cold air. The old woman's instructions had been clear. She burned the bundle of herbs first, the smoke filling her lungs and the space around her with a sharp, earthy scent. Next, she took the piece of charcoal from the flames and drew the circle on the frozen ground, careful not to let it break.

Finally, she pricked her finger with the edge of her sewing needle, hesitating only briefly before letting a single drop of blood fall into the flames.

The air shifted. The fire dimmed. A strange heaviness settled over the clearing, pressing on her chest, her ears, her mind.

Then he appeared.

He wasn't tall or looming. He was small, barely reaching her hip, with a hunched posture that made him look even smaller. His pale, leathery skin gleamed faintly in the firelight, and his face was unsettling—a wide, crooked mouth and almond-shaped eyes that glowed faintly like smoldering embers. His bat-like wings stretched slightly before folding neatly against his back, and his tail swayed like a lazy serpent.

Despite his unsettling form, his smile was soft, his voice gentle. *"You called?"*

Rosalyn scrambled to her feet, her heart pounding. *"I-I need help."*

He tilted his head, his expression curious and almost amused. *"Help? That's a dangerous word, little one. What kind of help?"*

*"I need to stop a marriage,"* Rosalyn blurted. *"I need to make sure I'm not forced into it."*





The devil chuckled, a low, quiet sound. "Ah, love and freedom." He stepped closer, his movements fluid despite his strange form. "But tell me this—are you certain? Truly certain? These things can't be undone."

Rosalyn straightened her shoulders, defiance burning in her chest. "I'm certain."

The devil studied her, his ember eyes narrowing slightly. "Many have said as much before you, only to regret their certainty when it's too late." His tone was almost kind, as if he genuinely wanted her to reconsider.

But Rosalyn held firm. "I won't regret it."

The devil sighed, shaking his head as though disappointed, but his smile returned, sharper this time. "Very well, little one. If you insist."

He extended a spindly hand toward her, his wings casting flickering shadows across the circle. Rosalyn hesitated, her pulse quickening as his smile widened.

And so, the deal began.



## Introduction

*'The Dreadwyld. It's not the name of a nation or continent — it's the name for all that is, was, and may yet turn against you.'*

Welcome to Dreadwyld, a land where ancient power and human ambition intertwine. In the shadow of the fallen Poltan Empire, kingdoms claw at each other's borders, driven by ambition, old blood debts, and fear of the unknown. The scars of the empire are etched into the landscape, in its crumbling ruins and fading gods, and they echo in the ambitions of those who seek to rise from its ashes. Here, survival demands more than skill or strength—it requires cunning, the forging of tenuous alliances, and the wisdom to navigate a world steeped in moral ambiguity and shadowed by the supernatural.

This is not a land of sweeping heroics or divine intervention. Magic in Dreadwyld is as rare as it is dangerous, a force whispered about in hushed tones. It flickers in the subtle curses of furtive practitioners or the inexplicable chill hanging over a forsaken glade. The Fae are no creatures of whimsy here but capricious beings of power, their bargains as treacherous as their smiles. In Dreadwyld, the supernatural exists not as spectacle but as something woven into the quiet corners of life, a constant reminder that there is more to the world than what is seen.