

Pumpkinwing Unmasked

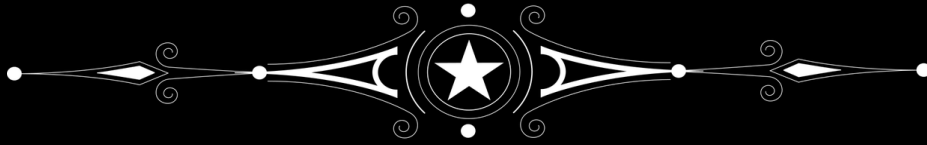
Commission for Cydra

By

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The following contains: Raven to anthro to human TF's, minor violence

Read at your own discretion.



Jacob Corwin couldn't have been happier to complete today's work. It might have taken all afternoon, but the truck was finally loaded. The trailer was now stuffed with an extreme surplus of squashes, corn, and eggs. His farm's final shipment for its fall harvest. Exact numbers still remained to be counted, though the young man could easily tell this was over triple the output from last year. Dollar signs were already dancing around his head, sparking ideas on how to improve working conditions for spring. Not to mention a few things he could finally afford to indulge on for a special girl at the forefront of his thoughts.

"I must say, you worked up an impressive yield," Malik said, getting one last glance at the bounty before a truck worker pulled the shutter closed. "An amazing turn around for a farm that was struggling just to get its crops in last year. You might end up breaking a new record for the tri-county area."

"Uh huh." Jacob kept his expression friendly and tone flat while signing away paperwork for the waiting trucker. "Luck just happened to be in my favor. I owe a lot to the workers that stayed hired on, too."

At this point he'd grown rather good at wearing a professional mask for these kinds of visitors. Every so often, for the past ten months, some thrill seekers, or bigfoot hunter, or random journalist would show up hoping to satiate their morbid curiosity. Malik had shown up that morning claiming to be the latter doing a fluff piece about the state's local growers. It wasn't a new excuse to bother the humble farmer, but he couldn't say no to any bit of media that might help increase his farm's good reputation.

"Ah yes." Malik drew out the words so badly Jacob could feel the smug grin without facing the scrawny reporter. "It makes sense having a hard-working crew would help turn things around. Especially with this area being protected by the great Pumpkinwing."

And there it was. Jacob was just glad this guy had the nerve to drop the shoe bluntly instead of trying to waste both their time with not so clever wordplay. Still, he couldn't hold back an eyeroll and dejected sigh. Unfortunately, the silly name drop had caught the trucker's attention too.

"The who now?" They asked, shifting glances between Jacob and Malik as they collected the paperwork.

Malik couldn't hold back his superior smirk, clearly waiting for such an opening. "Oh, the whole town knows Corwin Farm has become the latest hot spot for cryptid activity since their rise to success. Lots of eyewitness and camera reports say a

scarecrow monster lurks in the night, skulking the crops and terrorizing anyone they find.”

“And most of those so-called witnesses were criminals or kids wanting to play Scooby-Doo on private property,” Jacob said without hiding his irritation. Turning to a very intrigued trucker, he continued, “Farm’s get trespassers all the time. My guess is someone got sick of it and started a legend about a monster bird to scare them off. No idea who, but ‘Pumpkinwing’ sure helped the rest of us locals.”

“He acts like he’s innocent, but the first sightings were around this farm!” Malik’s insistence grew so aggressive the other two men were taken aback. “Yes. There’s been sightings all over town. However, your farm has seemingly seen the most increase in success this year. There’s no way tha-AAH!”

Something small and black chose that moment to smack across the top of Malik’s head, sending him into a panic. The truck driver that’d been paying rapt attention almost fell over in a fit of laughter.

Jacob couldn’t help giving a satisfied smile himself watching the insufferable man flail about swatting at the air to fend off invisible enemies. He outstretched his fingers, whereupon a cute raven perched. “You haven’t seen any monsters tending the fields for me. Have you, Jackie?”

The little bird chirps a merry song, almost as if she was laughing with them. This display coupled with the realization he was not actually under attack made Malik straighten with an indigent grunt.

“Hah! What a riot,” The trucker said as he gave Jacob a hat tipping farewell. “Crazy stories like this are why I love working in the country.”

“A man that talks to the vermin infesting his land isn’t a healthy sign either,” Malik grumbled. He’d busied himself with pulling out an oddly bulky cellphone, burying his red lined face in what looked like rapid texts. “You should really find yourself a girlfriend before it becomes a condition.”

Jacob silently took it back; he’d have preferred a subtler journalist to whatever this guy was. While it was true a lot of work got done around the farm that not even his small staff could seemingly manage, upfront trying to blame a local boogeyman on his hard work was overkill. He moved his hand so Jackie could move onto his shoulder to free up his hand again. The clever raven had moved into his favorite scarecrow one day several years back and became like a best friend overnight. That’s why when the truck pulled away to leave the two men as the only ones left on the property, he decided to drop all pretenses of hospitality.

“I happen to have two very special girls in my life. One of which I’m going to enjoy a date with this evening. And I’d appreciate it if you didn’t insult the other one to our faces.” Jacob was caught off guard when Jackie chirped in his ear, giving the lobe an affectionate nibble. That was a fairly ticklish spot for him. “Far as I’m concerned the only thing that’s been skulking around my farm all day is you. I think you’ve spied more

than enough of my home to finish your article by now. Clearly, you won't find any Pumpkinwings around here."

Malik shot him another look, only to have any potential response get cut off by his phone beeping in an odd tone. One look at the screen and the little punk's expression completely changed to one of confusion. His gaze whipped between the screen and Jacob several times before settling with an intent stare at the farmer.

Their silence lasted just long enough for Jacob's confidence to falter slightly. If he didn't know better it almost looked like Malik was staring intently at the raven on his shoulder. He'd just worked up the wits to demand again that they leave, when Malik broke into a disturbing smile and pocketed the phone on his own.

"Yes. I think it's time to move things along too. Your secrets won't stay hidden forever, though."

"The heck?" Jacob stared after the man off to their rusted Volkswagen. "Jackie. I'm starting to think that guy wasn't even a reporter."

The raven chirped a few times and brushed at his hair as she took flight off around his house towards the cornfields. It was just as well. The sun was dipping below the horizon, which meant time was drawing close for his date. After dealing with a weirdo like that, he definitely needed some time to chill with good company.

What Jacob couldn't have seen was Jackie taking a dive landing the second she was out of view. From the relative safety between hay bales and a rain barrel the little raven hopped around once to make sure of her privacy. With that assured, her little form suddenly became enveloped in a thick green glow. The raven didn't stay little for long. Her size doubled in a hard surge, only to double again and again. Wings stretched out to their full span where they popped into more bendable configuration on broadening shoulders. Fingers formed out of dainty hands, growing well-manicured nails. Legs grew out curvy and rich while her feet developed a lot more toes.

Jackie shivered for a second when her developing body lost its feathers. Thankfully, the bare smooth skin was quickly covered with the warmth of a sweater and jeans. Her tailfeathers gave one final flick goodbye before sliding up inside the base of her spine. She ran a now human hand over the curves of her hips and chest before giving off an approving chirp. Being able to mold your clothes in any way imaginable had some perks, and she'd learned over time people tended to like snug fits.

With a hard shake of her growing head, the raven's beak shrunk away into a perky nose and plump full lips. At the same time the remaining feathers atop her scalp exploded into locks of jet-black hair that settled across her shoulders. Now that she was able to make actual expressions, Jackie couldn't help promptly turning her face into a pout.

"Call me a monster? It's not like I actually do anything to hurt people!" The now human Jackie paced in a small circle from her hiding spot trying to work off her irritation. When she'd first been blessed with magic powers all she'd ever wanted was to help and

protect Jacob for being so kind to a stray bird. If she'd known scaring the crap out of thugs and nosy trespassers would turn into a living legend, she might have rethought the approach.

She paused to take a few deep breaths. Just like those calming exercises she'd once seen perching on various windowsills. Malik had certainly been one of the worst to poke around in a while. It only reinforced a growing problem that made her more nervous by the day. People were paying attention to the fact Corwin farm was getting extra work done overnight, and had special security to boot. She knew poor Jacob was suspicious of something going on. How could he not after nearly a year of it? He just had no idea the little raven hanging around was partially responsible for his success.

Jackie rested her back against the house giving out a sad sigh. "How am I even supposed to tell him? No one wants to be around a monster..."

Hearing the front door open jolted Jackie from her mopping session. There was still a date to be had and Jacob had obviously gotten ready while she was wasting time. She started making her way around to meet him when the rush of cold grass reminded her of a lack of shoes. Fortunately, there were plenty of discarded boxes in the trash bin to morph into sneakers. Within seconds, Jackie was running up the front path hoping to forget her glaring problems for another night at least. Something made easier when Jacob spotted her and broke into a heart melting smile.

"Sorry I'm late," she said upon reaching the porch, feigning heavy breathing. "I got a bit caught up."

"Hey Jacqueline! Actually, you're just fine." Jacob hopped the steps two at a time to hug her. His eyes briefly flashed towards the parking area before returning to her without comment. Jackie had been using the lie of being a good jogger to explain why she always made it out here without a car since they first started dating. She was so grateful when he'd stopped questioning it. "I only finished getting ready a few minutes ago. Luckily you just missed another obnoxious creep hunting crop monsters. You want to rest for a bit before we head out?"

"Nah! I'm starving," she said, flashing a toothy smile. Much as she wanted to stay in his arms for as long as possible, the excitement of today's visitors made her forget to eat the bird food Jacob normally left out. Now her human stomach couldn't help being as annoying as possible. "What did you have in mind?"

"Do you like sushi? There's a new bar that opened on tourist street that immediately made me think of you."

"Aw. You're sweet. I think sushi would hit the spot nicely."

In truth, Jackie only knew sushi had fish and rice on it. Still, she liked grains so it couldn't be bad if Jacob was offering it. She hugged one arm while he escorted them off to his car. Hopefully this bar had some dancing to it. Anything to burn off a little energy.

They didn't get far before another of Jackie's magic gifts kicked in, sending a shiver up her back despite the sweater. She couldn't explain the how's of it. When the harvest moon decided to grant her powers, it came with some unexpected extra perks. Right now, a sixth sense was setting off red alarms all over her brain, giving her one of the worst compulsive feelings.

There was an intruder on the farm and they intended to harm Jacob.

She didn't even need to think of an excuse to give him, either. Their walk had already come to an abrupt stop without Jackie noticing.

"That's weird. I don't remember leaving the barn door open."

A lump fell in Jackie's stomach when she followed his gaze over to the large wooden building. Its main gates were still firmly locked up, but they could both clearly see a smaller side door swinging ideally on its hinges.

The bad feeling only got worse when Jacob wiggled from her gasp in a light jog towards it.

"Hang on a second. I need to get that."

"Wait. I don't think..."

But Jacob was already halfway there. By the time Jackie collected herself to sprint he'd already reached the door. It was like watching a horror movie in slow motion the way he bent for the locks, oblivious to the ash tendrils that rolled out from the darkness beyond. They lashed around his arms and torso with lightning speed, pulling the man off his feet into the barn. His panicked cry got cut off as he vanished from view.

"Jacob!?"

The barn door slammed shut behind her man's abduction. Not that something as mundane as wood could stop her. Jackie summoned the full force of her magic in a green flash, shattering the barrier in a shower of splinters before making a defensive landing inside the barn.

What now crouched on alert for danger amid dank barn lamps was a fluid mix of Jackie's dual identities. Her body had not only grown more voluptuous, but also incredibly muscular. Thick legs and beefed arms were outlined tight in her fall clothes, but the stitching never seemed to reach a breaking point when she flexed. Granted, what humans found more intimidating was her exposed parts being covered in dark coal feathers. Both her hands and feet had become black and bird-like, ending in large sharp talons. Covering her anthropomorphic raven's head, almost like a battle helmet, was the very jack-o-lantern that served as a nest when she'd been a normal bird. A long-pointed beak jutted open from the grinning mouth while behind its hollowed eyes her emerald orbs burned with fury.

Jacob hung dangling in the middle of the open center for obvious provocation. The strange misty entities danced around his squirming body too strong for even his farm hands to break free. Their ends poured off into the ground where they pooled around Malik's feet like a twisted shadow.

"Wow. If that's all it took to draw you out, I wouldn't have wasted all day out on the farm." The scrawny man's smile was disturbingly crooked while he waved his thick phone device overhead. "Still, so nice to formally meet you, Pumpkinwing."

"W-what the hell!?" Jacob's words came out choked by his supernatural holdings, diverting the anthro raven's attention for a split second. His eyes gazed down upon her wide and full of alarm. The same kind of panic she'd instilled in so many other bad people trying to protect him. "Who... what IS that!?"

"Ooh! She never shared the big secret to your success?" Malik's smile stretched to encompass most of his face while he looked between the pair. "Looks like he really doesn't know. That explains a lot. Not that it'll matter in a bit. Mort hired me to take out a monster, and I'm efficient with my job."

Jackie's ill-tempered snort through her beak nostrils was barely audible as she refocused her anger back on Malik. Of course, Gregory Mort would be causing problems again. A year of having to stave off sabotage plots and the man still couldn't find some other farm to harass.

"Let him go. Now!" The calm, sultry voice coming from her beak might have wooed a human most days. This time it only added to the threatening nature of her aura.

"Yeah. Sure." Malik tapped on his device and the shadowy apparitions yanked back into the solid form of his shadow. The fact this dropped Jacob flat on his back with a pained cry didn't even register while he fully faced Jackie. "It's not like I can multitask the magic of this device, and Mort doesn't want the land owner dead before he can sell the property anyway. You've always been our real..."

Of all the things Jackie was not in the mood for, going into an evil speech after ruining her date ranked high on the list. Soon as she saw Jacob sit up dazed, but still awestruck, she flexed all the power in her feathered leg muscles for a straight on charge. Dark claws flashed in the light ready to smash that device and beat this punk senseless for the cops.

Unfortunately, an enormously voluptuous bird woman tanking towards him didn't faze Malik in the slightest. His hand holding the device whipped around towards Jackie, launching a large mass of his gray magic out to meet her halfway. It phased right through her large breasts feeling like an icicle had impaled her, yet the momentum of her attack didn't stop. She managed to get out a choking caw before something inside her body gave an unwilling flex, blinding her in a flash of green light.

When she headbutted Malik in the ribcage Jackie was the one rocked back after only managing the force of a paper wad. The tattered scarecrow outfit she'd used to

make her clothes had fallen to the dirt floor in a heap along with her pumpkin mask now that she had become a normal raven once more. She only realized this after beginning to fall and not before Malik's free hand snatched her out of midair, pinning a wing against her tiny body.

"So, this is your real form, eh? How very curious. I almost didn't believe my invention when it picked up your magic."

The putrid decay of never brushing repulsed Jackie as he spoke. Flailing attempts and a few lucky scratches did nothing to release Malik's grip. In fact, it only began to tighten around the tiny bird, putting painful pressure on her lungs. She focused on her power again, form glowing green as it rose forth, only to vanish before reaching the apex that'd change her.

Malik gave a hearty laugh that sprayed her beak with spittle. "Yeah. Don't bother with that. You're linked to my trap now. It'll devour all your magic like a wild pig. Shame, though. I'd love to know how a dumb bird got this kind of power, but I ain't being paid for research and discovery. Now stop struggling and we can do this fairly painlessly. One step on your head a..."

There was a solid thumping sound that sent Malik staggering two steps forward. Jackie was just relieved to suddenly have his strangling grip release her, gasping for breath and fluttering just in time for a soft landing on the barn floor. Her would-be assassin flopped face down in the dirt a second later, narrowly missing the startled raven. When she looked up, Jacob loomed over the pair with a shovel raised in case another blow was needed. Somehow it didn't look like the lanky smaller man was getting up anytime soon.

"Bastard really doesn't know when to shut up," Jacob said between deep breaths. A fluttering of wings whipped his eyes to Jackie, freezing the raven in place. For several long seconds all they could do was stare into each other trying to process the last ten minutes. Just when Jacobs jaw found the means to speak again, the device Malik had dropped erupted in a cluster of new tendrils lashing out wildly for anything nearby. "HOLY!"

The shovel came down on the device, cleaving it in half with a satisfying crunch. While that did disperse the shadow terrors resonating from it, Jacob and Jackie weren't expecting a second explosion. This time green magic made Jacob recoil in a blind daze as it filled the barn. All he could make out during that time was Malik's pained screams, which quickly turned into confused squawking.

For Jackie, she raised her wings trying to shield herself from the light. A warmth flooded into her being, making her overjoyed at the sense of magic building up from within again. Next thing she knew, her perspective on gravity changed. Hands filled up her vision attached to slim smooth arms instead of feathered wings. She straightened up onto her knees admiring them for a moment and then looked at the crumpled heap of clothes where Malik had fallen. A rather disgruntled, greasy looking crow was busy wiggling itself out from under the shirt.

More groans brought her attention to Jacob just as he was rubbing the spots from his vision.

“Crap! Are you okay, Jacob?”

He looked down at her blinking several times as she nervously bit her lip. Their look of confusion quickly widened to one of surprise, leaving Jackie unsure why his face was turning red before whirling to face away from her.

“You... uh... might want to...” Jacob struggled to phrase the words but pointed urgently down to the rest of Jackie.

She looked down and gasped, quickly donning the dropped scarecrow outfit and pumpkin on her naked curves. They promptly reformed into the sweater and jeans she’d arrived in while the pumpkin vanished entirely for later use. Now in some proper attire, she coughed to let Jacob know he could face her once more.

“What happened to him?” he asked instead, noticing the crow that’d been Malik finally free itself and flapped in a panic out the destroyed barn door.

“I... have no idea,” Jackie admitted while also watching the bird go. “I guess the magic he sucked out washed through him before returning to me? Poor thing probably doesn’t have any left to transform back either.”

There was a clang that made Jackie whirl around. The shovel had fallen out of Jacob’s hands as he eyed her up and down several times. Each pass over made her arms and legs press tighter to her body trying to appear smaller.

“You’re really Jackie?” he finally said after a painfully long pause.

“Y-yeah.” She took a deep breath and decided the jig was already up. Before her best friend’s eyes, she glowed green and shifted into her humanoid raven form, down to her normal bird state and then back to the beautiful woman he’d come to know. “I’ve been struggling to find a gentler way to tell you.”

“How long have you been able to... uh... this?”

“Since you met ‘Jacqueline’ at the harvest dance last year. It just sorta happened all of a sudden.”

“And all the work that’s been getting done overnight?”

“That was me too. Hefting crops barely breaks a sweat.”

Jackie risked a look into his eyes, looking for every hint of judgment in his expression. Being a farm owner Jacob wore everything on his sleeve. She could see his confusion, his disbelief, even sparks of curiosity.

But there wasn’t a hint of fear in his voice.

He made her jump with a hearty chuckle, finally relaxing his shoulders. "After all this time getting angry with the locals, I can't believe I've been dating the legendary Pumpkinwing. You've been causing a ruckus everywhere, it seems."

A flare of indignation broke Jackie's timid stance. "Hey! In my defense those dang kids came up with that name. The only reason I started deliberately appearing on other farms was so they'd stop trying to bother you all the... wait, you're not scared of me!?"

The question made Jacob double take with renewed puzzlement. "Well, this is certainly something to take in. I'm not sure my brain has fully comprehended everything. The raven I've been dotting on from a chick has been my secret employee and love interest. It's an amazing tale, but I don't think it's changed a lot about how I feel. You could do practically anything with those kinds of powers and looks."

Jackie was barely paying attention after the word 'love' started her heart pounding against her ribcage. She didn't even realize Jacob had stopped talking until she'd taken several calming breaths, face burning with embarrassment. "I-I would rather just be with you. I want to support the kind man that took care of me when I needed it most."

Jacob's response was to move forward so suddenly Jackie braced for something terrible. Instead, she felt a light kiss on her forehead that almost made her faint from the rush of euphoria it gave her. Luckily his strong hands held onto her waist to keep balance.

"I think we'll be okay going forward, then." He stroked her black hair, making her press up against the warmth of his toned chest. "The night is still young. If we hurry, we might still be able to get some sushi. Oh..."

Jackie blinked and followed his gaze. A different kind of embarrassing blush formed on her face realizing they were gawking at the barn door she'd demolished in the rush to his rescue.

"I don't suppose your magic is also good at fixing doors?"

She rested her chin between Jacob's pecs, gazing up at him with a sheepish smile. "Unfortunately, I don't think I was granted any carpentry skills. I'm more of your 'hard labor' kind of bird."

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Afterward

Hello, you beautiful person! I hope you enjoyed this story as much as I loved making it. If you'd like to read more, feel free to check out several of my other platforms where I post content for free and special exclusives.

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