The Phoenix's Fortune--My Feeding Method as a Web/Desolation Avatar

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Content Warnings:
- Mentions of: death, manipulation, addiction.
- Burning and heat related injuries.
- Murder.

I have a casino in-system, in the headspace. It's based on the one I had in my life before. I'm noncanon, but sourced from The Magnus Archives. TL;DR for those who are unfamiliar with the source itself, there's eldritch entities tied to certain fears that influence and bind parts of themselves to people (who are called avatars). I'm an avatar of The Desolation (fears of fire, destruction of potential, loss) and The Web (fears of arachnophobia, manipulation/being controlled, addiction). Avatars feed themselves and their attached entities off of that fear they generate.

So, I was a weird case, being tied to two entities at once. I had to find my own ways to feed, if I wanted to be productive and feed both at once--which seemed to be the best course of action. And what kills two birds with one stone so-to-speak? Life-destroying addiction, of course! So, after deciding I didn't fit in with the other avatars of my home in the UK, I moved to somewhere in the USA and made myself a casino. I named it The Phoenix's Fortune--kind of a normal casino-y name and whatnot. But, the point of the name itself was that *I* was technically the phoenix gaining from everyone *elses* downfall. Bit of a nod to the phoenix rising from its own ashes thing--I just gain from everyone elses instead. That play on words being unknown to most people who frequented the casino fed The Web, subtly.

I don't remember where in the US it was, in all honesty. In life it also had a bar area and all that, but other than that it kind of… Looked like a casino if it were run by a volcano-phoenix worshipping cult. Mostly actual fire as lighting--oil lanterns lining the walls, big, ornate metal fire pits on the ground. I loved the phoenix imagery, so there was plenty of that around. Things like carvings on the walls, statues, and other miscellaneous decor. I loved my lanterns--but I also loved fire pits. Huge, metal or concrete bowls that stand on the ground with fire in them. Mine *were* metal, of course. Concrete wouldn't heat up and burn if you were to accidentally touch it, and that's no fun. Any "accidents" fuelled The Desolation, at least a little.

Being tied to The Desolation, it of course was uncomfortably hot to be in the building at all. All the fire pits certainly helped with that. But of course, addiction doesn't care about that sort of thing... Uncomfortability is mild compared to eldrith-entity fuelled drive to gamble. People came and stayed despite the heat and thick smell of smoke. The slot machines and other things I had in there for people to waste their money away on were *also* warm to the touch. When you'd first start gambling, it was mainly a sense of discomfort. The deeper people fell into the trap of addiction, though, the hotter the equipment got, until their hands weren't necessarily recogniseable as hands, or some even fused into the objects themselves from the melting heat--trapping them there physically. That definitely fuelled my own fire.

The Web needed more than just wordplay, though. So, I decided to prolong the addiction, wrap people up in more threads of fate, and open the opportunity for more burning later down the line. I had plenty of people come to me, having spent their life savings on those damn machines, *begging* me to help them--people in desperate situations try desperate things. So, I gave out loans--money meant nothing to me in the end, and I had plenty. Of course, some would just spend it right away and that was a nice chance to melt some people for taking advantage of my "generosity".

Others would try to actually pick their life back up! But rarely did the money make its way back to me. So, a bit of waiting, watching them pick up the pieces, unknowing of anything I'm pulling behind the scenes. And eventually, there would be more burning. Either they made mistakes on their own with a little bit of twisting behind the scenes, or I got fed up and there had to be a bit of a "freak accident", which usually involved anything they had gained getting melted--houses, families, other material belongings, whatever. I loved the more drawn-out ones, where people went quite a while without falling into it, and they even felt *safe*, not knowing I was still pulling strings.

It's mostly the same imagery innerworld, I wanted close to a replica because really, I did live in that place and it was also literally my lifeforce. It honestly was almost like an extension of me in a way. It wasn't *literally* me, like The Distortion's door being itself, it was just like... If I were to carry a bag with me and felt lost or naked without it, the building would have an equivalent feeling to that. Something that isn't me, but needs to be with me. Like a comfort item integral to my identity.

Of course, I can't burn people in-system--there's rules against that. But having that reminder and that security of before helps all the same.