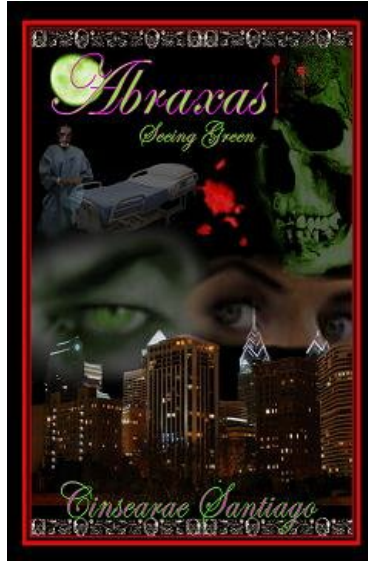


**EXCERPT FROM ABRAXAS: SEEING GREEN, BOOK 4**  
**By Cinsearae S.**  
**COMING SOON IN 2009**



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I felt sick. Absolutely nauseated with nervousness and despair. Just *what* in God's name happened to Edward?! Falling into a coma from getting his throat slit? It just didn't make sense. I never heard of such a thing!

I scooted away from Ryan, feeling like I had to vomit.

"Christine?"

I jumped off the bed, keeping myself wrapped in the sheet, suddenly ashamed to be naked in front of him for some weird reason.

"Christine, what's wrong? Tell me, please." He put his boxers on and walked towards me, but I skittered off to the bathroom, the sheet trailing

behind me, accompanied by that soft, *swish-swish* sound it made. I shut the door a little too hard.

“*Christine.*” His voice dropped a notch as he knocked on the door. Oh boy, there went that fatherly, reprimanding tone of his. “*Tell me...* what is the matter?”

My stomach was in knots and trembling at the same time. Not a nice combination. I sat on the toilet lid.

“Just... just feeling queasy,” I answered weakly.

*I saw Edward out there.* That *wasn't* a figment of my imagination. Edward's astral form was standing right at the foot of Ryan's bed, and he did *not* look happy.

He looked damn right pissed off.

God, how long had he been there? I hoped he didn't see me and Ryan... the thought made me queasy again.

“Christine, may I come in?”

‘*No,*’ Edward said. I looked up and gave a tiny shriek before slapping my hand over my mouth. Edward was giving me a look of panic.

“Christine! For God's sake, what's going on in there?”

“Edward...” I whispered, wide-eyed, a tear going down my cheek.

Edward vanished. Oh, holy hell.

Ryan opened the door and got on one knee in front of me. He ran a hand through my hair, then tilted my face up.

“My God, you're so *pale*. Are you sick?” He held my face in his hands. “My love...” He gently wiped the tear away. “I didn't...*overdo* anything, did I?”

I shook my head.

“Then, what is it?” he asked gently, his eyes suddenly getting wide. “Are you...?” He placed a hand on my abdomen. I shook my head again.

Something told me not to tell him what I saw. “Stress...catching up to me. That was... *so much* to deal with last night.”

“Yes, it was,” he said and sighed, helping me up and out of the bathroom. He sat me down on his bed. “Can I get you anything? Some chamomile tea, perhaps?”

I nodded eagerly. “Yes. Yes, that would be very good.”

“I shall return,” Ryan said, quickly exiting the room.

I turned around sharply, looking all around the room. “Edward!” I whispered harshly. “Edward, where are you?”

Nothing. I got up, opened Ryan's door and peeked out. Still holding the sheet around me, I made it to my room, then jumped in the shower.

Feeling better, I dried myself off, wrapped the towel around me, and hunted down something to wear. As soon as I found a sweater and a pair of jeans, I turned to toss them on the bed...

And Edward nearly scared the piss out of me again.

“**Jesus!**” I said, holding my hand to my chest. “Edward! What *happened to you?!?*”

He pointed to my closed door, then vanished again. Ryan opened it.

“There you are, my love,” he said with a smile, setting the tea on my dresser. “Getting ready to go to the hospital?”

“In a little bit.” I feigned my cheerfulness, trying to remain calm. Shit was happening too fast for me again. “Have you seen Kiera around?”

Ryan gave the faintest frown, a glint of green in his eyes. “I just passed her. She’s coming to see you in a few minutes.” He held me by my shoulders and looked at me carefully, as if trying to see if there was something I was hiding from him. “Are you *sure* you’ll be alright?”

“Yes,” I answered and smiled. “The tea should make me feel a lot better. It always does. Thank you.” I caressed his face.

Ryan held me to him, my head resting against his chest. He stroked my back. “I just want to make sure you’ll be well enough to...go.” On that last word, I could tell he really did *not* want me visiting Edward.

He cleared his throat. “I’ll leave you to get dressed.” He kissed my hand and left, closing the door behind him.

2.

**I** was laying face down on my bed, still not dressed, when Kiera knocked on my door.

“*Come in,*” I said with my thoughts.

I heard the door creak slightly before she gasped. “Miss C!” She quickly shut the door and rushed over to my bed. She touched my shoulder. “Are you alright?”

I rolled over slightly, holding the towel so it wouldn’t come undone.

“I...I saw Edward. The *disembodied* version of him.”

She paused. “I saw him too!”

“Oh, thank God,” I exhaled. “I thought I was going crazy for a moment. He was in Ryan’s bedroom and again in here. He looked angry. I think Edward was trying to tell me something about him.”

Kiera’s eyes widened. “Me too.” She looked around my room, hoping to see him. “Get dressed. Kurt’s coming with us.”

I sighed and got up. Why did I feel so haggard? Kiera looked at me carefully.

“Something else is bugging you, isn’t it?”

“Well...I’m not sure. I need to feel it out a bit more. I’ll let you know.” It was *Ryan* who was my other concern. The sudden shift in his vibes was puzzling me. Something about him felt foreign, and it was driving me nuts.

“I’ll be downstairs with Kurt,” she said quickly, closing my door behind herself.

I was dressed in two minutes, and raced down the staircase, having the urge to get out of the Price mansion again. The three of us went down the walkway.

“Remember I mentioned that Timothy Hayes seemed so familiar to me?” Kiera said.

“Yeah,” Kurt said, and I nodded.

“I *knew* him! Well, kinda. I was just a kid back then myself! He lived on my block!”

“No way,” I said, as I hugged myself.

“Took a little while, but I got Dennis to help me search through the city obits at the library. Good thing everything is electronically filed these days.” She sighed. “Eight years ago, a Timothy Hayes died, son of Mr. and Mrs. Johanna Hayes in Ardmore, PA. They lived on the same block I did, and the event of his death suddenly rushed back to me once I read what happened to him. He was hit by a truck.” She swallowed. “It...it would explain all the stitches he had around his ear, wrist and elbow. He... he had to have some of his...parts...sewn back on.”

“C’mon, girl!” Kurt said, holding his stomach. “You didn’t have to get all *graphic* on me.”

Kiera rolled her eyes. “Anyways, Timothy was missing from the morgue the same day his body was admitted. His parents had a hissy-fit. It was on the news for the longest. They had sued the city and everything. Well, at least they’ll have some closure now.”

We got into Kurt’s dark-red Honda. I was glad we weren’t getting into the hearse. It seemed more novel than practical, but that was Kiera’s thing. I hopped in the passenger seat, and Kiera sat in the back, holding onto both our headrests so she could hover in the middle behind us.

We were a quiet for a moment before Kurt had to get something off his chest. “Um... is Our Lord trying to fashion himself like *The Incredible Hulk* or somethin’?”

I gave Kurt a weird look. "Why on earth would you ask that?"

"Did you get a good look at his eyes lately? Sometimes, they're all green and everything. *Bright* green."

I shivered. I knew exactly what he was talking about.

"Does that mean something, though?" Kurt asked. "I mean, you and Our Lord have tell-tale eye colors that kinda describe the emotions you guys are feeling at the moment. But *green*? That's a new one."

"I've noticed that about Ryan for the last couple of days," I said. "It bothers me."

"Well... in its *negative* aspect, green means quite a *few* things," Kiera said.

We stopped at a red light, and Kurt started naming them off on his fingers. "Let's see... greed, envy, jealousy, selfishness, suspicion, stagnation..."

I flinched. I could understand 'stagnation'; there was something within his soul that still wasn't quite balanced, wouldn't let him be in harmony with his surroundings. Our 'breakthrough' in the tearoom helped immensely, but obviously, one tiny thing was hanging on. 'Suspicion' I had picked up on earlier too, but---

"Selfishness? C'mon Kurt, Ryan doesn't have a selfish bone in his body. And the whole greed, envy and jealousy bit..." I sighed, looking down.

Kiera was in thought. "Well... he's selfish when it comes to *you*, that's for sure, and that's how the other three tie in."

I looked at her.

"Selfishness encompasses *lots* of stuff," she continued. "Since you've been in his life, to him, you've become that *one* precious element he's rarely experienced. *Love*. He wants to make sure you'll remain his---hence the envy, greed and jealousy that's aroused in him every time your attention is given to something...or *someone* else."

"Like Edward." I folded my arms. "Kiera, Eddie is part of our family!"

"Hey, don't tell *me* that. I *already* know. Obviously, Our Lord still doesn't."

"Ryan should know Eddie by *now*, geez! He's lived at the mansion way longer than *I* have!"

"But things change, and with that, comes new challenges," Kurt offered. "Once something different is thrown in the mix---" He gestured to me. "It starts causing quite a few ripples."

“Eddie knows his place,” I said in his defense. “He *told* me that. He would never do anything to piss Ryan off---”

“---Except have a crush on you,” Kiera finished. I gave her a frown. “C’mon, Miss C. You know it, *I* know it, and that’s exactly where he messed up. And to be honest...” She leaned closer to our faces. “I think Our Lord asking Eddie about all those sex tips was a *setup*. We all know Eddie has trouble blocking his thoughts, so when Our Lord asked him about something so private, so *personal*, and in *total* confidence, Eddie let his guard down completely because of the sudden ‘honor and privilege’ of discussing such intimate things with the master of the house. *That* gave Our Lord the opportunity to see the underlying thoughts within Eddie’s head. And I’m sure a lot of them were about *you*, Miss C.”

Kurt sucked his teeth. “Man, that was pretty underhanded, even for Our Lord. but I guess with Ed being so spry and Our Lord being more... *mature*...”

“Don’t underestimate Ryan,” I cautioned. “Trust me.”

“But you know what I mean though, right?”

“Of course. Ryan sees him as a threat. God knows *why*. The poor kid is in the hospital, in a *coma*.” And thinking over what Kiera just said, that would explain what Ryan was saying in his mind while we were intimate the previous night.

“Um, Kiera, can I ask you something?”

“Sure.” She perked up.

“I really feel weird talking about this but... it has to do with me and Ryan's more... ‘closer’ moments.”

Kurt groaned and tried covering an ear by tilting his head down to his shoulder. Kiera rolled her eyes at him.

“Your other ear’s exposed, goofy.”

Then Kurt did an interesting driving tactic; he covered his ears with his hands, and used his *elbows* to steer the wheel.

“Kurt! *Stop that!*” I said excitedly. He snorted and grinned, but kept driving that way.

Kiera looked at me after rolling her eyes at him again, trying to suppress a laugh. “What’s wrong?”

“Well, Ryan is usually shy, a bit playful, but always romantic just the same. It’s a very novel emotion I get from him, and it’s one of the reasons why I love him. But lately, he’s been very... *forward*, lustful and dark, like he can’t keep his hands off of me. It seems *dirty*, for lack of a better word. Very unlike him. I don’t know where it’s coming from, but it just doesn’t feel like

I'm *with* him."

"I understand. It might be another part of what's going on with this green-eyed thing he's doing."

Kurt lowered his hands from his ears. "Y'all done yet?"

"For the most part," I answered. "Besides, it's not like I'd give *graphic* details."

I thought back to how Edward looked so pissed at Ryan when I saw him. What I was starting to dread crept back into my mind again.

All of us feeling solemn, Kurt turned on the radio. We got to Jefferson Hospital in about half an hour and ran into Dr. Luo. He smiled at us.

"My Lady," he said, taking my hand and kissing it. I blushed.

"Good thing Our Lord didn't see *that*," Kurt mumbled. "He'd probably try to get him too."

Luo gave him a funny look. "Get who?" he asked as he walked us to Eddie's room.

"Our Lord has been acting a bit funny lately," Kiera said. "Just trying to figure out what triggered it and why."

"Anything I can help you with?" he asked. "Does it have anything to do with what happened? You know, that situation with Natasha you all dealt with the other night?"

I perked up a bit. "You might be onto something, Dr. Luo."

"Please, call me Joe."

I nodded. "You *did* mention she was borderline schizoid."

"Yes, I could tell by how she reacted to things in otherwise normal situations. She was living quite the fairytale...in her head." He sniffed.

"Joe, what do you think caused it?"

"Herself. The woman had some nasty energy around her, *constantly*. Every time she came for prenatal checkups, I had to shield myself from it. Quite disturbing allowing all that *mess* to be around her."

"Interesting..." I trailed off.

We stopped at a room 2033. "He's in here. I'm so sorry for what happened, My Lady. I can't figure out what's going on with Edward. I wish I had more to tell you, but right now, his condition is an enigma." He started to walk away. "If you need me, you know how to reach me." He smiled.

"*Of course*," I said back with my thoughts.

He gave us a little wave and continued down the hall.

I looked at Kurt and Kiera. They seemed too afraid to go in. I sighed, leading the way.

Kiera immediately broke out into tears when she saw Edward. She

threw herself over his body, stifling her sobs in his blankets. Kurt covered his mouth as I watched a single tear flow down his face.

I stared at Edward. Immediately, flashes of my own mother when she was in the hospital and near death hit me like a Mack truck. I could still vividly see her blank stare, her pupils dilated from being brain dead, hooked up to machines that only kept her body alive, when I already knew her soul was long gone. There she laid, immobile, still and cold, her vitals dropping every minute until she...

I turned away, almost vomiting. Strong, Christine...be *strong*...

Everyone *always* told me to be strong, as if I wasn't allowed to cry, like I wasn't supposed to lean on them for emotional support! Like I was supposed to be my own, fucking rock! It only made me angrier at everyone.

I pushed the thoughts and memories aside. This wasn't about me, it was about Edward right now.

I steeled myself and regained my composure before turning back around. Edward needed me.

Kiera had sat up on his bed, but she was still sniffing loudly, wiping her nose on her sleeve. Kurt plopped himself in a chair.

I walked up to him, trying my best not to let tears fall. He looked like he was merely sleeping, and pale, with a look of worry frozen on his face.

"Oh God," I whispered, and as I touched his face, one of my tears escaped and fell onto his arm.

"*I love you, Christine,*" I heard in my head. I gasped and looked at his face hard, watching for any sign of movement. For a moment, I thought he was going to open his eyes.

"Edward?" I said out loud.

"*Please, put you hand on top of mine,*" he said. Immediately, I did.

"*Close you eyes for a moment,*" he continued. When I did, it took a while, but I felt the sensation of something covering *my* hand, as if his was on mine now.

"*Edward,*" I said with my thoughts, eyes still closed. "*God, we miss you so much...and you gave me such a scare at the house...*"

"*It was Our Lord...he did this to me!*"

I opened my eyes and gasped, my fears confirmed. "No," I said out loud. "Oh God...*no...*"

"What? What?" Kiera asked excitedly, Kurt leapt forward in his seat, eyes wide in anticipation.

"He says Ryan did this to him."

I felt the nervousness within Kiera. It was like a million fluttering

butterflies in the pit of her stomach. The warmth in Kurt drained from him completely. A feeling of stark fear. He was like a statue in his seat.

“This...this isn’t like Our Lord,” she tried to say in his defense. “He...he would never try to hurt one of his fledglings...”

“Kiera...I have to admit something. When I first arrived at the mansion and Edward happened to turn up in one of our conversations, I noticed little flickers in Ryan’s personality that displayed hints of jealousy. I remember calling Eddie ‘Blondie’, and even that irked him a bit. Ryan thought I was giving Eddie a pet name out of adoration for him. Ryan was doing his best in keeping his jealousy in check *then*, but now...?” I shook my head. “This has gone too far.”

Kiera and I looked at Kurt. He was still frozen.

“Kurt, snap out of it,” Kiera said. Kurt shook his head and looked at her.

“Our Lord tried to kill one of us...” he said, sounding dazed. “He tried to *kill* one of us!”

That phantom feeling of Eddie’s hand on mine became warmer and I looked at him. He was trying to communicate with me again.

*“He said he couldn’t have betrayers in his clan,”* Edward said to me. *“He already knew how I felt about you. He wants me out of the house. He doesn’t really want me as a son. It was all a lie, wasn’t it?”*

And then, a moment of shock. I saw a tear fall down the side of his face. Kiera gasped, staring at it as well.

“His sadness...” she said, her voice choking up. “It’s so strong...” More tears welled up in her eyes again, and she hugged herself.

“You...can’t hear him?”

“No.” She looked puzzled.

“Try putting your hand on his,” I suggested.

She grabbed his remaining hand and closed her eyes, trying to connect with him.

Kurt got up on wobbly legs and made his way to Edward’s bed, then sat himself at the foot of the mattress, still dazed.

“Eddie, what did he do to you exactly?” I asked out loud again.

*“Smothered me. I guess my body went into some kind of defense mode or shock by slipping into this coma. Thing is, I don’t know how to get **out** of it. And... the more I stay, the more scary things I see...”*

Kiera gasped. She must have heard him.

“*What kind of things?*” I heard her ask.

*“Dark looking shapes. They’re not friendly. I feel like I’m in some*

*kind of weird limbo, even though I'm not dead. I have to get out, I have to get out, please, please, help me!"*

Kiera covered her mouth and opened her eyes.

"We'll do whatever it takes," she said out loud, then slowly let go of his hand, looking at me. "Sorry, Miss C. I can't bear to see him like this, to hear him in despair..." She got up to look out of the room's window.

*"Christine?"*

*"Yes. I'm still here."*

*"I love you. I do. Nothing will change that. Ever."*

*"Edward--"*

*"No, not like that. I never forgot what you told me. You're just as dear to me as you are to Our Lord. You're the closest thing to a mom or an older sister that I have, and I respect you in that way."*

"Oh Edward," I said and leaned forward, hugging him as best as I could, trying to pour some of my power into him to hopefully strengthen him.

*"Thank you. I feel your energies. It's making me stronger already."*

I pulled away and brushed his hair away from his face. "I don't know why I can't just snap you out of this *thing* right now."

*"Maybe it's because I did it myself, and I have to **undo** it myself as well. God this sucks..."*

I managed to crack a smile. Even in his most down point, he still tried to make me laugh.

*"I love all you guys. Thanks for being here. Just do me a favor?"*

*"Anything, Eddie."*

*"Please tell the doc **not** to let Our Lord back in here."*

3.

Outside the hospital, we walked down the street, casually watching the people around us going about their daily, ho-hum lives. Kurt spotted a newspaper dispenser and picked up a copy of the *City Paper*.

"Damn, look who's slapped on the front page," he said, holding it up for us to see.

Natasha. In prison garb, nonetheless. The media snapped the ugliest picture of her they could, her expression wide-eyed and maniacal as two burly cops held each of her arms. She looked like she was struggling against them.

"Doesn't take them long at all," he said, thumbing through the pages

to get to the main article. He skimmed through it, giving us the gist of it.

“Well she’s going to Fairmount Psych Hospital temporarily until they transfer her to the Forensics Unit at Norristown State Hospital.”

“Forensics Unit?” I asked.

“Ah, that’s their fancy way of saying the unit for the ‘criminally insane’.”

“Ah,” I nodded in understanding.

“Boy, they really incriminated the shit out of her. She’s gong down as ‘Philly’s Black Magic Witch’. Ooo, branded Satanic too. And look! There’s pictures!” he said mockingly with a cheesy grin, showing us the article. Someone had taken a picture of her ‘altar’, and a close-up shot of the same sigil I saw scribbled in red under the altar cloth. I shivered, remembering the night Eddie and I broke into her house.

“They’re trying to blame her for those odd times when bags of headless cats and small animals were found along roadsides. They mentioned her ‘refrigeration room’ too,” he continued. “One theory is that she was also part cannibal, storing parts in the room for future use.”

“At least we know *that* idea’s bullshit,” I said. “Can’t the media ever get anything right?”

“You *sure* she wasn’t a cannibal?” Kurt eyed me playfully.

“She was a necromancer, not a cannibal,” Kiera said. “I seriously doubt she kept frozen limbs to munch on. She was too busy *controlling* them to ever have time to *eat* them. Don’t be gross.”

“Can you see her trying to write a book about herself while in jail? Or someone doing it for her? Milking any and everything for what it’s worth, right?” Kurt said sarcastically.

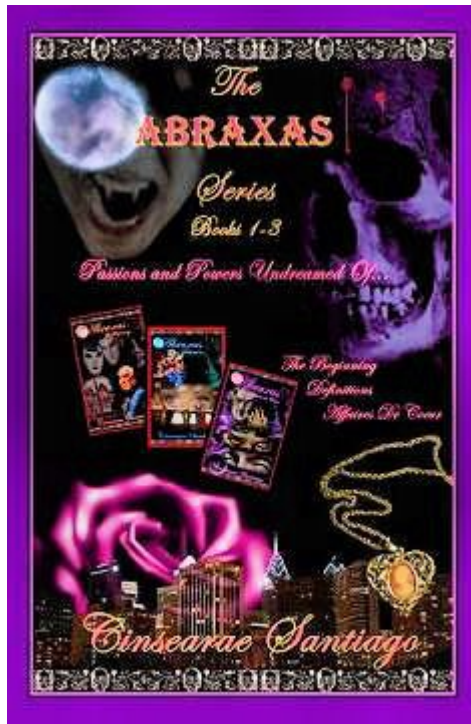
Kiera looked at the front page picture and tsk-tsked. “Orange is sooo not a good color on her.”

We all got a good chuckle in as Kurt tossed the paper into the nearest trashcan.



ABRAXAS: SEEING GREEN---Book 4 in the series  
Coming in 2009!

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